



22 DYNAMIC LAWS OF **CHURCH GROWTH**

IF YOU FOLLOW THEM, PEOPLE WILL FLOCK TO YOUR CHURCH.
IF YOU BREAK THEM, THEY WILL BREAK YOUR CHURCH.

FRANCIS BOLA AKIN-JOHN

22

**DYNAMIC LAWS
OF
CHURCH**

Dedication

To Dean Carlson

**Thanks for your friendship and dedication
to the expansion of His kingdom in South Africa.**

Appreciation

My sincere appreciation goes to the blessed Holy Spirit of God, who enabled me to write this book over a period of one month in two Countries. He provided me with strong illumination that made me to sit indoor in my hotel rooms and houses where I lodged. Eternal praise to you forever, thou sweet Spirit of the Lord. I have not seen a more selfless Person than you. You will forever be my Senior Partner in this life's assignment.

I equally thank my co-workers in the ministry who performed wonderfully during my absence from office. Rev Michael Oluwaniyi, and Pastor Wale Olaoluwa.- you are worthy ministers of the Lord. Thanks for your faithfulness to the vision.

My thanks goes to Bisola Erinfolami for her sincere service to the Lord. You are wonderful. I specially thank Kemi Adeyeye for her quickness and dexterity with the computer. Your dedication to work has made this book possible. Thanks a million.

I also thank Evang. Adedeji Adekusibe. I appreciate you.

I cannot but thank my wife for her love, support and prayers. My love, you are a woman in a million. Thanks for your unfailing prayers and love. My two boys, Blessing and Festus are wonderful. You are teaching me how to be a true father.

Finally, to all those who believe in the vision of Church Growth and are giving us their support, thanks for your dedication.

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Introduction

It is my candid belief that the continuous growth of the church in Africa depends largely on the kind of information that will be provided by African authors who have clear understanding of the church and the doings of the Lord. It is in the light of this fact that I embarked on the research and writing of this book. As everyone who has written a book will know, it is a very serious and demanding task to write a good and relevant book. It takes months, if not years of research to come up with facts and informations that will go a long way to really expand the frontiers of God's kingdom.

However, no effort is too great and no price is too high to pay for the sustainable growth of the church in Africa. It has been severally reported that the last great revival that will usher in the rapture of the church will come from Africa. And if that will be so, the growth seen in the last twenty years must be sustained and spread to other parts of Africa and into other Continents around the World. This then calls for proper grasp of the laws that undergird the growth of churches.

For too long a time, many church leaders are oblivious of the laws that help the growth of the church, their believe is that growth in the church is only a divine arrangement or the sovereignty of God at work. Of course, growth is divine in origin, nobody can bring growth to the church without the mighty workings of the Holy Spirit of God. Yet, growth cannot happen in the church without some laws being obeyed.

Church growth is a divine and human partnership. Paul must plant and Appolos must water so that God will send the blessings that will result in increase (I Cor. 3:6). In this instance, if Paul and Appolos failed to play their parts, God cannot do anything to bring increase. This is the truth of church growth that we seriously need to understand and apply.

This book hopes to set forth all the laws that help to accelerate the dynamic growth of churches in Africa and in other parts of the world. These laws are the outcome of years of research as to the factors that help or hinder the growth of churches.

They are not theoretical, but practical laws that work in everyday life of the church. I am going to present them in simple, strait-forward and easy - to - understand ways that every church leader can identity with.

You may discover that you have been using some of them rightly or wrongly. You may find new insight for the ones you have not thought existed. You may also discover that you need to change some of the ways you have been doing church. Whichever area you find yourself and your church, the idea is that you adjust, adapt or adopt the laws. If you break them, they have the capacity to break your church sooner or later, and if

you follow them wholeheartedly, people will flock and flow to your church in large numbers.

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February, 2006.

PART I

The foundation for all growth lies in the rediscovery
of the primary purpose of the church

CHAPTER 1

GROWTH DYNAMISM

God is the author of growth. He commands and loves growth in everyone of His creatures. Though He doesn't grow and will not grow, yet everything He is connected with must grow. Growth is the fact of life and the purpose of our existence. We live to grow and we grow to live. From our conception to our grave, we are growing.

Physically, the only sign that you are alive and living is that you are growing one way or another. However, growth, either physically or spiritually, doesn't come like a ripe pawpaw from the sky. It demands efforts and obedience to some vital laws.

Despite the fact that we have been created to grow, yet true growth will only be a mirage if we fail to obey the laws of growth. As it applies to our personal lives so also it applies to the church. The church that fails to follow and obey the laws of growth will find herself sick and stagnant.

Church growth is not a gimmick, neither is it a magic performed by God or men and women of God. Church growth is something we can study and understand. It is possible to know and apply the factors at work. Though complex and sometimes unpredictable, yet we can conclude through church growth research that there are laws that greatly help the growth of churches.

Yes, there is no one key to the growth of churches, it is a combination of spiritual and physical laws. It is really a mixture of factors. Church growth

to some extent is controllable. In other words, it is possible to apply the laws that God has repeatedly used to bring growth to several churches in different areas, states and regions of the World and inspite of differences in doctrines and denominational affiliations, and still see tremendous growth.

Growth and health are interwoven. To be healthy is to experience growth. Moreover, there can be no true and lasting growth without sound health. When an individual is sick, growth will be retarded, so also the church. Sick churches don't grow, only healthy churches do. The laws that help the growth of churches are also the laws of health. If a church applies and lives by these laws, health will be the outcome, which will result in true growth. If all the laws are obeyed, the growth potential of a church will be outstanding. And as long as these laws are followed, sickness and diseases will be kept at bay in the church.

It needs to be stated over and over again that true growth in the church means conversion growth. It is not building a personal empire, but kingdom expansion. Genuine growth results in people coming to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and becoming responsible members of His church.

Biological and transferred growths are good, but it is conversion growth that is the heartbeat of true church growth teachings. Conversion growth, whereby people are translated from darkness to light and becoming true members of the body of Christ is the true representative of the spirit of church growth.

Conversion growth may happen to twos, tens, hundreds or thousands of people over the lifetime of a church, but it must happen for true growth to be experienced. Conversion growth is true kingdom growth. It is when people are being converted that it can be said that the church is experiencing true church . The transfer of Christians from other churches may be good and inevitable in some situations, yet it does not represent the true spirit of church growth.

Nobody can cause conversion growth in the church without the dynamic power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Church growth is dynamic in nature. The dynamism is the power and blessings of God at work. It is not possible to achieve growth by human efforts and struggles. Rather, it is the dynamo and dunamis-power of the Holy Spirit of God that leads to conversion growth and kingdom expansion.

Moreover, this dynamic power of God cannot be at work without us obeying the laws that will bring it to reality. The blessings of growth cannot work and operate in our lives and churches if we fail to abide by the laws undergirding growth. Everyone of the laws of growth are dynamic in nature, in the sense that they are operative by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

Each of these laws cannot operate by itself alone. They are subject to the dynamic power of the Spirit of God. Though each of them can stand alone, but often, it is their combination that results in the health and balanced growth of the church.

The Holy Spirit is the Vicar of the church. His time is now. He is the Lord of the harvest. It is His mighty workings that usually results in the dynamic growth of the church. If He doesn't work, nothing will really work. In actual fact, it is His various ways of working in the church that has been turned into these laws of church growth. So therefore, dynamic church growth is the result of dynamic presence and power of the Holy Spirit using these time-tested, proven and practical laws.

The earth is created by God to run according to natural laws that guide it. Violating the natural law of life is the reason for so many disasters, problems and degradation that has befallen our World today.

As there are natural laws, so also there are spiritual laws. In the spiritual realm, there is the law of the Spirit of life which brings the life of God into the human soul. There is also the law of sin and of death. Once you violate

the law of the Spirit of life, the law of sin and death will begin to operate in your life. Also there are man-made laws that help the regulation of lives and living, such as constitutional laws, criminal laws, building laws, marital laws, traffic laws and company laws.

These are some of the laws that guide human relations and conduct. Violating any of these laws is to find yourself in problems with the government. In a real sense, governments are formed to uphold and defend the laws guiding a particular State, Country or Community. Lawless people will always be dealt with by the government. The only way to live in peace is to live according to the law. As it is physically, so it is spiritually. Much more importantly, spiritual laws have immediate and eternal consequences.

The only way to show that you respect the law is to obey it. Nobody can live a lawless life and go scot free. You cannot eat your cake and have it at the same time. If you desire progress, success, growth and breakthrough in life, you will always have them as long as you obey the laws guiding them.

Church growth therefore, answers to certain laws that must be known, understood and obeyed, if it is to happen in an appreciable degree and in a sustainable way.

I quite agree that you can experience growth in your church without caring a hoot about these laws. But the truth of the matter is that you cannot sustain such growth without knowing and obeying these laws.

One reason why there is so much retrogression, stagnation and downward spiral of once great and growing churches in the African Continent is the flagrant violation of these laws.

So many church leaders are of the opinion that these laws do not apply to their work because they have grown already. But I tell you the truth, once you are involved with the church of Jesus Christ and you really desire to

do a lasting work, you are compelled to obey these laws. If you violate them, they will seriously violate you and your work for the Lord.

What you don't know can surely kill you. Many churches have been destroyed because they don't know these laws. Of course, these laws are a combination of physical and spiritual laws that have helped church leaders who abide by them and break those who disobeyed them.

These laws are no respecter of persons, positions and power in the ministry. Whoever you are and wherever you find yourself in the ministry, they will always trail you and find you out, either positively or negatively.

If all your learning have not led you to learn these laws, then you need to humble yourself to learn afresh. Theological degrees and treatise cannot replace the knowledge of these laws. That you are reading this book is a sure sign that God loves you and wants to prosper His work in your hand. They don't teach these laws in Bible Colleges and Seminaries. Neither will they teach you in Seminars and Schools of Ministries. You can only come across them from someone who have been opportuned to walk with the Lord and do a profound spiritual research with the clear motive of helping pastors and church leaders grow better, bigger, balanced and more durable churches.

They have worked before, they are working now and will always work for those who know and apply them. As I flesh out these laws in the next pages, one after the other, go over them studiously and drink deeply from the wisdom spring so that you will be mightily challenged and transformed. They may not follow a sequential order, yet each of them possessed packed dynamites that can ignite and explode your work to another higher realm of growth not seen before.

CHAPTER 2

PRIMARY PURPOSE

Allow me to devote this second chapter to the task of emphasizing and re-emphasizing the primary purpose of the church in the world. The time we are living in demands that we remind ourselves of some basic and foundational truth about the church.

These days, many things are going on in the name of church. So many 'churches' have never discovered the main reason for the existence of the church in the World. They have not clearly understood the mind of Christ when He said "*I will build my church...*" (Matt. 16:18).

Today, there is a clear line of demarcation between "His church" and "our churches" due to various practises that run contrary to His primary purpose of establishing the church in the world. Most of what is being practised today in churches only points to the fact that it is our church, not the church He promised to build. We have allowed too many interests to seduce and draw us away from the primary purpose of His church.

To become His church demands for the re-discovery and serious commitment to His primary purpose of establishing His church in the World. We don't have to look too far today to discover that so many so-called "churches" have lost touch with Christ, simply because their reason for existence is highly suspect and contrary to the primary purpose of His church.

It is on record that churches are founded and run due to many reasons, such as money, prestige, programmes, pride, social meeting place, ceremonial parade, doctrinal correctness and personal ego satisfaction.

Each of these wrong reasons are the foundational reasons of why many churches were planted and still being planted across the African Continent. Small wonder then that the true and abiding presence of Christ is sadly missing in those churches and they are caricatures of the true church of Jesus Christ in the World.

The True Primary Purpose:

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20; *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world”*.

This has been regarded as the ‘Great Commission’ of the church, but sadly, many of us have turned it to the ‘Great Omission’. In the light of this last great command of our Lord to His disciples, it can be deduced then that the primary purpose of the church is to make it hard for sinners to perish.

The foundational reason, the basic purpose and primary priority of the church of Jesus Christ is that of doing church in such a way that it will be hard for sinners to go to hell. It needs to be stated clearly again that the primary purpose of the church in the world is to make sure that sinners do not perish.

The church is to be an agent of change, transformation, salvation and reconciliation. The true church of Jesus Christ must not exist as a mere figure, but as a mighty force, bringing change and turnaround to people, families, communities and nations.

The church must create an environment that would be conducive for sinners to be saved. The Church in Acts of Apostles was a good example of this. Yes, they worshipped the Lord, fellowshiped together, edified one another, prayed and studied the Scriptures, but they never forget their primary purpose. All they did was to enable them to create atmosphere that would make the sinners to find Christ. They did Church in such a way that sinners were coming to Christ on daily basis (Acts 2:41-46).

The Church of Christ is not to be in-reach but outreach focused. While we edify the saints, we must also evangelize the sinners. We must not be so immersed in fellowship with one another that we forget to reach out and win the sinners.

One reason why the Lord has delayed His coming is the fact that He doesn't want sinners to perish. He desires that everyone should be saved (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9). The church is His primary agent for this task. The vision of a dying world must burn brightly before the church always. We must never lose sight of this vision, neither must it become dim if we are to receive the smile of approval from our Lord.

Deviation From The Primary Purpose:

The world is advancing so much that they are making it hard for people to suffer. The technology of the world is such today that they make it hard for people to remain uninformed. The Coca-Cola Company makes it hard for you to think of other brand of soft drinks. These are good examples that the church should take note of.

However, majority of the church today have deviated from the primary assignment given to her. We have encumbered ourselves with many other things that are of least importance to God. We have left the major and begins to major in minor things. And this has resulted in sinners perishing in large numbers. Millions of sinners are perishing right before our churches today because we have forgotten our primary purpose.

The church of today has allowed dancing, singing, doctrinal bigotry, prosperity, contribution, worldly-mindedness and maintenance orientation to hinder her from vigorously pursuing the primary purpose of the church of Christ.

Churches that started so well but have deviated from this basic purpose are being forsaken by God today because they have failed to repent after

repeated warnings from the Lord. The Lord wants His church to be a lighthouse that will lead the wayward world back to Him. Once we forget the reason of our existence, we stand the danger of being left by the Lord.

Creative Impact:

To make it hard for sinners to perish means that the church must make impact on every strata of the society. To make impact means to create effect, make an indelible mark and be a source of change, turnaround and transformation. The church must therefore do ministry in such a way that people must be affected positively.

The following levels of impact must be constantly achieved by the church that wants to fulfil her primary purpose:

(a) Individual Impact

People in the immediate environment of the church must be continuously affected in positive and permanent ways. Their lives must never remain the same after coming in contact with the church. It must be easy for people to come and be identified with the church.

The church must have favour with the people and be run in such a way that sinners cannot but get saved through the effort of the church. The church must continue to affect lives in positive ways. Unfortunately, there are churches where a single soul didn't get saved in a year despite all the sermons and services.

(b.) Family Impact

Not only must individuals be affected, the whole families must be deeply touched by the ongoing ministry of the church. Families are the basic unit

of the society. There, character and morals are formed and will be carried to later lives.

The church therefore must do ministry in such a way that families will be positively affected with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The light of Christ must shine into every family in the immediate ministry area of the church. Quite sadly, many pastors preach 40 Sundays out of the 52 in a year without one whole family getting saved. What a waste!

(c) Community Impact

Every church must be a Community church. Every church must make sure that sinners don't perish in her Jerusalem. Every church is primarily responsible to God for the people in her immediate Community.

Before God will ask you of people in your Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the World, He will first ask you of people in your immediate Community. Every church must make every effort to make it hard for people to perish in their immediate Community. No church is allowed to be tucked into a corner in her Community. The ministry of the church must affect and impact positively the people in the Community.

However, it is sad to report that too many churches are not making any appreciable impact in their communities. People in the community do not know that the church is existing in their midst. They are therefore perishing with reckless abandon. Such churches have lost the reason for their existence. They must rediscover it quickly, else, the Lord will replace them very quickly.

The Lord has strategically placed each church in a community so as to impact and influence the people positively for His kingdom. There must be kingdom growth by the church in the Community.

(d) City Impact

Every city can and should be impacted tremendously by the churches in the city. Positive transformation in any city will only come through the agency of the church.

As the city of Ephesus was impacted by the church planted by Apostle Paul in Acts 19: 11-23, so also must churches affect and impact cities today such that it will be hard for sinners to perish in our cities. It will take every church impacting their various communities powerfully for the city to be seriously affected.

These levels of impact are possible when the church imbibe and put into daily practise the laws of dynamic church growth. All these laws lead to one thing: getting people saved and developing them into disciples that will in turn be able to disciple others for Christ.

To truly make it hard for people to perish, we must see the church in the following ways:

(1) The Gate of Heaven:

The primary responsibility of the church is to serve and operate as the gate of heaven on earth. She must direct people to God. The church must become a place where people truly get saved and disciplined for heaven.

The church must be run in such a way that she must continually point wayward people back to God. Nothing else must replace this primary priority of the church. Salvation messages and altar calls for people to get saved must be the daily practise of the church that is truly the gate of heaven.

When ceremonies, programmes, dancing and dogmatic beliefs have replaced this focus, then the church has truly lost the reason for her

existence.

(2) The Presence of God:

The church must truly function as the presence of God in the world. As the presence of God in the world, the church must provide succor and solution to people's problems, People must have their needs met by the church. The church must function as the voice of God to a suffering and dying world. The church must minister the whole gospel to the whole man.

As the presence of God, she must bring the presents that are obtained only at the presence of God to the people. The physical, material, spiritual and emotional needs of the people must be met by the mighty presence of God in the church. Failure in this regard is to defeat the purpose of the church in the world.

(3) The Only Plan of God:

To reach and win the world for Christ, the church is the only plan of God. God has no other plan to win the World to Himself except through the church.

The church must therefore wake up to this reality of wooing and winning the World for Christ.

Yes, the Church is not the kingdom, but God has planned to extend the frontiers of His kingdom into every heart through the agency of the Church. The World will only be won to Christ when the church in every locality, city, nation and regions of the World wake up to this reality.

Angels are not qualified for this assignment. It is the duty and responsibility of the church of Jesus Christ. This is the supreme task of the church - reaching out to win the world for Christ. Every true church of

Christ must truly fight to maintain and keep this as her number one focus. Many things will compete for the attention of the church, but this one assignment must be kept at the front burner.

(4) The Only Power That Can Stop Satan:

It is crystal clear that no other power can stop Satan except the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus said this in Matthew 16:18. *“I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

From this foundational declaration about the church, it is clear that the gates of hell will fight, oppose and militate against the very existence of the church every step of the way, but they will not prevail.

However, the church must engage in warfare if the gates of hell will not truly prevail against her. It is sad to report that the church is fast asleep in many localities while the gates of hell are busy working deceiving, dominating and destroying people.

The church must wake up and exercise her authority over the devil and his cohorts so as to free people from the bondage of sin, sickness, and diseases. The church must not only engage in defensive warfare, she must also be offensive against the enemy.

The weapons of warfare given to the church in Ephesians 6:10-18 are offensive in nature. The church must put on these armours and move offensively in warfare against the enemy that has held so many souls in

bondage. The power and authority to set the captives free has been given to the church only. She must therefore use them effectively to liberate people from darkness to light and from bondage to freedom in Christ.

All these will continually be possible when the church obeys the laws of dynamic growth.

Laws as Foundation

True dynamic growth in the church demands that it must be built on good and solid foundation. A solid and durable foundation is always very pivotal to any endeavour. If the foundation is faulty, the structure will not last. If the foundation is destroyed, there can be no lasting work. (Psalm 11:3).

Too many churches today, especially new apostolic churches, are built on the wrong foundation. This is one reason why they are collapsing as quickly as they come up. A more durable and lasting work will be done when these laws are used as the foundation of our churches.

These laws serve as true and profound foundation to any church that desires to be vibrant, viable, durable and long-lasting. They are not based on human whims and caprices, but on the abiding principles of God's word and His workings in the church throughout the ages. There can be adjustments here and there, but the heart of each law remains constant in many circumstances. If you build on them, you can be rest assured that you are building on a foundation that will last and sustain your work for the Lord.

Now, let us go and examine them one by one. However, don't only go through them, allow them to also go through you.

PART II

Laws of Dynamic Church Growth

These laws are not man made. They are principles of God for growing the church of Jesus Christ. Tactics, methods, systems and strategies do change, but principles are constant, because they are based on the eternal truth of God's word.

CHAPTER 3

LAW OF VISION AND CALLING

In the last couple of years, so much has been written about the place of vision in our lives and in the church. But it is sad to say that this truth has not really sink into the consciousness of church leaders.

Research has confirmed that only about 4% of ministers and pastors are living and doing ministry based on one vision or another. The rest 96% are doing ministry in the church without any concrete vision, small wonder that large percentage of churches are floundering and folding up.

No church can truly grow and flourish without obeying the law of vision and call. This law is foundational and basic to every other thing the church wants to do or become. Planting, founding and starting a church must come as a result of God's clear vision. This vision must be received by the leader. True church growth results from the vision and call of God upon the life of the leader. To do otherwise is to set the foundation of failure for the church.

The pastor must differentiate between vision and ambition. Vision is from God, while ambition is from man. Ambition leads to problems while vision elevates. Too many churches today started based on the ambition of the pastor. Ambition for money, position, title, pride and desire to rule people are some of the motives that led to many of the churches being founded today, the more reason their growth are not sustainable.

Furthermore, churches that are started by Committees will always flounder. Joint-foundership of a church is not backed by the Scriptures or church history. It has always led to problems and stagnation. I am aware of churches who are in the throes of death today as a result of joint-foundership and election of leaders. The beginning will be good and interesting, but they will soon hit a rough path with multifarious problems that will eventually stagnate and ultimately, sink the church.

True church planting that will result in lasting and durable churches must be based on the law of vision and call. God must give the vision, and call the leader into the work. The leader that hopes to plant and lead the church to growth must receive his vision clearly from the Lord. He must be convinced of his call to pastor and lead the church.

Of course, some leaders are called to run para-church ministries, yet they are pastoring churches. Their disobedience will affect their churches in grave and negative ways. Everyone that God calls, He gives a clear vision and mandate. He called Paul and showed Him the vision of what He wants him to do for Him. (Acts 26:18). Paul worked according to the vision and he succeeded. Working outside God's vision and call is the beginning of suffering and stagnation in the ministry.

Church growth demands that there must be strict adherence to God's clear vision and call. No two church are the same. They may have the same name, but God have different call for each of them. God's vision for your church is like the finger-print, there is no other one exactly like it.

God's vision for a church comes in various forms; either through the voice of the Spirit, dreams, revelation, prophetic word or angelic visitation. Whichever form God decides to use, the leader must discern God's vision so clearly, understand it and be able to communicate it to others intelligently. Such vision from God is His covenant with the church. It is the prophecy of God's working and future of the church.

God's covenant working in the church is based on the vision He has given and shown to the leadership. We need to realize that this work is His work. He only works according to His revealed vision. It is the covenant that binds Him to such church and work. He will never be committed to what He has not commanded. Neither will He pay for what He has not ordered for.

Defining Vision:

Vision has been described as seeing the invisible and making it visible; a window to a better future and revelation of God's mind for individuals, group of people and corporate entities. True vision is always concerned with a better future. God's vision will always lead us from the present to a bigger, better and preferable future.

Whenever God intends to bless, revive, transform and turnaround a group of people, communities, cities or nations, He first shows the vision to a willing and receptive heart. If properly discerned and received, the vision becomes God's covenant to work and bless such people.

True vision from God will do the following in your life:-

1. It Will Stop You

You can't say you have received vision from God and still follow your own way. Like God's vision arrested Paul on the road to Damascus and stopped him from his own way, so it is with everyone that receives His vision. You will have to stop in your way and begin to follow the way of His vision in your life. God's vision will always lead to changing the course of direction of your life. It will lead you to the right way He wants you to follow which will enable you to make maximum impact with your life.

2. It Will Send You

God's vision will be your propeller. It will send you to where you never thought you can go to in life. It will be the driving force of your life. It will enable you to do things in ways you never imagined before. True vision from God will take you to the high and low places of life. Proverbs 18:16. says, "*A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men*". True vision from God will send you to men, women and places you only dreamt of. When truly pursued, it will send you all over the world or send the whole world to you.

3. It Will Strengthen You

A compelling vision from God will really strengthen you to live and run with the vision. It will energize and ginger you to rise up and do all that needs to be done. A man with an arresting vision will rise up to pray, fast, work, study and grow. Nobody will force him to work, it is the vision that will strengthen him. You cannot be lazy after you have received a vision

from God. The vision will quicken you to work and will provide the strength and motivation to carry on in the face of seeming impossibilities.

4. It Will Stretch You

God's vision for your life and ministry will always stretch you beyond your natural capabilities. In actual fact, God will not give you a vision you can fulfil all by yourself. If you can fulfil the vision all by yourself without His mighty help, then it is not from Him. God's true vision will always be far beyond your capability to fulfil. You will therefore need to seriously depend on Him to bring it to reality. God's vision will stretch your faith. It will stretch your walk with the Lord and help your personal development. Fulfillment of God's vision will always stretch you beyond yourself.

5. It Will Satisfy You

God's true vision for your life, if properly discerned and obeyed, will ultimately satisfy you. Once you understand and begin to follow His vision, you will have peace of mind and find satisfaction that is beyond human comprehension. It goes to say then that if you are not happy and satisfied with what you are doing it may be a pointer to the fact that you are out of God's vision. Ultimate satisfaction in life is tied to commitment to God's true vision for your life and ministry. There is no satisfaction anywhere else.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that God's vision doesn't come to a Committee or Board, but to individuals. In churches where the Committee, Board or Trustees decide on which vision to pursue, growth will never happen there. God's vision for the church is usually given to the leader, who in turn passes it to others. He runs with the vision because he sees it

clearly, deeply and profoundly. Others must support the vision and see it with him so as to bring it to fulfillment and reality in the church.

A true leader sees clearly, sees more, sees before others and sees deeper and higher than others. He not only sees in these dimensions, he is also able to communicate and transfer the vision to others in concise and cogent ways until the people will buy into the vision and join him to fulfil it.

The law of vision for dynamic church growth is hinged on the fact that every local church must be run according to God's definite vision for her. Every church must discern the vision of who she is, who God wants her to reach and what emphasis she must stress continually.

Not every church can be all things to people and single church can satisfy every need. Therefore, every church must discern her audience, her message and her focus in life. Every church must have a definite focus in the World and in life. Without a focus, you will never be a focus.

Clear vision will show who the church is sent to reach and what to emphasize. It is true that we must preach the whole gospel to the whole man, but there must be a starting point by the church. People must know your church for your vision and emphasis. It is then they will focus on the church in large numbers.

Dynamic growth in the church answers to obedience to God's vision. Without commitment to God's vision for the church, growth will always be a mirage. Every true leader that desires dynamic growth in the church

must therefore seek God in times of intensive prayers, fasting and waiting upon Him for a clear vision. You must also listen to the voice of the Spirit and every other way God may choose to lead and direct you. There is no time spent waiting upon God that is wasted. Getting His true vision will compensate for any time spent in seeking His face.

Not only must you take time to get His vision, you must also be committed to that vision. God will not reveal his vision to you if He sees that you will not follow it passionately and fulfil it. He will cross -check your motives in asking for His vision. If your motives are right. He reveals them to you and if not, He waits until you can have the right motive in asking.

Furthermore, getting His vision is not enough, you must be able to cast the vision to others in various ways until they can comprehend it and give the necessary commitment and support for the fulfillment, Continuous pursuance of the vision by the leader and people are also of paramount importance.

Clear and true vision from God is the foundational law of dynamic church growth. You cannot break this law and still hopes to see true all round growth in the church.

CHAPTER 4

LAW OF PROCESS

Growth in the church is not a programme, but a process. This is the second law of dynamic church growth that must be properly understood and obeyed. Many sincere church leaders have unfortunately see church growth as a programme and after attending some seminars, read some books on the subject and even take a course on it, then practise it for a while in their churches, have gone to cancel it because they didn't see the rapid growth they had expected.

Such leaders have failed to properly understand the undergirding principles of church growth. It is not a programme that you do for a time and cancel because of apparent lack of fruit. Church growth is rather a process, and as a process, it needs time and effort on our part.

Growth is natural and growth is also supernatural. Both natural and supernatural growth follow a process that must be critically analyzed and understood. Usually, growth in the church starts from addition and move gradually to increase, multiplication and extension. That was the process in the Books of Acts of Apostles (Acts 2:41, 5:14; 6:1).

God, who is the author of growth in human lives and in His church always initiate it as a process. The process of growth starts with the leader. Growth within will lead to growth without. As the leader grows, so also God will be increasing the level of the growth of the church.

Though many church leaders today would rather vote for rapid growth, yet solid growth is always better. Overnight growth in the church doesn't last. Many quick and mushroom growth will peter away quickly too, because the foundation is fickle and faulty.

Solid and durable, growth in the church is like the palm tree. It takes time. It is not a day, but daily growth. The palm tree is very durable, fruitful, storm-resistant and extremely long-lived because it follows the process of growth.

The oak tree is also another example of durable and sustainable growth. The corn can grow rapidly within few weeks and be harvested, but not the oak tree. It takes years to grow because it will live many, many years after the corn must have died and be totally forgotten.

It is on record that churches that grow dynamically also follow the law of process. They usually start small and nurture their growth gradually. Yes, God can bless and bring supernatural and explosive growth to a church within a year. Such explosive growth can lead to several thousands of people coming to a church within a year.

But nine out of ten times, He will not do it because such growth are not usually sustained. Many churches that once experienced such rapid and explosive growth are mere shadow of their former self today because the process of maintaining and keeping such growth on course was not properly understood.

Growth momentum in a church is a gradual thing and it answers to the right process and atmosphere. A right process will create a conducive atmosphere that will allow growth to take place.

Once a growth momentum starts in a church due to the proper atmosphere, it must be carefully maintained and nurtured so that it can increase. If it is not properly and jealously guided, once it nose-dived, it is always difficult to pick it up again. Churches and church leaders that fail to understand this momentum and how to maintain it in the church will always be frustrated.

Most times, the growth of a church is likened to eating the elephant. It is practically impossible to eat it at once - you have to eat it bit by bit. Durable growth requires that you take one step at a time. You will have to take the right step one after the other before lasting growth can really happen in the church. You will have to build the church up on the right foundation and keep on doing the right thing to see growth.

Long walls are not built at once, it takes one block upon another at a time. Coming now to the process that leads to dynamic and sustainable growth in the church, many times it is like the Chinese bamboo. You plant the seed and water it for five solid years before it will sprout. But it will then grow to 90 feet tall in two weeks and you can cut it down for whatever you want to use it for. Church growth follows the same process. The process of growth in the church involves good seed watering, tending, nurturing, pruning, training and a proper structure.

Most importantly, you must have a good seed which is the word of God. As the people come to hear the word being faithfully declared and they are being won to the Lord, you must water them properly, feed them regularly with balanced diet, prune them of excesses, train them up for God's use and evolve the right structure that can absorb continuous growth. It is following this process of growth that will lead to dynamic growth.

There must be proper structure of prayer, intercession, care, welfare, visitation, counselling, fellowships, sharing, training and discovering of spiritual gifts for usage. Without such structure in place, the church will lack the capacity to handle continuous growth and will thereby kill off the growth momentum of the church.

The process of finding the lost, folding them into the church, feeding them with the balanced diet of the word, feeling them for gifts and fielding them back to their world to continue finding must be strictly adhered to. Everything a church does must revolve around these revolving process in the church. Each of them must be developed to maximum effectiveness for proper growth process to be in place.

It has been discovered that a church must grow 10% in a year to remain healthy and at the same time not lose any of her present members. That can only be achieved if the proper process is seriously followed.

Too many churches have this unwholesome attitude of doing everything to find the lost, but abysmally doing nothing to fold them into the mainstream of the church life. They only glory in the number of people who answer the altar call in their churches, yet these people are not found in the church any longer. Such attitudes run counter to the spirit of church

growth and the great commission of our Lord. These are clear waste of precious resources.

Churches must purposely pursue the assimilation of a given number of people in a given year. The percentage of those getting saved and incorporated into the life of the church must increase every year. The church must strike a balance between winning the lost and edifying the saints.

While we incorporate those who are being won and they pass through the process of becoming true and genuine disciples of our Lord, the church must also be out to win and woo more people to the side of the Lord. By so doing, the church will be able to maintain her growth momentum. Doing everything with the consciousness of growth will go a long way to keep the growth momentum on course.

Furthermore, the ability to recognize the growth curves of the church will also help the growth process. The leadership must be able to sense and anticipate when the growth momentum of the church is about to change to a higher and faster gear. It may come in form of an influential saved person, a sudden spirit of devotion, dedication or waves of intercessory spirit and repentance in the church. Such divine infusion of opportunity must be intuitively seized by the leader and more and spectacular growth will be the outcome.

God usually ends such growth curves when He sees that the church is not ready to receive more of His blessings of growth. Unfortunately, many church leaders prove that they don't have the capacity to receive more rapid growth from God by their failure to recognize the growth opportunities that God bring to their church and ministry.

The law of process is one law many church leaders are breaking with reckless abandon. They don't want to follow any growth process; it is too slow for them. They want to start a church in a year and be counting thousands of members. They love to play the numbers game to their friends and partners. They even boast in their 'Schools of Ministry' that they have not followed any law of church growth and yet thousands had flocked to their church!

Well, while this may be good and true, however, such growth cannot become solid and sustainable without recourse to the law of process. What you will find is that after some few years, multifarious problems will crop up that will eventually scatter and sink the church.

In most cases, such church will experience massive breakaway and numerous problem that will return her back to the beginning and to the basics of Christian faith. If you jump up, you will come down, but if you grow up you will stay up.

If you want to do a lasting work, you cannot but obey the law of process. God will only give you supernatural growth after you have handled the time of additional growth very well. The growth momentum that starts with addition will eventually culminate in multiplication, if properly nurtured and carefully handled.

CHAPTER 5

LAW OF PERSONAL GROWTH

Personal growth is the primary growth. Personal growth is the mother of every other growth in the church. It is a fundamental law of dynamic church growth.

The pastor that is willing to see growth in the church must first of all pay the price of personal growth. The price must be unflinchingly paid by the pastor if he hopes to lead the church to dynamic growth.

The price of personal growth cannot be paid in a lump sum or once and forever. Rather, it must be paid instalmentally and systematically. In short, it is a life-long process. The day your personal growth stops, that day your ability to lead stops with it.

In my many years of teaching, analysing and helping growth in churches through practical consultancy, I have not come across a church that truly outgrows the leader. The few ones that tried always fall back to the level of the pastor.

In a true sense, growth does not start outside of you, but begins inside of you as a pastor. Your church cannot grow without if you are not growing within. You must implode before you can explode. If you don't set yourself on fire, nobody will come and see you burn for the Lord.

The pastor is not the church, but his personal growth will largely affect the growth of the church more than anybody else. You can't break this law for any reason and still expect durable and dynamic growth in your church.

The first maxim of church growth says that the pastor must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price. The first price that the pastor will have to pay and continue to pay is that of personal growth. His personal growth is very crucial and vital to the growth and continuous well-being of the church. This is so because the speed of the leader is the speed of the people. If you want to grow the organization, you will first have to grow the leader.

Pastors who desire church growth must take their personal growth very seriously. You cannot demand from others what you don't demand from yourself. It is your personal growth that will make the people to buy into you and thereby causing growth momentum to start and accelerate in your church.

Personal growth means self-improvement, because the largest room in the whole world is the room for improvement. It involves having a large heart and a broad shoulder to carry weight and load; a matured and broad mind that can handle issues and situations in balanced and admirable ways.

Personal growth could also come in the area of character building and attitudinal development. It means working over your perceived weaknesses that tend to undermine your ability to lead and help people.

Personal growth can thus be described as; moving from grave to grass, from grass to grace, from grace to glory and from glory to glory until you enter into glory. It is a process that translates to God dealing with you on a continuous basis and removing every obstacle, sin, evil, shallowness and barriers that will hinder His greater working and flow through you and in you.

Continuous personal development is thus the core and heart of true church growth. Personal growth underscores the fact that you can always grow bigger, better, stronger, wiser, higher and deeper in your life, leadership and ministry.

Even though some people are raising eyebrows to the relevance of the pastor in the church; a number of write-ups have tried to downgrade the 'pole' position of the pastor in the church. Some churches have also tried to grow without having a pastor to lead them - they are being led by Committee of three or five Deacons or Elders.

Others also are of the opinion that church growth teachings are giving undue and unnecessary advantages to pastors, since, according to them, all of us can lead the church.

Whatever are the merits and demerits of these positions, the fact still remains that Jesus recognizes the pastor as the leader in the church. He

repeatedly dealt with and wrote to the pastor - the angel of the church - in His letters to the church in the Book of Revelation. (Rev. 2 & 3).

His letter was to the angel of each church, not angels, but singular angel. By that, He was clearly demonstrating His reference for the top leader; the pastor, as being responsible for the condition of the church. Jesus doesn't believe in building His church from ground up, but from up down. He deals with the leader and the leader relates to the people. He will never bypass the leader to deal directly with the people in terms of vision and direction.

It was said of the church in the wilderness that God revealed His ways to Moses but shows His acts to the children of Israel. God always honours the leader.

Therefore, the pastor is very important to God in the church. His life and personal growth will always affect the church in positive or negative way. The personal growth of the pastor and the church are like Siamese twins - you cannot separate one from the other without injuring or killing one.

The church is growing because the pastor is growing. The church is dynamic because the pastor is dynamic. The church is forceful because the pastor is forceful. The church is prayerful and passionate because the pastor is prayerful and passionate for God.

The church equally is weak, powerless, lifeless and stagnant because the pastor is weak, powerless, lifeless in his preaching and stagnant in his life. The life of the pastor permeates, percolates, penetrates and pervades the

life and blood of a church. You cannot really divorce the life of a pastor from that of his church.

To really see change, growth and turnaround in the fortune and health of a church, it must start with the point man - the pastor. What he doesn't encourage and project will not hold water in the church.

Personal growth in the life of the pastor therefore must cover five major areas, namely: spiritual maturity, emotional maturity, mental maturity, social maturity and communication maturity. Now let me briefly explain them:

(1) Spiritual Maturity

The spiritual stature and foundation of the pastor will make or mar the church. If he is spiritually down and has lost his relationship with God and have gone into secret sin(s), it will begin to show in the dry and oppressive atmosphere in the church. This will lead to stagnation and downward spiral. He must keep his relationship with God by all means. He must maintain a close walk with the Lord. His prayer life must be vibrant and invigorating. Pastors that are too busy to pray and to seek the face of the Lord are mortgaging the spiritual vitality of their churches.

Research have revealed a close connection between the devotional life of pastors and the growth of their churches. Pastors who keep a regular and consistent and quality devotional time with the Lord usually see growth in their churches than those who are inconsistent and too busy to seek His face.

Pastors must work at their spiritual growth. They must be filled with the Spirit always and be free from every vestige of self, sin, curse and Satan. They must become more tender, loving, forgiving, forbearing and balanced in their view and outlook.

Every carnality and shallowness must gradually fade away in their lives. They must display spiritual depth and profound wisdom that is only found in those who walk closely and humbly with the Lord. They must show evidence of true growth in grace, anointing, wisdom and understanding.

In short, there must be no room for the devil to launch his smear campaign against them. They must continually weed every seed of evil from their hearts and lives. They must allow the keeper of their souls to continually do a deeper work of cleansing, purging and purification of their hearts and lives. They must allow Him to make them holy in body, soul and spirit as much as saved sinners can be.

Moreover, they must live so well that they become ‘devils’ to the devil’. Ephesians 6:10 says “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might*”. Being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might is not a day work, it is a daily thing and a long and continuous process. If you are strong now, then you must pursue the power of His might which comes only to the daily seekers.

(2) Emotional Maturity

Every pastor that really wants to lead his church to growth cannot joke with his emotional maturity. It is one area of his personal growth that must

be taken seriously.

He must grow to the level whereby he is emotionally stable, consistent and dependable. He must be able to hold his temper, desires for food, sex and pleasure in check and control. He must not be a man or woman given to fits of temper, annoyance, anger and abusive language.

Self-mastery is highly needed and desirable in dealing with people, issues and problems. He must handle and conquer himself first before he hopes to control and lead others.

It is as sure as a new day that pastors will be subjected to temptations, trials and deceitful nature of human heart. Every gospel minister shall surely be seriously tempted by women, men, lust of the flesh and pride of life. How to survive such inevitable snares of the flesh and enemy will depend largely on your emotional maturity and the grace of God.

Apostle Paul knew these very well when he said in I Corinthians 9:27 *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away”*.

Every true pastor must practise this truth. Self-discipline is the law of life and self-indulgence is the law of death. You must continue to grow and work on your emotional maturity to the level whereby you are dead to carnality, fleshly lusts and every form of ungodliness in your life.

You will have to deal with your heart, desires and longings very firmly. You must be in control of yourself in every situation under whatever circumstance, provocation and temptation.

You must be so emotionally matured that your strong character can withstand barrages of criticism without lashing back and becoming hysterical.

Being a whiner, always complaining, critical, touchy, abusive, angry bitter, moody and temperamental are always signs of emotional immaturity. Pastors with such unwholesome attitudes will lose wonderful people in the church. Pastors who refuse to grow out of these things and are always in foul mood will do more damage than good to their churches.

Pastors who vent their anger on the people almost always by being cheeky and abusive will not see true growth in the church. People will tactically withdraw from such pastors and will never go to them for counsel, because they don't know which mood they will find him.

Pastors who use the pulpit as an avenue to abuse, lambast and castigate the people, no matter the provocation are a disgrace to the ministry! When you are not emotionally mature, you will find yourself in these things.

I am aware of pastors who are doing these things on regular basis and yet they complain that their churches are not growing! If you can't handle yourself, then you can't handle others.

Church growth will result in various people coming to the church. You must be emotionally secured in order to handle them in godly and

glorifying ways. Immature pastors have taken emotional advantage of people in the church through sexual harassment and covetousness.

Every true servant of the Lord must grow out of these things by consistently working on his character. Daily character improvement is absolutely necessary for strong emotional stability. Your character is the bedrock of your ministry. Without character you will fall and cringe in the face of temptation and opposition.

Being a man of strong, durable, resilient and consistent character is the goal of emotional maturity. Reputation is what people know about you, character is what God knows about you. True godly character is shown by what you can and will do if you know nobody will find out.

It is good to trust the Lord, but it is better for God to trust you. It is only a godly and growing character that would make God to trust you and commit more of His grace, anointing and blessings into your hand.

Developing a strong godly character doesn't happen in a day. It takes a long process. You will have to work at it every day. You will have to improve on your attitudes, manners, actions and reactions.

Through studying, discipline, self-control, prayer and help of the Holy Spirit, you can daily experience emotional growth. If you work at it, you will achieve it. Without it, you will always be a danger to the people and your ministry is also in danger of collapsing at any time.

3. Mental Maturity

One more area of the personal growth of the pastor is mental maturity.

It was written of Jesus in Luke 2:52 “*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*” He grew mentally as much as He grew spiritually.

Every pastor must work at increasing in knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Lack of relevant and right information will lead to stagnation in the church.

Every pastor must be a learner and must possess a learning spirit. Pastors that are too proud to learn and keep learning will always be a problem to their churches.

The church is in the age of information. Education, information and technology are increasing at an alarming rate. People of today are getting informed more than ever before. Knowledge is increasing among the youths that constitute the higher percentage of population the world over.

The pastor that hopes to be relevant today must work at his mental capacity. He must update his knowledge of the word of God always and be current with issues so as to minister to people in relevant ways. The more you know the better you will become.

Every true pastor must be a man of one book. He must study, read, digest and exegesis the Scripture. He must provide depth of the knowledge of the Scriptures to his people. Much more importantly, he must also read relevant books that will be of great assistance to the effectiveness of his ministry.

Seminars, conferences, workshops and training must always be part of his schedule. He must always show himself a learner. An ignorant pastor will always destroy his people (Hos. 4:6) Ignorance is a disease that has ruined many pastors and churches. It is one trick of the devil to destroy churches.

The best friend of every leader is information. Every leader that wants to lead the church to lasting growth cannot do without the right information. Your effectiveness will largely be determined by the information at your disposal. In this gospel ministry, you cannot shine more than the light you have. You can't be a lizard within and hope to be a lion outside. Neither can you be a pussy cat within and hopes to be a crocodile outside. You will always be without what you are within.

If you are lean within, you will never be fat without. Your level of mental maturity will largely determine the impact of your ministry. Your personal growth is deeply connected to your mental maturity. Continuous mental growth will help your personal growth in no small measure.

4. Social Maturity

Part of the personal growth of pastors is their ability to relate well with people. Pastors of growing churches are continually working on their relational skills. Pastors with bad or offensive relational skills will always drive people away from the church.

Growth in the ministry calls for good and effective relational skills from the pastor. Growing churches attract various editions of people and proper relational ability is needed to assimilate and turn them into true disciples of the Lord. If the leaders fail to relate in a loving, caring and wise way, they will always loose the people.

Churches that hold on to rules and regulations without relationship will have resentment and rebellion in large measure. Pastors that have rules and regulations plus relationships will attract the respect of people and have results for God.

Church leaders must continually hone and develop their relational skills and this calls for serious personal development. The ability to relate well with people doesn't come in a day. It is something you must keep working at and improving every time.

Social maturity demands that you must show respect to others, listen to their views, celebrate their success without any tinge of envy on your part and be able to laugh and smile with them sincerely.

Good relationship is a give and take lifestyle. You must be ready to give as much as you are willing to take. You must value and respect others, no matter how low they are. You must build trust by being transparent, open, loving, credible and truthful. Being narrow minded and myopic destroy relationship. Selfishness, self-glory and self seeking are the very enemies of good relationship.

Personal growth demands that you must grow out of these things and improve your relational skills. Your ability to relate well will help your ministry in no small measure. The law of personal growth demands for good relational skills on your part. Since it is a skill, you can learn and acquire it. You can always become better in the way you relate with people and maintain relationship, it is then your ministry will soar to greater heights.

5. Communication Maturity

This is the fifth area the pastor must grow in his personal life. He must grow in his ability to communicate well with people. He must be able to pass his message across without let or hindrance. He must be able to communicate in such a way that people will understand and grasp what he is saying.

Too many pastors know what to say, but how to say it is the problem. They use soul language and unclear intonations that confuse the people more, they are very low in their ability to communicate with the people.

Due to their lack of communication ability, the people will have hard time understanding and following them. Unfortunately, some pastors tag such people as rebellious and disobedient. But the truth is that the people cannot decode the messages, vision and goal of the pastor due to defective communication ability. Such scenario are common place in churches.

In the light of the above, pastors must therefore work on their ability to communicate effectively. Effective communication calls for clear, plain and unambiguous language. It requires clarity of thought and presentation. It is the ability to say the same thing in different forms, ways and settings. It is the power of persuasion through delicate balance of humor and seriousness.

Attaining such level of communication maturity calls for work and serious improvement by the leader. It is an area he must keep on working so that he can always carry the people along. Without proper and effective communication, nobody will believe and embrace the vision of the pastor. Nobody will follow you if they don't know where you are going.

These five areas are where the personal growth of the pastor is greatly needed. He must keep working at them so as not to delay or debar the growth of his church. The pastor is not the church, but his personal growth will largely affect the growth of the church. Continuous growth in the church therefore, is hinged on the continuous personal growth of the pastor.

CHAPTER 6

LAW OF CHOICE

Though many may feel offended by this law, yet it holds true in every growing church. The offense is the seeming belief that the law of choice places the onus of growth on the pastor and church leadership. Many may feel offended because they think church growth teaching is trying to be secular and human in outlook and displacing the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in the growth of the church.

The truth is that Church growth teaching recognizes the number one place of the Holy Spirit in the growth of the church. It is one of the laws that will be treated later.

However, without proper and adequate preparation on our part, growth cannot come. If we don't desire growth, plan and work for growth. God will not send the blessings that will result in the growth of the church.

The law of choice demands that we must desire growth and make a choice for growth in the church. Without making a choice for growth, the church will give room to chance and "chance will chance the church not to grow".

Making a choice for growth requires that the church must be growth conscious and set goals for growth. Growth consciousness is one sure mark of the law of choice in the church.

Every church must choose between growth and stagnation. Growth will not come without a deliberate choice on the part of the church, and making a choice for growth demands that growth must become the filter that everything must pass through in the church.

Too many churches are stagnant, sick and struggling because growth - consciousness is sadly missing in their scheme of things. They organise, preach, programme and administrate without examining their relation to the growth of the church. Things are being done without growth as the goal and focus. Things are being done haphazardly and without recourse to their relevance to the proper growth of the church. In such churches, decisions are being taken that will jeopardise the growth of the church without anybody batting an eyelid.

The absence of growth-consciousness equally manifests in routine, lifeless, powerless and lukewarm worship services. It shows in the church being inward looking and maintenance oriented. The zeal for growth, vitality and vibrancy in the church is sadly missing or nonexistent. Growth cannot come to such churches until the leadership begins to make a choice for growth.

Choice for growth usually starts as a desire for change, vibrancy, dynamism, growth and vitality of the church in the hearts of church leaders. This desire is then fuelled by prayer and seeking of God's face until the leadership determines to bring about the change by taking literal decisions that will help the growth of the church.

Further choice of growth is exemplified by the desire to change the climate of the church. Many churches are finding growth very difficult as a result of oppressive climate. The climate of many churches are not conducive for growth of any kind. It is oppressive, foul, bad and hostile to growth. Many of such climates come about due to splits, ethnic quarrels, doctrinal divisions, incidence of tribalism, nepotism and scandals.

These incidents have been allowed to pollute the climate of the church until there is no more tangible and visible growth. The people are bitter, unforgiving, low in morale and discouraged. The devil also makes sure he torments them with guilt and condemnation regarding past ungodly scenario.

Breaking out of such bad climate will require a strong choice for growth. Making a choice for growth by the leadership will require repentance, restitution, restoration and willingness to rise from the ashes of failure to a better future.

Choosing growth requires that the church must take decisions that are growth-friendly. Growth, change and turn around answer to choice. What you choose is what you get. If you choose growth and become growth-friendly in your policies, growth will definitely come to the church.

Growth must become the filter that every programme, decision, project and activities must pass through. Everything must be examined in the light of their contribution to the growth of the church. The perspective of growth and bias for qualitative and quantitative must override everything else in the church.

The church must choose between peace and progress. In some instances, peace is the enemy of progress, and if a church wants peace at all cost, progress will be mortgaged. In other words, a church must fight for

progress at every step of the way. There will be opposing forces and people who want to hinder the onward movement of the church. Progress must be fought for and focused on at every step.

More than anything else, goal-setting is the sure mark of the law of choice in the church. The law of choice operates by the willingness to set goals for growth in the church. Goal setting is the number one requirement for numerical growth in the church. One way any church can display their choice for growth is the art of setting goals for the numerical, financial, physical and spiritual growth of the church.

Without goal-setting, growth will always be a mirage in the church. Goals are statement of faith. They are the stated act of believing God for mighty growth over a period of time. Every church that has made a choice for growth must pursue a worthy growth goal.

When there is nothing to pursue, there will be nothing to possess. When the goalpost is down, the game is over. No church can truly grow and continue to experience tremendous growth without some form of goal-setting.

Every church must set and pursue numerical goal. The goal must be set by the pastor after times of prayer. It must be clearly communicated to the people and repeated often until the people become the owner. A church without focus will not be a focus. There must be a goal that the church is focusing on.

For example: If the church is 80 adult members at the beginning of the year, there must be the stated goal of 200 adult members by the end of the year. This means that the church is having the goal of winning 120 souls in the next twelve months. The prayers, seminars, teachings, Sunday Schools, outreaches, worship services and activities of the church will be focused on achieving and attaining this goal.

There must be quarterly review and assessment as to the effectiveness of the church in attaining the stated goal. Every hand must be on deck to achieve the goal.

The goal must be written so clearly and boldly in front of the church so that everyone coming in will easily see it. The leader and the people must be ready to plan and pay the price that will lead to the goal attainment.

The pastor must pay the price of vision, training, sharing and setting exemplary examples for the people to see. The people also will pay the price of personal growth, giving of their time, talent and treasure, soul winning and prayer intercession for the church.

Focusing on achieving such stated goal will keep the church focused, united, devoted and going in the right direction. Lack of such goal setting will result in bickering, strive, majoring in minor things and wasting precious resources on uncoordinated projects.

Goal setting in the church must not be subject to the whims and caprices of some supposed leaders. Unattainable goals will lead to discouragement which can kill off the growth enthusiasm of the people.

The goal must be smart goals. Smart goals are specific, measurable, attainable, reachable and on a time-table.

The example of an 80 adult member church that sets the goal of winning 120 adults in the space of twelve months meets the standard of smart goal. It is specific - 200 adults. It is measurable -120 souls; it is attainable-by 80 adults; it is reachable - with the help of God and on a time -table of twelve months.

Furthermore, financial goals, physical goals and spiritual goals must be set for the church. Nothing will really happen in a church until we are willing to take the risk of setting goals. Goal-setting is a risk, but it is a worthwhile risk. Without willingness and boldness to take such calculated risk, the church is at risk. It is risky not to take a risk.

On a final note, even if you don't achieve your stated goal, one beautiful thing about goal setting is that you will not remain where you were before. You might not get to where you intend to go, neither will you remain where you were before. Every growing and vibrant church has obeyed and continue to obey the law of choice in no uncertain measure.

CHAPTER 7

LAW OF LEADERSHIP

The law of leadership is the non-negotiable law of dynamic church growth. The 21st Century church needs more of leadership gift than any other gifts. No church can rise higher than the leadership being provided. Leadership may not really be needed in other organizations and entities, but it is highly needed in the church.

In actual fact, leadership in its purest form is the only antidote to decay and death in the church. The church is the most leadership intensive organization in the whole world. In other entities, leadership can be

dictatorial, position-conscious and power display, but in the church, it is influence.

In the church, leadership is not position, power, popularity, title, talents, age, class and status. Healthy leadership is vision, influence, trust, production and result.

True leadership is not wielding authority but empowering the people. One may have all the position and yet not be a leader in the church.

A good example is king Saul and David. While Saul was the king on the throne, David was the leader who led the people out and in.

II Samuel 5:2 says; “Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou was he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the LORD said to thee, thou shall feed my people Israel, and thou shall be a captain over my people”

True leadership in the church is godly influence. Leadership in the church doesn't rest in the hand of a committee but on one person - the pastor.

The pastor must be the leader in the church. He must be allowed to lead and be supported by the people. The people must concentrate on following and the pastor must concentrate on providing good leadership.

Pastors must rise up to become leaders. Pastors can only lead few people when they remain only as pastors. But when they grow up to become leaders, then the work can move faster and swifter.

Moses was functioning as a pastor until father Jethro gave him that candid advise. By taking the advice, he started to function as a leader and his ministry moved up to higher level of effectiveness.

The major difference between a pastor and a leader is the handling of people. While a pastor wants to do everything and hates to delegate, a leader loves to use people and help people to rise up to their potentials by allowing them to take responsibilities.

Dynamic church growth demands that the leader knows the way, goes the way and be willing to show the way to others. My recent book; “Leading Your Church To Lasting Growth” has much to say on this subject.

Everything rises and falls on leadership. No church can grow beyond her leadership. As the leader, so are the people. Healthy church leadership demands that the pastor must provide vision, direction and provide servant-leadership that will catalyze the entire church to growth. The purpose of leadership is not to lord over the people, but to serve, help, encourage, motivate and mobilize the people towards a worthwhile goal.

Servanthood is the heart of true church leadership. Only the servant leader can catalyze the church into growth. You cannot manage the church to growth, you can only lead the church to sustainable growth.

Leaders that are managers or that use management methods in the church will retard rather than see progress in the church. You lead people, but you manage properties and things. When we employ management methods in leading people in the church, then trouble is around the corner.

Churches that use management methods are always immersed in crisis and chaos. People feel cheated, deprived, subdued and therefore murmuring, complaining and dissatisfaction will run counter to the much needed unity to move the church forward.

The law of leadership for dynamic church growth demands that the church leader must not be a positional but an influential leader. Positional leadership will not hold much water in the church of the 21st Century. He will not achieve much because people will only follow because of his position. Rather, he must lead by influence. He must have influence with the people through his transparent lifestyle, credible character and results of his ministry.

Influence is the ability to make people follow you without coercing or forcing them. They follow you because of who you are, the results of your ministry and what you stand for.

The influence of a leader is not static. It is either going up or coming down. You either build or bust your influence through your actions or inactions. One of my books titled “Supernatural Leadership” will really help you further here.

Leading the 21st Century church requires that the leader must be a strategic thinker, not a status quo man. He must be flexible and change-oriented. He must be courageous and not fearful. He must be able to initiate and envision a better future for the work. He must be able to discover and develop the people to become effective for God.

He must lead by integrity and credibility. He must develop better leadership skills through learning, growing and self-improvement ventures. He must rise above inferiority complex and petty jealousy of his under-leaders. He must delegate and be able to work through people.

He must not only have followers, he must develop leaders and leaders of leaders. The law of leadership for dynamic church growth recognizes that the 21st Century church leader must imbibe and lead by the following maxims:

1. Life

Your life is your leadership, you cannot lead aright if you are not living aright. No law of leadership will work if you are living wrongly. Your life will always affect your leadership for good or bad. It is not possible to divorce your life from your leadership. You are your leadership.

2. Limit

You must remove every limit from your leadership. Limits are shortcomings and weaknesses that tend to undermine your ability to lead effectively. Sometimes, they are within and inside you, other times, they are without and from people. You must rise above them, else they will serve as powerful barriers to your leadership impact.

3. Love

You must be motivated by genuine love for God and the people. Love for the glory of God must be the underlying motive of your leadership. God will not bless your leadership if your motive is wrong and defective. When things are being done from unholy motives, it will always have negative effect. Your secret motive will determine whether God will bless your leadership or not. The love of God and humanity must be the overriding factor in your leadership.

4. Learn

A leader is a learner. The more you learn, the better you will become. Every effective and dynamic leader is a life-long learner. If you stop learning, you will start to lean. To continue to lead and be at the cutting-edge of God's move, you must continue to learn. The spirit of learning will help a leader more than anything else. Leaders that are too proud to keep learning will surely forfeit their leadership.

5. Ladder

A leader must be a ladder. He must allow people to climb up. He must be a lifter and not 'a limiter' of people. He must work to lift and promote others. He must allow others to climb on his shoulder so that they can see further.

6. Labour

A leader must labour. Church growth is hard work. Leaders that lead their churches to growth usually labour hard and long. They are not indolent and lazy men. They labour in the word, prayer, planning, goal-setting, teaching and training the people. They work their fingers to the bones. They realize that the ministry you don't labour for today will not feed you tomorrow. The work that doesn't give you sleepless night today will not give you peace of mind tomorrow.

7. Legacy

A leader must work to leave a lasting legacy. Every leader will leave one type of legacy behind or not. Your kind of leadership style will determine the kind of legacy you will leave behind. True leadership in the church must leave the kind of legacy that will outlast him, such that the work will begin to take a higher degree of impact after you might have left the scene for others.

Conclusively, it remains to be said that there is no vacuum in leadership. You either lead the church up or you lead her down. You either lead her to growth, dynamism and vibrancy, or you lead her to sickness, struggling and stagnation. Such is the power of leadership in the church.

CHAPTER 8

LAW OF SPIRITOLOGY

It is an incontestable fact that there can be no growth in the church without the blessed Holy Spirit of God. True and genuine church growth is rooted in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the vicar of the church. He is the one that was sent to search out brides for Christ. He is the Lord of the harvest. He is the Spirit of growth. It is His mighty workings and outpouring that can result in numerical and spiritual growth of the church. He is the only one who can turn the church into a growing, glowing and glorious church. Neglecting the Holy Spirit is signing the death warrant of the church.

Spiritology is the act, demonstration, power, presence and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of every Christian and the church.

Many churches that believe in the cessation theology all experience dryness, burnout, stagnation, lifeless worship and routine church life.

A good example is the Nigerian Baptist Convention. Most of their churches were fast becoming nominal, traditional and spiritually lifeless churches while they held on to the doctrine of cessation of the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifts. Many people consider them as traditional and

carnal churches. But all that has changed and is changing for the better since they changed that doctrine few years ago.

Life, vitality, vibrancy and dynamism is fast returning to Baptist Churches. The routine, mechanical, lifeless, powerless and lukewarm services are fast giving way to enchanting, lively and powerful services. Since they welcomed the law of Spiritology into their lives and churches, things began to change for the better. The branches are now experiencing the inflow of life they have never experienced before.

No church can really be the true church of Jesus Christ without the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit. In churches where the Holy Spirit is not consciously welcomed and allowed to rule and reign, growth will grow wings and fly away.

The Holy Spirit must be given preeminent position in the church. He must be in control of everything. We must not try to use Him, rather, He is the one to use us. If we are in the habit of using Him, wanting Him to dance to our whim and caprices, then we will not really be what God wants His church to be.

If we only see Him as a personification of divine energy and power, and we therefore pray and long for His power without any desire to fellowship and commune with Him, He will not really work through us. Too sad that this is the way many churches and church leaders see the Holy Spirit of God. They see Him simply as 'power' and nothing more.

He is not only power, He is a wholesome person that desires our fellowship, communion and partnership. He is the one that should use us

as He deems fit to the glory of God the Father.

The Holy Spirit is the most selfless person I have ever known. He doesn't speak of Himself, but He always speak of the Father and the Son. He is the most powerful and amazing person I have ever known. He is everywhere at the same time and bringing mighty transformation to lives, situations and circumstances.

He is the voice of God to the world. He is the one that hears the voice of the Father and the Son and relates it to us. The voice every Christian is hearing today is that of the Holy Spirit of God. Quite sadly that many churches cannot hear His voice today because they usually disobey, quench and vex the Holy Spirit of God through their actions and carnality.

According to Isaiah 63:10. *“But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them”*.

Many churches cannot grow today simply because the Holy Spirit has turned against them.

Powerlessness, carnality and stagnation are reigning supreme in many churches, simply because they rebelled against the Holy Spirit of God through their sinful, corrupt and ungodly lifestyles.

Too many churches are experiencing hyponeumia today. Hyponeumia is the abnormally low presence of the Holy Spirit in the church. It is a state

where the presence of the Holy Spirit is so low that nothing tangible will happen in the church.

In such churches, salvation will be far and few, religious people will fill the church, routine, lifeless and mere activities will hold sway. In such state, the church cannot but be sick, struggling and stagnant. Needs of people will not be met. Sickness, diseases, and death will reign unhindered. Fruitlessness, barrenness, unanswered prayers and demonic activities will be very rife.

The presence of the Holy Spirit will be low in a church when the leaders are not living right with God, the Holy Spirit is no longer emphasized and welcomed in the services because education and knowledge has taken over; prayer and seeking of God's face has been neglected: sin is allowed unchecked and uncensored in the church and there is no more time to seek His will and leading in our scheme of things.

With the low presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, the devil and his cohorts will have a field day. Many calamities and ungodly incidents will be happening. The church therefore will be barren, empty and on a downward spiral.

It must be emphasized and re-emphasized that it is the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit that can bring growth, change, turnaround and explosive multiplication to the church of Jesus Christ. His presence is what will bring presents to those who come to His presence.

The Holy Spirit is the one that brings sinners to repentance and lead believers to spiritual maturity. He is the one that will bring healing to the bodies and soul of people and bring mighty transformation that nobody can manufacture.

His mighty presence will be seen in the church when we surrender totally to Him, allow Him to lead us, fellowship with Him and welcome His presence into every service.

There must be time to commune with Him in our spiritual prayer language and pray in the Spirit. By that, His presence will flood our soul and He will brood over the church in a mighty way. (Jude 20; Gen. 1:2). His anointing will be fresh and full in our lives when we allow Him to lead and work through us. When our lives becomes an expressway for Him, then He can really flow unhindered through us.

Today, many are only seeking His anointing without communion with Him. (II Cor. 13:14). No, that is the wrong approach to the Holy Spirit. His presence in our lives is what will make the anointing to be fresh and full upon our lives. Anointing without His presence will lead to dryness and unfulfillment.

Growth in the church demands that we must constantly seek His refillings, stress communion with Him, encourage the discovery, development and usage of His gifts in the church and always create time to pray in the Spirit.

Holy Ghost services could be held where His gifts will be in operation and people will be really blessed, healed and edified through the supernatural

demonstration and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. We must understand that if He doesn't work, nothing else will work. Also, without Him we cannot, and without us He will not. We need Him, He needs us.

CHAPTER 9

LAW OF CHANGE

This is one law of dynamic church growth that so many church leaders have fought, resisted and are still fighting and resisting. They are always up in arms against any change. They believe that church growth teaching is always trying to bring confusion by canvassing for change in the way things are being done.

However, nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, church growth teachings emphasize change, but not just change for the sake of change. They are changes that are fundamental to the continued relevance and effectiveness of the church in the world.

Change is the only constant thing in life. One of life's certainties is that certainly life changes. The church is in a changing world. Everyday, the challenge of change faces the church. Things are changing rapidly before our own very eyes. Changes that were thought impossible before are happening right before our eyes.

In the light of the stupendous change that has come upon the world, the church cannot remain unconcerned if she hopes to be effective in winning the lost.

The church must welcome change if she hopes to remain relevant in a fast changing world. Yes, people, perceptions, views and understanding of people are changing. The church must hold on to the unchanging and infallible word of God on one hand, and welcome change in methods, strategies, doctrines and forms on the other hand.

Growth means change. The idea of growth connotes the idea of change and transformation. Not all growth will lead to change, but without change, growth will not happen. No church can fight change for too long without losing out on growth. To see growth in the church, change must be welcomed and embraced.

The law of change works best for dynamic church growth when leaders are willing to look at the institutional factors of the church that hinder growth and are ready to change them.

It is without gainsaying to state that most churches cannot grow due to old, archaic and outmoded institutional factors.

More than any other factor, institutional factors have hindered and obstructed durable church growth in African churches. Most, and sometimes up to 92% of churches in Africa are lying prostrate and are on downward spiral due to institutional factors that leaders are unwilling to change.

Institutional factors are the organogram, management styles and administrative logjam that have served to retard the growth of the church.

People complain against the injustices being perpetrated in the name of these wrong ways of administering the church, yet, nobody is willing to effect the necessary changes. The slogan of the leaders are “we have always done it like this” and “as it was in the beginning, so it is now and so shall it ever be”. It is on record that such churches usually nose-dive and die eventually.

Churches that are fighting to retain the institutional factors that are doing more harm than good will always experience break-away, splits and stagnation. These institutional factors that are obstructing growth must be gradually recognized and phased out of the church system. It is then and only then that growth will be welcomed.

Churches and church leaders that are averse to change or too slow to change will always miss growth opportunities that God brings their way. Churches that resist change will never rise to their God-given potential.

Churches that hold tenaciously to their old, archaic and outmoded way of doing things and presenting the gospel will be incapable of winning the people of this fast changing world.

What are the areas the church should welcome change?:

1. Personal Change

If you don't change, change will change you. Every leader must be change-friendly. Your life, character and leadership must be witnessing gradual and positive changes. You must become better by the day.

Your prayers, preaching, teaching methods and general leadership must be improving. People must see that your handling of situations and problems are becoming better by the day. As a leader, the change you are canvassing for in others must first be seen in you.

2. Change of Method

Methods, tactics, systems and strategies must change. Once they are no longer relevant and result-oriented, they must be changed. Methods must not be turned into sacred object that we are afraid to change. If one method works for one situation, another method will work for another situation. Methods must change, only principles are constant because they are based on the truths of God's word.

Outdated, relic and museum-bound methods must not be allowed to hinder the advanced march of the church of Jesus Christ. Winnable people can be lost due to wrong methods and strategies.

The church must be wise enough to change all the methods that are no longer relevant to the people of now. For example: outside preaching and

crusade worked sometime ago, but is largely ineffective today. Going out two by two to houses worked before, but is largely ineffective in many communities today. Does that mean that people do not want to hear the gospel being preached to them today? Absolutely no. We only have to evolve new methods of presenting the old, unchanging gospel to a rapidly changing world.

3. Church Change

The church that refuses to change will find growth very difficult. Growth means change and change leads to growth. The church that desires to grow must be willing to change controversial doctrines that brings dispute.

John Wesley says; “in essentials - unity; in non-essentials-liberty; and in everything-charity”. The essentials that we must not change from are salvation, freedom from sin, godly living and exemplary lifestyles. The non-essentials are what we put on, head covering or not, what we eat and jewelry, etc.

All these have served to hinder the growth of many conservative churches who major in the non-essentials of the Christian faith. Many will even want the sinners to get saved and sanctified before they step the door of the church. They believe that the church is only meant for the saints, and not for sinners.

Many churches have become ineffective and remained ‘a holy club of saints’ because they view changes in these areas as compromise. They

preach and castigate churches and church leaders that welcome changes in those areas as backsliders and compromisers.

However, crisis of great proportions always attend conservative churches because of these things and they usually experience large numbers of breakaways and church splits. If the church refuses to change, change will definitely change the church.

Every church must go over her methods, institutional factors and ways of doing church with a fine tooth-comb and see areas where the process of change should be implemented.

Change in the church should be gradual. Don't change too soon and too quickly, else, those who love the way things are will leave in large numbers. Also you must institute gradual change so that those who desire change will stay and be committed to the upliftment of the church. Change is easy when people learn enough that they are ready to change and change is possible when people received enough that they are able to change.

Change must be communicated repeatedly before it will be implemented. The under-leaders, assistants, elders and ministry workers must be thoroughly informed and convinced of the benefits of the change before it will be made public. Once they are convinced, they will share it within their circle of influence such that when the announcement is eventually made, majority have heard and accepted.

Change is dynamic. Change is invigorating. Change is growth-friendly. Without change, decay and death will stare the church in the face. No church can record durable and sustainable growth without facing and dealing with the question of change. When the church and leaders reject and refuse change, deterioration and downward spiral becomes inevitable.

No church can aspire to a better future without the courage to welcome and embrace change. The future growth, impact and effectiveness of any church will never be realized when change is fought and resisted.

Change, glorious change is always the key to the future of any worthwhile work for the Lord. God will not give you everything you need at the beginning of the work. He will bring changes at His own time as long as you are following Him. (Acts 10:11-16) Don't be rigid, but rather be flexible to follow His change, else you will miss His best for your life and ministry.

CHAPTER 10

LAW OF PEOPLE

The second most important principle of church growth is that “the people must want the church to grow and be willing to pay the price”. The pastor is not enough for growth, the people are equally important.

Deborah was able to save Israel from the enemy because the people willingly gave themselves (Judges 5:2), Nehemiah too was able to rebuild the wall within two months because the people had a mind to work and they really cooperated (Neh. 4:6).

The law of the people holds true in every church. No church can really grow without the commitment, cooperation and dedication of the people. The pastor is important; and in terms of percentages, he carries 51 % and the people carries 49%.

Without the active support of the people, the pastor alone can do nothing. The 51 % only shows his pole position in the church. He is number one, but he needs the complete dedication and acceptance of the people to really make a lasting impact in the church.

If the pastor wants the church to grow and the people do not want the church to grow, the church will not grow.

A popular proverb says, “you don’t clap with one hand”, neither “can you barb my head without my permission”. It is nearly impossible to see peace and progress in a church where the pastor and the people are working at cross purposes.

When the pastor have not done enough to gain the confidence and trust of the people and the people too are stubborn and unnecessarily troublesome, growth will be difficult to come by. What makes a good pastor is often good church members. Working together in mutual respect is the key to qualitative and quantitative growth of the church. Now let us examine some salient areas:

1. Commitment

To what degree are the people committed to seeing growth in the church? If they are highly committed to see growth, it will show in their:

(a) ***Commitment to Christ*** - They will really love Him and make Him their personal Lord and Saviour. They will obey Him and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

(b) ***Commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ***- They will love His church, be active and responsible members of His church, use their gifts, talent and treasure to grow His church and be a regular partaker in the programmes of the church.

(c) ***Commitment to the Work of Christ in the world*** - They will really love to preach the gospel to sinners, both at home and abroad. They will carry out the great commission with everything God gives them in this life.

High commitment to growth also means the people are ready to pay the price of church growth. The price of church growth for the people comes in form of personal growth, intercession for the church, obedience to leadership, discovering and using their gifts and paying the money. People that shows commitment to the growth of their churches will pay these prices unflinchingly.

2. Following

To what degree are the people willing to follow growth leadership? The law of the people works very well when they behave as lambs that truly follow the shepherd. They are obedient, teachable and submissive. They truly behave as faithful, available and teachable people in the church.

When the people are really ready to be “**FAT**” people, then growth will be on course in the church.

Furthermore, the people must concentrate on following and allow the pastor to truly lead the church. They must not usurp the position of the pastor to themselves. The patriarch and matriarch of the church must leave the reign of leadership to the pastor and become true followers.

In churches where the strong lay leaders have taken over the position of the pastor, growth and progress will be a mirage. In churches where the committees are confronting, confusing, confounding and committing the pastor, crisis and chaos will hold sway.

In a church where the lay leaders are not ready to allow the pastor to lead freely, growth will be non-existent and any semblance of growth will soon fizzle out.

When the people are not committed to following the vision, direction and leadership of the pastor, growth will only be a pipe dream. People that are too proud to follow the God-given leadership and vision of their pastor will be too busy to see growth in their personal lives, businesses and in the church.

3. Supporting

Are the people supporting and strengthening the pastor? The people that refused to support their pastors morally, financially, physically and materially will always be struggling with poverty and penury. Churches that punish and pauperized pastors will never be free from poverty and divine judgement.

Pastors must be supported by the people. He must be adequately taken care of to the best ability of the church. He must be given good salary, adequate emoluments and have his needs met so that he can do the work without any distraction.

The people must organize themselves to supply the basic needs of the pastor. Moral and prayer support must also be given to him and he must be encouraged to work. Everything that will hinder his effective working must be removed.

The people of the church, from the smallest to the greatest, must give the pastor the room to perform. They must support and strengthen him by prayer, physical blessings and material provisions that will leave him with no complaint as to why the work is not moving fast enough. With such support, the sky will be the beginning for pastors of churches.

4. Praying

To what degree are the people willing to pray for growth? Growth in the church answers to fervent and importunate prayers of the people. When the people are willing to pray, fast and seek the face of God in profound

intercession, then growth will come to the church. But when the people are playing rather than praying, then growth cannot come.

Growth demands that the people must be ready to pray and intercede for the church and their pastor. God does nothing but in answer to the prayers of His people. When the people takes time to pray. God takes time to answer.

The growth of the church will always be in proportion to the prayers of the people. If they are fervent and focused in their prayers. God will answer without delay. But if they are lifeless, lukewarm and unserious in their prayer times. God will be incapacitated from working mightily.

Group prayers, vigils, prayer chains and periods of fasting must be practised. When the people are committed to praying for growth, then God's days of power are here with us again in the church.

5. Giving

To what degree are the people willing to financially support and pay for church growth? Church growth costs money and it doesn't come cheap.

The building, lands, properties, excellent P. A. Systems, chairs and environment cost lots of money too. The seminars, books, resources and training cost lots of money.

The people must be willing and ready to finance growth in the church. The people must not only pay their tithes and offerings, they must also sow their seeds and partner with God in kingdom investments so that growth can be kept on course in the church.

In churches where people don't pay their tithes as at when due, things will always be tight for them. When they don't pay their offerings in graduated form, sufferings will not be far away from them. And where they refuse to sow to growth, they will not reap expansion.

6. Welcoming

To what degree are they open to outsiders? The people that practice 'holier than thou' attitudes will securely lock the doors of the church against outsiders. The people that feel threatened by the presence of sinners in the church will always jeopardise the growth potentials of the church.

When the church is inwardly focused and maintenance oriented, it will remain stagnant and non-growing. And when visitors are not genuinely and enthusiastically welcomed, growth will never happen.

Church growth requires that the people must show genuine love to sinners and welcome them to the church. They must accept them as Christ has accepted us into the glory of God.

Acceptance without approval must be practised by the people. The fact that we accept sinners and make them feel welcomed doesn't mean we approved their lifestyle. When sinners feel the love and touch of Christians, they will repent and straighten out their lives.

When church people drive away sinners by their actions and looks, the church will have a hard time experiencing any kind of growth. The people must show commitment in these areas before real growth will be a daily occurrence in the church. If the people refused to pay the price of growth, growth will not be seen.

CHAPTER 11

LAW OF PRAYER

The church that kneel before God can stand before any man. The church can truly go forward only on her knees. When man works, he works, but when man prays, God works. Church growth requires that the church must take prayer as a ministry. She must truly become the house of prayer if growth must be seen.

The church must become a groaning church, because only a groaning church will ultimately become a growing church. The church that never

prays never grows. Until the church truly become a house of prayer, she cannot become a growing and glorious church.

For supernatural power, purity, holiness, spiritual dynamism and vibrancy, the church must return to the prayer chamber. Church growth is in relation to the prayer life of the church. The decline and powerlessness of the church is the testimony of the neglect of prayer.

Prayer must become the number one ministry of the church. It must be accorded the top priority. Prayer must not be given a mere mention in the church, rather it must take the front burner.

Today, we teach prayer, emphasise the utmost importance of prayer in our church, but sadly, we are too busy to pray.

It's time to always remember the powerful words of Samuel Chadwick: *"The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, work and Christian activities. He laughs at our toil, mocks our wisdom, but trembles when we pray"*.

Lukewarmness, coldness, tiredness and lifelessness in prayer must be done away with. The sin of prayerlessness must be repented of. Prayer must return as the main business of our life and church. The church must elevate prayer to ministry status.

Prayer, believing prayer is God's price for supernatural power and growth in our lives and churches. "No prayers, no conversion; no prayer, no power; no prayer, no growth". Prayer then is not optional, but mandatory if growth must occur.

Prayer must become the number one ministry of the church. It is when we accord prayer such priority that dynamic growth will come. The key for all growth lies in the prayer life.

If the church doesn't have a prayer emphasis, the planning, preaching and programming will all be in vain.

The research of growing churches confirmed that churches with strong prayer emphasis usually record more rapid and durable growth than churches with little prayer ministry. The churches with least developed prayer ministry records least growth.

We can safely conclude then that without fervent, importunate, believing and persistent prayer, the church cannot truly experience growth.

If God must work and growth, revival and restoration experienced at this time, the church must become strong in prayer again.

In actual fact, when God wants to do something great, He first sets His people to prayer. Prayer is as vast as God. It can do all that God can do. God has put all His resources at the disposal of he who can pray. Not to pray then is to deprive the church of the great and mighty power of God.

Prayer that Touches Heaven

Prayer is not preparation for battle only, it is the main battle. The prayer that will bring growth and health to the church must be fervent, intensive and persistent. It must include serious warfare with opposing forces. It is such prayer that will touch heaven.

The prayer that touches heaven is the one that brings results, answers, growth, power, change and blessings to our lives and churches. It is;

Prayer with faith - Mark 11:22-25; Jam. 1:5-8

Prayer from a pure heart - 1 Tim. 2:8; 1 John 3:22

Prayer according to His will - Jam. 4:2-3

Prayer with fasting - Matt 17:21

Praying with earnestness - Jam. 5:16-18

Praying with persistence-Matt. 15:21-28;
John 20:10-18

Strategies for Church Prayer Ministry

1. The Pastor must Model Prayer for the People

If the pastor doesn't pray, the people will not pray. If he doesn't set the example, the people will not follow. His people must know him as a man of prayer. He must come to the church often to pray so that his people will see that he takes prayer very seriously.

Pastors tend to be activists, yet they must get serious enough about the growth of their church to create time for prayer.

The prayer ministry of a church will not be powerful as it should without the pastor playing a major role. If he is weak in prayer, the church will be weak in prayer too. His emphasis on prayer will also be the emphasis that his people will place on prayer. The prayer ministry of the church depends largely on the examples he sets.

2. Times of Corporate Prayers in the Church

There must be times when the people come together for joint waiting upon the Lord and seeking of His face. It may be early morning prayers, weekend prayer and fasting; using public holidays for seeking God's face and declaring periods of waiting upon the Lord, ranging from seven days to forty days in the church.

There should also be prayers before the services for workers and many intercessors can decide to wait and seek the face of the Lord after each service or at a special time during the week.

Every opportunity for joint and corporate prayers must be utilized in the church. Agreement brings power and when we pray together, it releases more forces for good than when individual Christians pray alone.

3. Periodic Sermons on Prayer

The pulpit must be effectively used to drum up support for the prayer ministry of the church. There must be regular messages or series of teachings on the importance, place and power of fervent prayers in our lives and in the church.

Without regular support and emphasis from the pulpit, the prayer ministry of the church tends to lose steam and power. The pulpit must demonstrate and exemplify prayer and then call people to regular, continuous and prevailing prayers for the church, the nation and themselves.

4. School of Prayer

The prayer ministry of a church will receive a great boost when a School of Prayer is set up. A prayer course should be designed that will take people through 13 weeks of learning and practising the basics of prayer. It must not only be theoretical, it must also be practical and experiential.

The teachers must be proven prayer practitioners. They must teach both by precept and by example. Every member of the church must be encouraged to go through the course at least once in their life time in the church. The school can also be given a week of prayer in the church, when the whole church will be given the opportunity to see prayer in action and testimonies shared. It is on record that such churches don't remain the same again.

5. There must be Minister of Prayer

One other way that a church will show strong prayer emphasis is by having a minister designated as the minister of prayer. He will be responsible for

the prayer ministry of the church. He organises the prayer programmes of the church and lead the school of prayer. He sees to it that regular and fervent prayer goes on, on behalf of the church always. Of course, the results must show, whether he is truly effective or not.

6. Prayer Warriors and Intercessors must Function

The church cannot really function effectively in winning the lost and edifying the saints without some loyal, faithful and dedicated members functioning as prayer warriors and intercessors.

Prayer warriors are groups of people voluntarily praying for the church. They are neither paid nor employed by the church. They only see the need to lift up the church in prayer and decide to come together on regular and weekly basis to pray for the church. They meet during the day time and in vigils.

Intercessors are Christians that God has given the special gift of intercession and they use it to uplift the church and her leaders. Sometimes, they are paid and in full employment of the church, at other times they do it voluntarily as the Lord lead them.

However, every church must have these two groups of people praying for her regularly. They must pray for the pastor, the programmes of the church and get prophetic word from the Lord for the church.

This is the 'powerhouse' and furnace room of the church. The fire must not be allowed to go out. Without such furnace room and 'powerhouse', the church will be powerless against the advanced march of the enemy.

7. Prayer Room or Prayer Centre

Every church that is serious about her growth must have a place dedicated to prayer. What better way to demonstrate the prayer ministry of the church than to have a room or place dedicated to seeking God? Members can come there for prayer and seeking of His face regularly. Churches that refused to have such a place are simply saying they have no emphasis on prayer.

A place dedicated to prayer for 24 hours will really and greatly help the dynamic growth of any church. Such a place must be properly managed, administered and strictly run by the church so that it will not be polluted. God must be answering prayers on regular basis as an impetus to pray more.

8. Prayer Outside the Church

Churches that are serious about making impact and affecting their communities positively are not only praying inside the church, they are also taking prayer outside the church. Community impact demands that the church must pray and saturate the Community with prayer. There are demons out there that hold the people in bondage and it is only the church that can deal with them.

The church must therefore take prayer to the streets, junctions, corners, centres and important spots in the Community, not in a showy way but in quiet obedience to the Lord.

Joshua 1:3 says; *“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you...”*

The church must take this promise literally and therefore prayer-walk the Community with the sole aim of claiming the land for the Lord. There should be prayer of repentance, petition, binding, loosing, prophetic release and declarations of God’s favour and open heaven over the Community.

Employing these strategies of prayer will really show that the church is obeying the law of prayer for dynamic church growth. Growth cannot but be the outcome of these efforts. Every great growth started in prayer and when serious and intensive prayers are neglected, decay and spiritual wane always set in.

CHAPTER 12

LWA OF THE PLACE

Too many church leaders have not recognized the important role of the law of the place in the continuous growth of their churches. Many have done

ministry with the notion that the place is not important and has no relevance to the growth potentials of their churches.

Many have taught that heaven is our goal and we should not be 'worldly minded' as to pay attention to the place of worship. They contend that monies spent on having a befitting place of worship is money down the drain. To them, it is sheer waste of God's resources.

Leaders with such notions usually have their churches in run-down, hot, stuffy, damp, water logged, smelly building and in demon-invested areas of the city, town or village. The environment will be nauseating and the offensive odour will be killing and breathless. No wonder such churches will only record marginal growth over long periods of time?

There are some other group of church leaders who don't really have the faith for growth at the onset of the church. They will therefore buy 60 feet by 120 feet land or in some cases 30 feet by 60 feet land and construct a small building, hoping that one day they can see some sputter of growth.

These kinds of small churches litter the landscape of our Continent. In actual fact, they are the norm rather than the exception.

Every pastor and church leader must stop underestimating the impact of their building and place on their growth. The place of your worship and the kind and type of building you worshipped in will greatly determine the growth and continuous growth of the church. This is one law of growth that many have neglected or are totally ignorant of.

Yes, God can work and do work without placing emphasis on the worship place, but more often than not, the building and place of worship will determine the steady and sustainable growth of the church.

We shape our building, then our building will shape us. This is a truism that church leaders must take seriously. The size and shape of your worship place will determine the size and measure of your growth on the long run.

Your kind of building will also determine the kind of people that will eventually come to worship there. A small building with permanent structure and with no room for expansion have killed off any growth potential that the church might have.

If the building and place of worship is not really important, why did God commanded his leaders to enlarge their tent in Isaiah 54:23?

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shall break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited”.

Good and durable growth in the church require space and conducive atmosphere of worship. Today, people want to worship God with a

minimum of comfort. The place and the environment are important.

The chairs, pews and P. A. Systems are also important. Churches that are still using benches without a place for people to rest their backs are still waiting upon the Lord! Small churches remain small largely because of the size of their building. Churches with lots of space grow large, by and by.

Lasting church growth demands that churches must not be in a haste to erect a building. Too many churches build too soon, and they kill off growth momentum in the church.

So also many churches had dabbled into gigantic building projects too quickly that drove their young members away because the demand for money was too much and unbearable. Many young pastors have become the slaves of their financial partners because they get involved in capital-intensive building projects that their young church is not yet capable of supporting financially.

Churches can still worship in a rented or leased venue until they are capable enough to start a building project that will accommodate their present and future growth. Churches that start in vacant plots of land usually find growth very difficult because the thinking of the public is that they want to use them to build their church building.

Allow me to pinpoint some salient areas:

Facility

Every church must aim for a good facility. Either rented or leased, the facility must be in good condition. The toilets must be clean, neat and well-maintained. There have been cases of people who went away from churches simply because the toilets were poorly maintained and full of bad odour. Also the children church or chapel must be kept warm, bright and neat.

The environment must be sparkling and inviting. The church must be freshly painted and with good curtains and well-kept flowers. It must be well lit and the seating arrangements very strategic. A poorly kept facility is a sure sign of decay and death in the church.

Location

The location of a church matters a lot. The location must be easy to find and be accessible by road. The environment must be friendly and not hostile. The signposts must be strategically placed that it will easily lead people to the church without much hassle.

Churches that are located near poultry or dairy farms will have a hard time attracting quality people. The atmospheric odour will not give their nose a breathing space and their health will be impaired.

The size, shape, colour and brightness of the signpost will form people's opinion about your church. They are your first public relation officer. When they are poorly done, it gives people the impression that your church is not serious about their souls.

Parking

Many of our churches that desire growth have not given a thought to the issue of parking space. Generally speaking, churches in Africa have not shown sufficient interest to parking of cars.

Many churches block the streets and cause heavy traffic jam through the absence of parking space or poorly arranged cars. They even gloat in their ability to cause unnecessary pain and delay to other road users as a result of heavy traffic occasioned by their church service.

However, these unwholesome attitude by churches is giving the church a bad image in the public. It is time that churches must give parking the rightful position it deserves.

Every church must have a well arranged off-street parking lot or garage. The parking must be properly arranged and with adequate security. It must not constitute nuisance to other road users.

A good parking area will keep the heart of members at rest when they bring their cars to the church. They will not be worrying unnecessarily about the safety and security of their vehicles.

A church without a good parking area will either be losing members who are car-owners, or they will stop bringing their cars to church, which will be a minus for the church.

Moreover, without an off-street parking arrangement, the church will be attracting negative comments from residents, neighbours and other road users which will impact negatively on the growth of the church on the long run. A church that is noted for notorious traffic congestion whenever she holds her services will attract the wrath of the traffic authority and create a bad image for herself, which may become an obstacle to her future growth.

The law of the place demands that we must strike a balance between functional structure and an architectural masterpiece. Of what use are super structures without people or with nominal, unsaved people?

The place is important but the type of people there are much more important. As we go for good structures and architectural design that is excellence-oriented, let us not forget to fill the building with truly saved, holy and heaven-bound souls.

CHAPTER 13

LAW OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Dynamic, dependable, durable and sustainable church growth rests squarely on the mighty workings of God in the church. If God is not at work in a significant way in the church, then numerical and spiritual growth cannot take place.

It is when the lives of people are being seriously affected, impacted, changed and transformed that the news will spread out and much more people will flock and flow to the church. The news of God's working in mighty signs, wonders, miracles and healing will always attract crowd to the church.

Jesus says in John 4:48 *"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe"*.

Signs and wonders in the church is a signal to people that God is at work and they will always come in large numbers to such church. People want to be part of a church where God is really at work, because nobody wants to join a sinking ship but a winning team.

The growth of any church depends largely on the impact she is making in the lives of people. Church growth will be possible when the church is affecting and impacting peoples' lives tremendously. *Changed lives are the surest evidence of the impact of the church.* Transformation is the incontestable fact that the church is affecting people significantly. Without such, growth will be a pipe dream.

The hand of God must be at work, meeting the real and felt needs of the people. Today, people don't come to church because it is their father's church, or because their friends attend, but because of needs in their lives. Needs, either felt or real, are what drive people to churches today.

The principal and primary reason why many people will flock and continue to flock to any church is because they want their needs met. Nobody comes to the church without some form of needs that he or she secretly hopes will be met and addressed one way or another. If God is at work in the church and the needs are met, the likelihood of staying in the church is highly enhanced.

There are two basic needs in the lives of people: felt and real needs. Felt needs are the problems, afflictions, oppressions, sicknesses, diseases, calamities, poverty, penury, debts, ill-luck, failure, loneliness and negative

experiences that daily bedevil the existence of the human race. Many felt these are their real needs and therefore desire quick solutions to them. They are ready to go to any length and do anything so far there is a promise that those needs will be met. They could not see beyond those needs. Their basic motives of coming to church is to have those needs met.

Much more importantly, their real need is salvation, forgiveness of sins, acceptance with God, peace, assurance of heaven and freedom from guilt and condemnation of the devil. They also need joy, love, growth, protection, encouragement and preservation of the Lord.

How ever, more often than not, people don't realize their real needs until their felt needs have been met. Bringing growth to the church demands that we minister to their felt needs in order for them to realize their real need.

Eighty percent of those who came to Jesus during His earthly ministry were people in this category. They came with their felt needs but have their real need met also by the Lord. The felt and real needs of the people must not be taken for granted if the church must grow, Churches that no longer meet the needs of people, starting with her members, usually decline and decay.

What better way to meet the needs of people than to see God at work in miracles, signs and wonders? People must experience the power of God to save, heal and bless on daily basis. They must be touched and transformed by the mighty presence of God in the church. The gospel must not only be heard, it must also be experienced.

Practical demonstration of God's power to heal, deliver and free people from the chains and shackles of sin, sickness and Satan must be openly

displayed. The gospel of the kingdom must be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. The gospel of the kingdom is the gospel of power. It is displaying kingdom power against the host of darkness. It is the kingdom of God destroying the manifestations of the kingdom of the enemy in the lives and bodies of people.

There must be testimonies of salvation, healing, miracles, signs and wonders in the lives of the people on daily basis. People must testify of the mighty workings of God in the church. Testimonies of the supernatural power of God to bless and prosper the people must be seen, heard and experienced.

It is such mighty and significant impact that will draw people to the church in large numbers. Church growth is not really possible without the supernatural demonstration and manifestation of God at work.

Quite sadly and disheartening that some false gospel ministers who realized the relevance of this law to the growth of the church have gone to demonic sources to get power to display in their 'churches'. They know that miracles, signs and wonders are a crowd-puller any day and therefore secretly made covenant with voodoo, occultic and demonic sources for power so as to attract people.

It is sad but true that many so called 'gospel ministers'; apostles, bishops and founders are not operating in the pure and undiluted power of the Holy Spirit. They have other sources of power rather than that of God. Yes, the miracles are there, but they are spurious and fluke miracles and as such many are being deceived and taken advantage off.

True and genuine miracles that result in significant changes and transformation of people's lives for the better are from the Lord. God is still in the business of performing such mighty miracles to bless and edify his people.

Miracles were mightily evident in the ministry of our Lord to attract the crowd to Him. The apostles used mighty miracles to prove the authenticity of the gospel of our Lord. The Holy Spirit is still doing miracles of salvation, healing, transformation and wonders today.

Attracting the genuine power of God for significant impact requires that our motive must be pure. Impure motive of seeking God's power display in the church will meet with His disapproval.

Too many preachers and pastors are seeking God's power for selfish glory and aggrandizement. They want to show off and dominate people. God will not grant His cherished power to such people. Pure motive that seek for His glory alone and the edification of people is what He will honour.

You must also desire to operate in the supernatural. Without desire you cannot re-fire. God doesn't grant wishes, He only grant desires that are strong and godly. You must take time to seek His face, declare His work by faith, preach the gospel of the kingdom and boldly pray for people for healing, miracles, signs and wonders. Pray in the name of Jesus and launch out in faith. Seek God regularly in prayer and fasting and don't be ashamed to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit.

If you are able to do these on regular basis, your ministry will affect people significantly. God will use you to bless and edify others as long as you remain a holy, clean and uncontaminated vessels in His hand. Your church will keep growing as long as people's needs are being met and their lives being significantly impacted.

CHAPTER 14

LAW OF ORGANIZATION

The church is not only an organism, it is also an organization. It comprises of people that must be properly and effectively organized for growth. Lack of proper organization and administration is the reason for the slow and snail-speed growth of some churches. Without proper organization and administration, the church will remain stagnant.

It is unfortunate to note that many churches are being wonderfully led, but poorly organized today. Many young pastors know next to nothing when it

comes to effective organization of the church. Others who are secularly educated and have served as Company Directors bring their management skills in the business world to run the church. The result has been disaster of great proportions.

Many churches are now lying prostrate as a result of being led by secular management methods. Proper organization calls for clear demarcation of the church in three ways: celebration, congregation and cell.

Celebration

This is the Sunday gathering where the people come to worship and celebrate the victory of Jesus. The attention is on the Lord and everyone is concerned with rendering good and acceptable worship unto the Lord. The focus is on corporate worship that glorifies the Lord and edifies one another.

Celebration time must be taken serious and every member must partake regularly. There could also be big celebration time during the week or vigils, both inside and outside the church. It is a time for great preaching, praises, prayers, worship and healing.

Congregation

The church must not stop at celebration level only, it must also organize down to the congregation level. Congregation is a smaller group of people than those at the celebration level. They come together for teaching and

deeper fellowship. It may come in form of Bible Study, Men's fellowship, Women's fellowship, Youth fellowship and Children departments.

At this level, people share together and minister to each other more than at the celebration level. Congregation can happen inside the church or on special days during the week.

Cell

This is the third level that the church must organize. Cell is a very small group of people meeting together in homes and sharing meal, friendship, Bible study, prayer, testimony, songs and intercession that are otherwise not possible inside the church during the time of celebration and congregation.

It is a deeper level of fellowship that helps the integration, assimilation and follow-up of new converts. It really helps the back door of churches to be closed.

At the cell level, people can enjoy each others' fellowship at a deeper level and they can easily evangelize sinners. Everyone have the opportunity to invite friends, relations, associates or neighbours to the meeting.

Rapid growth of new converts is possible at such nocturnal meeting places and time, because they have the opportunity to share their testimonies, develop their gifts and invite their friends. They pray and they are prayed for and carefully nurtured by matured Christians.

Every church that desires to maintain her growth and record more spectacular growth must organize along these three levels. These levels

must be carefully maintained and nurtured for growth in the church.

Without organizing along these lines, things will always be muddled up and confusion will reign supreme in the church and the church will be unable to really give direction to the people.

Another aspect of organization is the volatile issue of church administration. Many churches, both denominational and independent alike, have experienced non-growth as a result of wrong administration. Wrong administrative policies and systems have ruined many churches than we would readily agree with.

As I wrote in my book; “The place of Anointing and Administration in Church Growth”, many churches cannot and will not rise to fulfil their destiny because they are being wrongly administered. Ignorance and politics of church administration have led to the downward spiral of churches.

Church administration starts from registration with the government. Many churches are too quick to register and when they do, they pick the wrong kind of people as Trustees and Board members. They pick people who are their literal enemies and who will instigate others against them.

So many of such churches have cases in the court and the bitter feud had left sour taste in the mouth and a scar in the heart of the contestants which will take long to heal.

Another contentious issue is Constitution. Wrongly worded Constitutions have been used to kill off the peace and progress of churches.

Constitutions that gives power to boards, trustees, elders and deacons over pastors and gospel ministers will do more harm than good.

Church organogram and administrative charts that leave the pastors and ministers in the middle of nowhere will destroy than develop the church. The administrative system that punishes, disciplines and deals with pastors without hearing the other side will always be wrong and cannot help the health and well-being of the church.

The administrative system that places the church money in the hands of Committees in which they can control and spend it without any recourse to the pastor will have boomerang effect on the progress of the church.

The church administrative system that says the Executive Council of the church, comprising of elders, deacons and members can sack and dispense with the service of the pastor on any flimsy excuse, will always bring retardation, stagnation and crisis of confusion to the entire church.

The pastor must be the head of the local church. Deacons, elders and committees must be subject to him . He must be given the free hand to lead the church according to God's vision for the church. In the case of misdemeanour, the denominational executive or the person who functions as his mentor is the one that have the capacity to discipline him after careful and unbiased investigation.

Pastoral transfer should also be carefully done. Transfers can help or kill off growth in churches. When transfer is to be done, it must take

cognizance of each pastors level. Every two years reshuffling of pastors will not always augur well for the health of the churches.

Proper church administration should not be rigid and in concrete. There is no one perfect administrative system. The Scripture actually refers to differences of administration (I Cor. 12:5). If you employ an administrative system that brings much problem, complaints and murmuring to the church, for God's sake, change it to a better one.

Proper administration also demands that the registration of the church must be patiently done. It must not be rushed. It is only required for property and legal entity.

Lawyers should not be engaged in the writing of church Constitution. They usually include many phrases that could spell doom for the church if someone decides to sue or drag the church to court. Rather, the services of a versatile Church Consultant should be employed.

The organogram of the church must be simple and clear to all. The pastor or founder must be at the top. Every decision must be subject to his approval. The bulk must stop at his table. The committees should not have the power to spend the money without the express approval of the pastor or founder. Every money spent must also be recorded and the account books kept up to date. Misappropriation of money must never be allowed. You grow the church by anointing but keep it by administration.

If the administration is right, the church will keep on growing. If it's wrong; it will retard the growth and health of the church.

Good church administration must handle outside ministers that want to join the church carefully. No matter their calling and conviction, they must not be placed directly on the altar. They must start from being a church member to workers.

When you place them directly on the platform and allow them to minister to your people so soon, you destroy the morale of those who started with you; and you invite crisis because you don't know his doctrinal beliefs and by this you have sown the seed of breakaway.

Also, churches that want to join your church network must be properly scrutinized. It must not be hastily done. Patience, prayer and wisdom must be employed. Series of meetings must be held and the leading of the Holy Spirit must be sought, received and obeyed.

Improper church affiliation can lead to mistrust, suspicion, character assassination and feeling of being used. In many cases, it has killed off the fire of revival and renewal.

The law of proper organization is one law that will always determine the direction and sustenance of any church. If rightly used, it can keep the church crisis - free and growing and if wrongly used, can lead to quick chaos, splits and continuous deterioration.

CHAPTER 15

LAW OF GOD'S WORD

The Scripture declares in Psalm 138:2 “...*for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*”. This shows clearly the place and prime importance of the word of God.

The word of God, written for us in the Bible is highly regarded by God Himself above all His name. What a lofty realization! It goes without saying then, that no church can truly be said to be the church of God without high regard and esteem for His word.

The proper and solid foundation of any church must be the true and undiluted word of God. Every other foundation will crumble. The written word and the Living word must be present for the church to truly grow. It is strong commitment to the word of God that results in church growth. God will not back human ideas but His undiluted word.

The law of God's word for dynamic church growth requires that the church must give the word of God the place of paramount importance. Everything must be done according to the word of God. The word of God must be

believed and taken literally in the church. The word must be declared without fear or favour.

People must be taught to respect and obey the word of God. The church must be built on nothing else but the powerful word of God that is able to bring salvation and light to all. The people must also live in obedience to the word of God.

Not only should they hear the word, they must obey the word by regulating their lives according to the teachings of God's word. When members have no regard for God's word or refuse to live according to the light of His word, life and vitality will gradually ebb away in the church.

True church growth is hinged on obedience to the very word of God. Churches that emphasize something else beyond, above or beside the word of God are not true churches of Christ. In churches where human philosophy has taken over, it is bye bye to health, vitality and well-being.

It is the word that will work wonders in the life of the people. It is the word of God that will bring change, transformation and turn-around to the lives and situations of the people. It is the word of God, spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit that will bring miracles, wonders and transformation to the people (Mark 16:20). God will only back His word and confirm His word in the lives of the people.

Dynamic and glorious church growth cannot happen if we allow other things to take the place of the word of God in the church. Too many church

leaders have allowed their preferences, ideas and personal prejudices to obstruct the free flow of God's word in the church.

In other instances, ceremonies, singing, dancing and contributions, good as they are, have been allowed to replace the word of God in so many Pentecostal churches. Long hours are given to these harmless activities and only few minutes are given to the declaration of the word of God. There is always time to do other things, but when it is time for God's word, the usual phrase is "no time" or "time is gone".

Still in some churches, there are areas the preacher must not touch and once he dares to go to such areas, the microphone will be switched off!

Dynamic church growth is hinged on the fact that the church has a word from the Lord. The church is founded on a particular promise from the Lord and that word from God becomes the anchor of the church.

Every church must therefore operate on the very promise of God to her. Growth will continue to be a mirage if there is no word from the Lord to rely and rest on. Church growth is always the outcome of faith and obedience on the part of church leadership to the very word of God to her.

The law of dynamic church growth differentiates between the written word and the spoken word. The written word is the Logos-the letter of the word, while the spoken word is the Rhema-the very word of God in due season. The written word must be taught, read and known by the church.

There must be a place for Bible reading, studying and understanding. But much more importantly, the rhema of God's word must be preached to the people. This is the word preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. It comes as a revelation, insight and inspiration. It brings light, life and illumination to the church. It is a word in due season that will bless, edify, challenge, motivate and encourage the people.

In other words, the pastor must not preach sermons but messages from God to the people. Sermons are meant for the head, while messages are meant for the heart and lives of the people. They have the capacity to bring solution, direction and satisfaction to the people. In churches where the pastor only preach sermons, he will soon find out that his people are sick of his sermons and tired of his teachings.

The preaching of the word must be backed up by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Without the manifest anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, the truth will deaden the people more than error. The truth of the word without the power of the Spirit is just the letter that killeth.

The word of God that will cause explosion in the church must be anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The law of God's word in dynamic church growth recognizes that it is the growth of the word that will lead to the growth of the church. When the word of God increases, the church will increase. When the word grows, the church grows.

Acts of Apostles 6:7 and 19:20 confirms this truth; *“And the word of God increased; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith”*
“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed”.

It is crystal clear then that when the word of God, preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, prevailed in the church, sickness, sin, Satan and problems must give way and growth must come to such church. Human ideologies will fail the church and the people, only the word of God will abide for ever. Everything else will fail, except the true word of God.

It is high time the church, whatever the affiliation and dogma, returns back to the Bible. The Bible, not church doctrine or dogma, must be faithfully and truthfully declared in the church.

Personal interpretations, prejudices and preferences must give way to the undiluted and unambiguous declaration of God’s word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Simple, clear and straight forward declaration of the whole counsel of God must return to our churches if growth and increase must be seen and experienced.

Biblical truth must be balanced. The people must not be fed on one line of truth to the neglect of other aspects and equally vital truth of the Scripture. Those who emphasize holiness must balance it with healing; prosperity with purity; faith with faithfulness, power with pureness, miracles with meekness and signs and wonders with godliness.

Churches that name themselves as the 'word church', must live up to that name. The word must not be human theories, motivational teachings and mental thinking only, but also the balanced and undiluted teaching and preaching of God's word.

The word must not only be preached, it must also be taught for the proper foundation and stability of the people so that their faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the living God and His word.

Research has confirmed over and over again that churches that remain faithful, loyal and obedient to the undiluted truth of God's word will not only grow but keep growing and blessing lives.

CHAPTER 16

LAW OF DISCIPLESHIP

In the last several years, there have been tremendous church growth in the Continent of Africa, with Nigeria as the focal point. Hundreds of thousands of people have flocked to churches. Thousands of people now attend Christian programmes and worship services regularly.

Every Sunday morning, you could see thousands of people in our cities, clutching their Bibles and going to church. Quite amazingly, the growth is not only seen in Pentecostal, Charismatic, Evangelical and Conservative churches, they are also seen in mainline, denominational and traditional churches.

Many pseudo-christain churches have changed and are still changing to Pentecostal churches. The percentage of people going to church are higher

today than twenty years ago.

At every corner you turn, you will see banners, posters, and fliers announcing one Christian programme or another. Advertisements in the papers, radio and television are now more pronounced than ever before.

Many churches and preachers are competing for space on the television and radio for one kind of ministration, programmes and service or the other. Awareness of the gospel is very high and attendance in churches keep on increasing.

Today, it is very easy and common place to see churches with 2,000; 4,000; 10,000 people in weekend attendance. It is now the rule rather than the exception. Furthermore, thousands of churches are springing up and being planted, both by denominations and independent church planters.

However, the reality on the ground is that fundamental Christianity has not really increased despite all these positive and tremendous numerical church growth.

One major reason for this alarming situation is the lack of emphasis on discipleship. Many of those multiple thousands of people coming to church are only religious and not really born again. Some that are born-again have remained only as babes in Christ with every trait of immaturity. Some may not agree with my findings and conclusion, but that is the stark truth that we must contend with now.

The tendency is very high now to see church as a social gathering where people come to meet their friends, exchange addresses, plan business meetings, enjoy each others' company through some rituals of singing, clapping, dancing, giving of offerings and sitting through the rigour of routine sermonizing.

Without mincing words, this is the scenario in many Pentecostal, Charismatic and Apostolic Churches today. The people have not really come to terms with what it means to be genuine and committed Christians and devoted disciples of our Lord.

Many of the thousands flocking our churches are only playing church, looking for one blessing or the other from the Lord. They have gone through the process of reformation by the church, but they have not been transformed by the Lord.

Outwardly, they look like Christians by their pious manners, but inwardly they are still battling with sins, evil and ungodliness.

And the preachers have not helped matters by being muddled up in their messages and also preaching those sermons that only cater for the physical, material, financial and social well being of the people without strong emphasis on the spiritual well-being. If they get to mention the spiritual well-being of the people at all, it is sparsely and quickly done so as not offend the sensibilities of the people!

What a heresy and height of ungodliness! I am genuinely afraid that if we continue at this rate, decline and deterioration will soon come to our churches.

True church growth is not people becoming mere church members. They must be soundly and genuinely born - again and become disciples of our Lord. True church growth is not only numerical growth. In actual fact, numerical growth is only one aspect of growth that must be seen in the church. Balanced church growth calls for both numerical and spiritual growth. As the church grows in quantity, it must also grow in quality. As people flock to the church they must get born-again and grow up to become committed disciples of our Lord.

I am aware that the word 'discipleship', has got lost in the dictionary of many new Apostolic and Pentecostal churches. The emphasis is on using the people to build a great church and attendance records can be flaunted to admirers, far and wide.

They break the law of discipleship in dynamic church growth with reckless abandon, and they think they can get away with it. Well, very soon the law will break them and their church also.

Doing a durable and rewardable work demands that church leaders must start to take the law of discipleship very seriously. They must stop using the people to build a great church, rather, they should use the church to build a great people. The church is not the building, the church is the

people and the people must truly know the Lord and be seriously committed to Him.

The Lord is not looking for babies, but matured men and women. He is not looking for a church that is a spiritual nursery, but an army that can fight the end time battle and win. The church must never operate as a baby nursery but rather as a barrack to train Christians to fight the battles of life and of the gospel.

The strength of a church is not measured by the seating capacity but by the discipleship and sending capacity. A church doesn't need more members, but ministers who can reach out to minister to others.

The commitment level of the people must be high. They must show commitment to Christ, the church of Christ and the work of Christ in the world. They must show true marks and qualities of true disciples of our Lord in their individual lives.

A true disciple must live a sacrificial life; practise self-denial: maintain regular devotional life of prayer and Bible study; show signs of growing in faith; live a godly, holy, distinct and exemplary lifestyle; discover and use gifts to bless and edify others; participate in mission and reaching out to sinners; give time, talent and treasure to the propagation of the gospel; be a regular and responsible member of a Christ-centered church and live obediently to the word of God by seeking to do only those things that Jesus would do if He were still on earth.

These true qualities of a disciple must be inculcated into the life of every member of the church. They must be emphasized and re-emphasized until it becomes the life and blood of every professed Christian. It is only those

who are willing to live by this standard that are true and genuine Christians.

If our churches can imbibe this law and stand firmly on it, requesting and demanding that every member live by it's dictates, much of the problem bedevilling the church will be greatly solved and reduced.

It is an open secret that lack of discipleship emphasis have resulted in too many problems that are seriously threatening to sink many once thriving churches. Though, many pastors, bishops and leaders are trying to cover these things and behave as if things are okay, but the watching public are not deceived.

We cannot do less than our Lord and hope to succeed. He gave stringent conditions for becoming His follower and disciple. When He saw great crowds, he sometimes preach hard and thought provoking messages to them so that He will know those who are truly His. (John 6:52-69)

Pampering and cajoling people with sweet sermons will not always produce rugged and tough people for heaven.

Growing churches balance their discipleship process around these five elements:

A way to find people
A way to fold people

A way to feed people
A way to feel people
A way to field people

Now let us look at each of them briefly:

(a) A Way to Find People

The church must be outreach minded. Concentrate on reaching out and finding lost sinners. The church must never lose, ignore or abandon the evangelistic mandate. The church must open many doors of outreach to sinners. She must continually woo and win sinners in their hundreds and thousands.

(b) A Way to Fold People

The church must not only find, she must also fold them into the life of the church.

Finding sinners must be followed by a programme of folding and assimilating them into the church. Finding sinners and not folding them into the church is a wasted effort, wasted resources and precious time. There must be a way that people will easily be incorporated and assimilated into the church so that they can become responsible church members. Folding them in will help their growth and maturity.

(c) A Way to Feed People

They must be fed with balanced diet of the word. They must be built up for the Lord. The feeding must not be shallow or one sided. They must be really grounded in the word and growing in Him.

The kind of feeding we do will largely determine their growth and maturity in Christ. It will determine whether they will remain as spiritual babies or grow to become committed disciples of the Lord.

(d) A Way to Feed People

There must be a process of teaching, training, discovering and developing their gifts for proper usage. The people must be felt for spiritual gifts and trained to use their gifts to bless others and glorify the Lord. They must not remain idle, uninvolved and uncommitted in the church. They must find out God's purpose for their lives and fulfil their ministries.

(e) A Way to Field People

Those who have discovered their ministries must be allowed to move out and fulfil them. The church must get people involved in mission and church planting. People must be released for home and foreign mission. The people must not be allowed to become saved, sanctified and satisfied. They must get ready and challenged to get involved in world evangelization, starting from their own Jerusalem.

The process of discipleship must revolve around these five elements continuously.

CHAPTER 17

LAW OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Even though spiritual warfare remains a much vilified issue among many respected Christian leaders, yet it has come to stay as a law that helps the dynamic growth of churches.

In the last 18 years or thereabout, God has raised the specter of spiritual warfare to a level never known before. It has become a veritable tool to

accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission given to the church by the Lord.

The church in Africa must especially recognize spiritual warfare as a law that helps the vitality of the church in so many Communities. Africa is known for occultic practices, idol worshipping and demonic invocations and incantations.

Such evil entanglements give room for the devil to exercise control over a tribe, people, community, city and nation. He holds them in bondage and blindfolds them to the light of the gospel of our Lord.

No wonder Apostle Paul said in II Corinthians 4:3-4; *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them “.*

It is clear then that many don't believe the gospel because the enemy has placed a seal of darkness on their hearts. Spiritual warfare then is mandatory if we must succeed in evangelism and church growth. It was this realization that made me publish a classic book on it “Spiritual Warfare for Dynamic Church Growth” in 1999.

Jesus gave a promise of building His church and that the gates of hell will not prevail in Matthew 16:18. In that promise is the shout of victory, but we must fight and resist the enemy. The gates of hell will not fold its arms and watch the church progress without opposition and blockade. It will fight and resist the forward movement of the church in a determined way.

Knowing that the church is the only power that can stop Satan, the gates of hell will therefore wage relentless war against the church. The gates of hell will not give up without a fight, the church therefore must practice spiritual warfare in both offensive and defensive postures.

The Scripture says in II Corinthians 2:11 *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices”*. Satan has many devices against the church. He has plans and methods of obstructing the gospel and growth of the church. If we are ignorant and uninformed about these devices of the enemy, then he will cheat us and take advantage of us.

Candidly, much of the church world has been showing abysmal ignorance about the devices of the enemy against the church. The more reason churches are empty, shallow and stagnant. These are evidence of Satan’s success in his devices against the church.

Spiritual warfare is an effort to deal with the forces blindfolding people from responding to the gospel of our Lord. It is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It is evicting the host of darkness that makes the local church to be struggling in the community. It is resisting and overwhelming the gates of hell militating against the growth, progress, advancement and expansion of the church.

Spiritual warfare is an effort not to underestimate or overestimate the enemy, but to recognize that he is there and that we have the authority to deal with him and stop his nefarious activities in the community.

Jesus introduced spiritual warfare by first defeating Satan in the wilderness encounter and then consummate it on the cross. (Matthew 4:27; Col. 2:15).

He invaded the kingdom of Satan with the kingdom of God. He first dealt with the strongman before proceeding to preach the gospel. He took authority over the enemy and displayed His divine power over him during his earthly ministry. He also gave authority to the church to resist the devil and bind his demons so that the gospel can really progress and prosper (Luke 10:17-19).

Jesus has conquered on the cross for us, but He placed the responsibility of resisting, binding and taking captive the strongman and releasing those in bondage on the lap of the church.

Church growth cannot really happen without spiritual warfare. Before growth will happen in the church, we must engage the spirits that bring lukewarmness, non-growth, stagnation, barrenness and decline to our churches.

The example of the Ephesians church should suffice for all. The church was established through warfare in the Book of Acts chapter 19:11 -26.

Paul fought warfare on three levels. He fought the ground level warfare of casting out demons and performing miracles. He also fought the occultic level of dealing with those using magical powers and arts, and have their books burnt. He also fought on strategic level of overcoming Diana, the strongman (demon) over Ephesus and Asia minor.

It was after overcoming on these levels that he planted the church in Ephesus. It eventually became a strong, virile and thriving church. In the epistles he wrote to them, he warned and urged them to continue the warfare he started the church with (Ephessians. 6:10-18). But they apparently neglected it, because after some years Jesus sent a chilling message to that church that they have left their first love, and are now cold, lukewarm and stagnant. Sadly the church was eventually wiped out. (Revelation 2:1-6).

Every local church must learn a lesson from this church. Without warfare, Satan and his demons will have a field day operating inside, around and over the local church.

It is an open knowledge among spiritual warfare practitioners that Satan assigns demons to churches. There are specific demonic agents assigned to a church to hinder her health, growth and progress.

They can operate inside, around and over a church. Sometimes, they capitalize on an incident, or instigate crisis, chaos, rebellion, sinful actions and plant the seed of corruption in the hearts of the leaders, members and workers.

Any pattern of reoccurring problem, crisis, calamities, incidents and sinfulness in a church is the sure evidence of the particular demonic agent working against that church.

In some churches, it is death, accidents, poverty, disunity, splits, curses, religious spirit and scandals. Once they are current and recurrent in the church, that means demons are at work.

If we fail to use our God-given authority against their power, they will render the church sick, stagnant and struggling. If we don't deal with them. God will not deal with them on our behalf.

A strongman is in control of many communities and cities. Many of our cities, communities and neighbourhoods are demon dominated. Every community and city has a 'spirit' and each unit of the society is protected and directed by its brooding angel. If it is under the authority of God, it's spirituality is angelic and if under Satan, demonic.

The demonic agents usually take control through the first inhabitants of an area, and their continued presence is guaranteed through sacrifices, fetish ceremonies, festivals and covenants. The herbalists, occultic priests, mystic temples and pagan altars serve as 'power boosters' to the enemy in the area. The land, people, communities and area have been dedicated to the strongman.

Without evicting the strongman through powerful warfare, there might be no breakthrough for the gospel. The strongman must be known, engaged and defeated so that his captives can be set free.

Going to an area to preach the gospel and plant churches without this kind of warfare has been the bane of many missionary efforts and it has led to the death of many missionaries and church planters.

Effective spiritual warfare will only be possible when we study, know and are aware of the devices of the enemy. The enemy you don't know is the enemy that will defeat you. You must be informed about your enemy.

You must put on the whole armour of God. The whole armour of God is the sure protection against the onslaught of the enemy. James 4:7 must be literal in your life. The more you submit to God, the more effective you will be in driving out the enemy.

Warfare must not be done alone. You must share your knowledge with others and enlist them after proper training. Everyone that wants to be engaged in warfare must be ready to live holy, godly and transparent lives. There must be no room for sin, evil and unforgiving spirit in your heart and life. If you harbour any of such, you will be powerless against the enemy.

Spiritual warfare starts from our personal lives. There must be no ground for the enemy in our lives on which he can use to launch his smear campaign against us. It is then warfare can move to the church, family and our communities.

Spiritual warfare must take place on the ground level. This is dealing with demons operating inside the church and hindering the growth of the church from within. (Mark 1:20-23). They are the fifth column that give

information to the enemy from within. They must be engaged through serious fasting, prayer, sanctifying the church, chairs, doors, altars, pews and strategic points as the Lord leads. Warfare should also be done, by going round the church in Jericho march and declaring the place a Holy Ghost zone.

Spiritual warfare should move to the occultic level whereby we bind and destroy occultic powers working in the streets and adjoining areas of the church. This will call for street by street warfare, house to house prayer and praise marches in the community.

At this level, only one church is not advisable to do it alone. The ideal thing is for churches to come together to jointly drive out occultic powers militating against the light of the gospel in the community. (Acts 8:5-11). Prayers should be made at junctions, town halls, palaces of chiefs, government headquarters and every important points of interest serving the community.

Spiritual warfare must also move to the strategic spirit level where the strongman ruling over the tribe, people, city and communities is confronted and dealt with. Churches should come together for time of waiting upon the Lord and doing praise marches that will destroy the stronghold of the strongman over the place.

In all these warfare, we must effectively use our spiritual weapons. Prayer and fasting preparation must precede everything, sins must be repented of and reconciliation made. Then, when we march against the enemy repeatedly in the name of Jesus, blood of Jesus, word of God and authority in prayers, they have no choice than to bow. This must however be done repeatedly for maximum impact.

CHAPTER 18

LAW OF STRATEGY

Many church leaders may be surprised to see strategy as a law of church growth. To such people, it is a confirmation of their assertion that church growth teachings glorify human effort than God's intervention. But the truth and reality is that churches grow as a result of one strategy or another. It may be known, it may not be known, yet church growth usually results to the employment of certain strategy.

Though a careful reader can see some form of strategy in the other laws, yet by dealing with it in a whole chapter is not a duplication of efforts, but a recognition that it is an important law of dynamic church growth.

Strategy is the art of doing things in a wise, effective and result-oriented way. It requires proper planning and knowing the most cost-effective way of achieving results. Strategy is not human planning without taking God into cognizance. Rather, it involves knowing the mind of the Spirit as to the most effective way to do ministry and achieve maximum result for God and His kingdom.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 says; *“If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct”*.

Wisdom is another word for strategy. Strategy is better than energy. Without good and viable strategy, the church can end up in tragedy.

Apostle Paul calls himself a wise master builder in I Corinthians 3:10. In other words, he is a wise strategist for the kingdom of God. He did not work haphazardly, but in strategic and effective ways.

By employing good strategy, he was able to lay a good foundation for the work. He believed in working strategically to achieve results that will stand the test of time. Church leaders of today cannot do otherwise and hope to succeed.

We may acknowledge it or not, but strategy is a feature of our daily existence. We plan or strategies to go out and achieve things. We also plan or strategize in achieving some aims and goals in life. Much more importantly, strategy is very crucial to the health, growth and continuous relevance of the church. Without a good and viable strategy, the church will be unable to win the people of this generation.

It is strategy that will determine the results the church will achieve. Continuous relevance calls for strategic planning by the church. Strategy that works before may not work today. Winnable people can be won or lost due to strategy. What has worked before is not working today. Continuous evangelistic effectiveness demands for a viable strategy.

God has never fought two battles with the same strategy. That shows that He is very strategic. He moves in strategic ways, His wonders to perform.

A good study of the ministry of John the Baptist and that of our Lord Jesus will reveal different strategies.

While John was fiery, hell-raising and radical in his messages and yet, countless thousands flock to him for repentance, Jesus was mild, miracle-working and need-meeting in His approach. He achieved mighty results. His approach to sinners was very different to that of the pharisees and the religious bigots of His day.

John never performed a miracle, yet he turned the nation back to God and introduced the Lamb of God to them. Jesus did so many miracles to

authenticate His divinity and draw the people to God. Both achieved lasting results, yet they employed different strategies.

Strategy is based on the fact that what works in one place may not work in another place. Past strategies will not work in the light of changes in peoples' views, perceptions and outlook of life.

Effective evangelism demands for strategic planning. How people were won in times past is not how they will be won today.

Unfortunately, many church leaders are either ignorant of this truth or they simply choose to go ahead hoping that one day people will respond. Some are even saying, that the hearts of sinners today are so hard that they don't want to come to the Lord anymore. They are saying such because sinners refused to respond to their old and worn out strategies.

Churches who believe that past strategies that was blessed by the Lord will always elicit response today from sinners will find to their consternation that they are recording abysmal failure.

For example, past strategies such as house to house preaching, distribution of tracts, open air film show, open air street preaching and big time crusades, early morning town cry and bus preaching have all worked one way another, but mostly now are not as effective and result oriented as before.

In some cases they still enjoy some fair degree of success, but majorly they are no longer effective. Churches that still cling to them will work so much but achieve little results.

Research and mapping must come before a strategy is evolved. There must be honest answers to pertinent questions. The church must be researched and mapped .

This means that we must search out those reasons that negate the vitality and effectiveness of the church. They may be historical, spiritual and physical in nature. They must be discovered and addressed.

We must equally answer the following questions very sincerely: Why are we not growing? What are those things hindering the growth of the church? What is the growth rate of the church? Why is our evangelism not effective? What is our assimilation rate? How effective is our Sunday School? Where is the graph of growth pointing?

How relevant are our strategies? Are we using any discernible strategy at all to reach and win people? If not, why? What are the strategies that God seems to be blessing today? How do we use them for maximum effect?

The story was told of the Tiv people in the Middlebelt of Nigeria. The Missionaries who brought the gospel to them employed the usual strategy of preaching and open sharing of the gospel, without doing any form of research to the viability of their strategy.

Well, in twenty five years, they were able to win 25 people. Frustrated and defeated, they left and handed over the work to those new converts. The

converts, knowing their people, changed the strategy. They got the gospel message into songs and folklore and in another twenty five years were able to win 250,000 people for the Lord!.

Churches must search out strategies that God seems to be blessing today and employ them for mighty church growth. Some effective strategies today are miracles, signs and wonders; prophetic prayers and impartation; allowing people to initiate and run ministries to various segments of the society; community warfare and praise marches; specific programmes that are geared towards some particular needs and deliverance from demonic oppression, sickness, curses and generational bondages.

All these and many more are strategies that God is blessing for dynamic church growth. No one strategy is more sanctified than the other. God can choose to bless one in one place than the other.

The church must be strategic because Satan is very strategic. Until you are able to evolve the right strategy, your church may not see the desirable growth you so much longed for.

CHAPTER 19

LAW OF IMAGE

Image is everything! Your image like a smoke or odour will always go before you and reveal your true identity. The growth of a church depends largely on the image the church projects.

Some church leaders seem to forget that though the church is a spiritual entity, yet she is also a social institution. As a social institution, she is being closely watched and monitored by the society. The church is held in high standards and people lose faith in her when she appears not to be living up to godly expectations.

To have power and impact the society, the church must strive to maintain a good and positive image. A church with a good image naturally attracts people and a church with a bad image repels people. How people see your church matters a lot.

The Book of Matthew 16:13-16 shows to us that Jesus was concerned with the image He was projecting. He asked what and how the public perceived Him and also how the disciples perceived Him. Not that He was looking for the approval and applause of men, far from it, but He was concerned about projecting the right image to the people.

This is because, once people's perception is wrong and faulted, it will adversely affect the way they receive the message and the truth He brought. The church that is serious about her growth must take a cue from our Lord. How the people sees the church matters a lot.

The kind of image the local church is projecting in the Community will go a long way in shaping her growth and future.

What unbelievers are saying about your church matters a lot - they will make or mar the church. Surprised? But very truthful. You have no control over their thoughts, but how they view the church due to how the church has comported herself will form their opinions about the church.

Our research has uncovered the fact that unbelievers do tell each other the kind of churches they should attend. While they recommend one church to

one another, they hinder and prevent their friends from attending some churches based on their opinion of those churches. So, if your church has created a negative image for herself in the Community, you can be sure you will have a hard time experiencing growth there.

On the other hand, some local churches have never given their image a single thought. They are not known in their locality. They project no image and has no positive or negative image about themselves. They are existing in their Community but they are not leaving or making any appreciable impact there.

Dynamic growth requires that you must be known for something. You must project an image. Your host community must identify your church for something. Your identity must be clear and unambiguous. For example, you can be known as a miracle centre, prayer centre, healing sanctuary, deliverance arena, blessing centre, family church, solution centre, teaching church, power centre and et cetera.

What you are known for must be what is happening in your church. When people come to your church and God repeatedly do spectacular works in their lives, they will carry it to others and that will be the nickname of your church.

People must see your church as a place where God will meet their needs. The news must spread far and wide about God's doing in your place and that will reinforce the image of your church. Many who will not come to church today will come when they want their needs in the area your church specializes in to be met by the Lord.

Your image will form peoples' thinking about your church. If they think positively of your church, then you will attract a crowd. If they think negatively about your church, then you will remain stagnant and decline.

If outsiders don't think at all about your church, then your growth will be put in abeyance. If you are doing nothing to place the consciousness of your church in the thinking of people in the Community, then you will never see good growth.

When your church is lost, unknown and unheard of in your Community, how then can you experience growth? Even, if people are coming from long distances, yet, the church has no future, if she is unknown in her immediate Community.

Every church must be a Community church. Every church must make impact in her immediate community. A one to five kilometers radius is the ministry area of the church. This is her Jerusalem which she must win first before going to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth.

Churches that are doing practically nothing in their immediate communities and yet are trying to win the world are disobedient unto the Lord. So long the planting of the church in such community is as a result of the leading of the Lord, that church must become a Community church.

A Community church in the sense that eighty percent of members of the church must be people from the immediate community. The first Century church affected Jerusalem, her immediate community very well before God sent her to other areas.

Churches that fail to win the people of their community are failing God and the people. If every church can function as a community church, winning and affecting people positively, many people will be won for the Lord than the present situation.

The fact should not be lost that one reason why so many churches have not really become a community church is because they have no good image there. At one time or the other, crisis of alarming proportions such as scandals, moral lapses, quarrel, infighting, financial impropriety and tribal sentiments had rocked the church, leading to splits, break away and forming of rival congregation in the same community.

These unfortunate scenario had led to the bad image of churches in the community. Don't be deceived, whatever goes on inside a church always finds its way to the ears of people in the community and they will either help or hinder the image of the church in the community.

Churches that build on wrong foundation of crisis, fighting with land owners, taking over other peoples' properties unjustly and duping members of their hard-earned money in the name of seed sowing and joint property development will have a hard time convincing people that they are genuine and real.

Pastors that are messing around with women and having disobedient wives and children will make people to think negatively about the church. Pastor's wives and women of position in the church who are not living right will create bad images for the church in the community and effectively kill off the growth potential of the church.

Churches that have the mentality of us against them' in their approach to issues in the community will only earn themselves image that will work against them in the future. Good community image starts from the pastor. He must see himself not only as the pastor of the local church but also the pastor of the whole community. The community must be his parish.

The church must also be involved in community projects that will enhance her image and shows that she cares. She must partake in community development projects, repair roads, dig boreholes and serve the community in whatever capacity that are not ungodly.

A church can create a good image for herself by sticking to the truth of God's word, living by Scriptural examples and by not tolerating sin and evil.

Any pastor that has behaved in an ungodly way to lower the good image of the church must be transferred or resigned. Retaining such pastor is a pointer to the community that the church is not ready to repair her battered image. Churches that desires dynamic growth on continuous basis must find means to make people think of them, and positively too!

CHAPTER 20

LAW OF PROGRAMMES

The law of dynamic church growth also calls for pragmatic programming in the church. No church can expect to grow without proper programming. The place of programme in the health and growth of a church cannot be

overemphasized. It has the power to help or hinder the viability and vitality of any church.

Good programming has the capacity to lift a church to new level of growth and impact, and bad programming can lead to disinterest, discouragement and disillusionment of the people with the church.

Too many pastors have not come to terms with the utmost importance of programmes to the health and well-being of their local church. They set up and start some programmes that cannot be of real benefit to the people in whatever form. No research is made as to the relevance of such programme and the people react by refusing to participate in large numbers. The church will not grow on just any kind of programme.

People today are selective when it comes to which programme to attend in the church. People don't just come to any programme anymore. They choose the ones that can bless and edify them and jettison those they feel are irrelevant.

Many pastors that are crying themselves hoarse over the inability or unwillingness of their people to come to their programmes in large numbers need to cross-check the impact and relevance of such programmes in the lives of their people. People react and quietly show their disapproval to a particular programme by their refusal to attend in appreciable number.

But too often, pastors don't see the handwriting on the wall and they still stubbornly continue with such programmes, despite increasingly low and

scanty attendance.

Programmes are the midwives of your vision. Your vision for the church will become realistic and practical in the church through the avenue of programmes. Programmes are the avenue to bring vision into practical fulfillment in the church.

Leading the church forward demands for strategic programming. Building up a well-balanced and rounded church calls for wisdom and deep understanding of the power of programmes. Programmes can be used to correct imbalance, wrong notions and attitudes of people towards the church, situations and redirect them on the right way to go.

Many times, programmes in the church take a life of their own. They tend to stand aside and become sacred. Leaders are unwilling or outrightly afraid of changing or scrapping such programmes despite the fact that they are no longer bringing positive results to the church.

Just because the programme has been running for a long time and God had used it in the church to bless lives tremendously, it has now become so sacred that nobody is willing to cancel it, despite clear evidence that its usefulness is past gone. In such cases, decay will start in the church.

Pragmatism must be the watch-word when it comes to effective and result-oriented programming. We must be pragmatic enough to assess and change those programmes that has outlived their usefulness.

Programmes must be changed or retained according to their continuous relevance in the lives of the people. The people must be held in high esteem than any programme. The people are not made for programmes, rather, programmes are made by people and for the blessings and edification of the people. The moment they no longer achieve their intended and desired impact, they must be scrapped and better and more relevant ones instituted.

Every church must have a 'Programme Assessments Group? Their assignment is to take critical and dispassionate look at the relevance, impact and results of each programme of the church. Their recommendations will determine the fate of many church programmes.

Every pastor or church leader must ask and answer the following questions:

What percentages of our programmes are geared toward maintenance and growth?

Are the programmes relevant and need-meeting?

Are people's needs the focus of our programmes?

Where are the signs of the programme effectiveness?

The weekly, monthly and yearly programmes of each church must pass through the scrutiny of these pertinent questions.

Pastors must know that too much programmes kill a church and too few programmes hurt them spiritually. In the first instance, too much programmes will kill off the vital interest of the people.

The programme schedule that runs every day of the week for six months and after that, another one will start a week later, will leave the people breathless and unable to digest and put to practise all they have learnt. Their family lives will suffer and they will not have time to really enjoy their rest and relaxation.

Having programmes four or five times a week, weekend retreats, public holidays and always coming up with one seminar, teaching or reemphasis that leave no room for rest will soon get on the nerves of the people and they will quietly rebel by skipping them often.

Without mincing words, this is a poor case of bad programming, and I am aware that many churches are in this situation.

However, too few programmes also will leave the people malnourished and weak spiritually. The tendency to visit and attend programmes in other churches will be very tempting.

Yes, many pastors are displaying lack of creativity in planning and executing programmes. They only carry out their weekly routine of Bible Study, Miracle Hour and Prayer Meeting. Nothing to ginger and fire up the people. Such churches will become spiritually low, cold and cases of backsliding and transferring of membership will be very high.

These two realities call for delicate balance of programme planning on the part of church leadership. The weekly programmes must be kept lively, interesting, need-meeting and dynamic. The teaching and prayer programmes during the week must keep on arousing the interest of the people. The weekly programmes must deliver God's blessing to their lives.

They must be timely, time-conscious, on a good day, relevance in content and always leave a good taste in the mouth of the people. Weekly programmes that are abstract in content, poor in timing and irrelevant to the lives of the people will leave a sour taste in their mouth and they will withdraw their attendance. Most Bible Study programmes in churches suffer from this malaise.

Monthly programmes that will focus on particular needs and areas must be wisely executed. The topics must be interesting and challenging. The timing must be right. The handling must be superb. The speakers must justify their invitation. According to your situation and environments, they may come up in the morning, evening, week days, weekends or vigils.

The temperament and response of your people should determine your programme structure. No matter the success of any programme, it must close at the advertised time. Extending and elongating a programme beyond the advertised time will leave you short on credibility and it will affect you and your church later on.

It is always good to release the people and round off the programme while they are still enjoying it. By that, when next you call them, they will respond quickly, knowing that you will keep to your word and time.

Dynamic and durable church growth demands that the pastor must be very creative in his programmes. He must creatively use programmes to build up the church, work on the weak areas of the church and solve problems in the life, family, marriage, business, finance and spiritual lives of the people.

Running the same kind of programmes on the same area of focus will bring monotony and imbalance to the people. Programmes must be used to challenge, motivate, inspire and encourage the people to pray, give, sow, lead, evangelize, stand up for Christ and do the will of God in this corrupt and sinful world.

Our programming structure must not only maintain the saints, they must also be outreach oriented. There must be programme of preaching, teaching, training and developing the people for future usage.

Issues and knotty problems must be addressed and solutions provided that will help the people to live balanced and growing Christian lives.

Every month could be given a name and a particular subject addressed. Monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly seminars, conferences, workers

and staff training programmes must be included in the calendar. They must be designed to address some glaring areas of needs in the church.

The underlying motive of every single programme in the church is to edify the people and to present every man perfect in Christ.

Each programme must be well advertised and notice given before hand. Hush and rush in programmes debar people from attending. The benefits of each programme must also be well communicated to the people.

Proper and prevailing prayers must go on on behalf of each programme. A programme not well prayed for, though well planned will still fall short of achieving the intended results. Lasting impact, results and transformation demand for proper planning, serious handling, creative approach and prevailing prayers for our church programmes.

CHAPTER 21

LAW OF PULPIT

The fact that I am making this the 19th law doesn't mean it's not as important as the other laws. The fact that it has not come up earlier has not diminished its importance to the dynamic growth of the church.

Of course, I have written a book; "Leading from the Pulpit" on this, yet we cannot but examine it as a law that greatly helps the acceleration and continuous growth of churches.

Every pastor or church leader must operate behind a pulpit, podium or an altar. His duties require that he or she must occupy some kind of platform to address and communicate with the people every time.

In so many churches, the pulpit or lectern is strategically placed that everyone must see it and all the **actions come from there.**

The pulpit is the controlling centre in the church. It gives purpose, direction, guidance and leverage to the church.

No church can rise higher than her pulpit will allow. The pulpit will either lift the church up or lead her down. When the pulpit ceased to give clarion call, its voice muddled up and unclear, life and vitality will be away in the church.

When the pulpit is corrupt and cold, the pew will be twice corrupt and cold. When the voice from the pulpit has sunk to a pathetic whisper, the fire, vibrancy and divine unction gone, then the days of evil are upon the church.

Dynamic church growth answers to dynamic and fire-brand pulpit. Churches grow or decline according to the power of the pulpit. Churches rise and fall in proportion to the leadership from the pulpit.

Not all pastors of growing churches are great preachers, but they are good leaders in the pulpit. They are alive and well in their pulpits and it reflect in the growth of their churches. They know how to use their pulpits to keep the growth of their churches on course.

The impact of the pulpit is greatly determined by the kind of man behind the pulpit. If he is not transformed, the pulpit will not possess any transforming power. If an unregenerated man stands behind the pulpit often, it will gravely affect the church. The power of the pulpit to transform is hinged on the life of the man behind the pulpit.

The pulpit that will lead to dynamic church growth must possess transforming power, and that cannot be self-generated, it is dependent on the man behind the pulpit.

If he is not a transformed person and his life a clear and an open channel for God to flow through, then the power of the pulpit to transform will be severely limited. If he sees the pulpit just as a 'professional platform' then it will be impossible to give life to the people.

Today, people come to church to hear good, sound, relevant and life-changing messages. Majority of the people are tired of the sleazy, sweet-tongued and rabble-rousing ways and manner of the prosperity preachers. They therefore desire some sound preaching and teachings that can help them here and hereafter.

My experience among several people in many churches show that the average church goer is interested in balanced, good and relevant preaching.

Though it may be hitting them hard, yet they want it because they have come to realize that this is what will help them on the long run.

They are therefore put off by the lying, deceitfulness, self-glorification, display of wealth, and exaggerations being openly displayed by many preachers on the pulpits today.

Growth preaching are relevant, timely and problem-solving. They are not imbalanced, one-sided, dull, uninspiring, gloom and doom sermons, rather, they are messages that bring hope, healing, deliverance, edification and challenge to the people.

Not only are they preaching, they are also teachings that seek to ground and develop the people in the things of God. An untaught church will scatter and stagnate.

A church that is only fed on motivational messages will never last. Such a church will be incapable of standing for Christ in the day of trouble. It will be full of carnal, worldly and flesh-dominated people that will be a caricature of true Christianity.

A church that is built only on preaching will collapse at the end of the day. It will be easy for them to backslide. It is a church built on sand which has no root or sure foundation.

Every preaching and teaching time must come with ministration. There should be fervent prayers after each message. It is the prayers that will help the messages to sink in.

The people must pray and the preacher must pray for the people. He must minister to the needs of the people with the same anointing he used in preaching.

God must continually confirm His word in the life of the people for the pulpit to remain relevant. Private preparation must precede every pulpit usage. Without it, the pulpit will lose its power and influence.

CHAPTER 22

LAW OF PUBLICITY

I was thoroughly amused some years ago when a respected man of God said: “We don’t publicize our programmes, it is the Holy Spirit that brings the thousands of people by Himself”.

Many gullible pastors believed that statement because it came from a highly respected man of God. They failed to cross check the facts on the ground.

At least to my knowledge, this is a church that has thousands of local branches and each branch is mandated to bring their people with buses and cars. Flier and stickers are printed and branches that failed to sufficiently mobilize their people to come and also bring their friends will cease to enjoy the favour of the denominational leaders.

With such internal mobilization efforts, how will thousands of people not come to the large monthly meetings? Yet, the General Overseer is credited with such statement.

However, it is gratifying to discover today this same church advertising on the radio, television, big screen billboards, newspapers, stickers and posters. They spend huge amount on publicity. It seems they have finally come to realize the importance of the law of publicity to the dynamic growth of churches. Yes, the Holy Spirit will bring the people, using publicity as effective instrument and tool.

You must realize that anything you are doing, without publicity you are like the man winking in the dark; he knows what he is doing, but nobody else does. This is the reason why so many programmes that has been meticulously planned and fervently prayed for still record low attendance of people.

In many cases, we prayed so much for the meetings and angels come down in great abundance to distribute gifts and divine blessings to the people, but the attendance is abysmally low and discouraging. In fact, angels are much more than the people who come!

The brethren of Jesus said to Him in John 7:4 *“For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world”*. What an instructive truth about the role of publicity!

It simply means that if you don't blow your trumpet, nobody will blow it for you. Whatever you want to do, you cannot discountenance the place of publicity. Nobody will know what God has done, is doing and wants to do in your life and church if there is no adequate publicity on your part.

The people that God wants to draw and bring to your church are not located in one spot, you need publicity and advertisement to bring them. It is publicity that will keep the church in the thinking of the people in the community.

One reason why many churches are lost and unknown in their host Community is because they are publicity shy. They believe the people will see them anyway. But the truth is that without adequate and persistent publicity, the community tends to forget the existence of a church in their midst. How then can people flock to that church?

Many churches that are sound, healthy and sincere are unfortunately not seeing much growth because they have not employed the effective tool of publicity. Many who have something to offer the people are not coming to the forefront, due to lack of publicity.

It is only those who are shallow, empty, fickle and have almost nothing to offer the generality of the people that are effectively using the instrument of publicity. And they keep on having the crowds and milking the people dry, because those who have something to offer have refused to publicize and advertise what they have.

Yes, the word of mouth is the most effective advert. However, publicity and advertisement will create the quick awareness of your church over a large area that the word of mouth cannot. Publicity and advertisement starts from your ability to create a work that people will keep talking about, week in, week out.

Something good must be happening in the church, either in the physical structure, arrangement of events or in the spiritual encounters people had in the church that will become the talk of the town. The good and positive things happening in your church will keep her in the thinking of the people and they will keep talking about her.

Excellence must become a way of life in the church. The policy of doing things better today than the way it was done yesterday must be vigorously pursued. Such commitment to excellence in the spiritual, physical, material and social aspects of the church will allow people to keep talking about her in positive ways.

The spirit of excellence must guide the church in the construction of billboards and signposts of the church. The kind of signposts announcing the name and programmes of the church goes a long way to form people's impression of the church.

The handbills, fliers, banners, posters, calendars, T-shirts and labels are all publicity agents of the church. Their quality must not be compromised. They are the silent Public Relation Officers of the church and once they are released to the public, you will not be there to defend yourself for any fault and mistake. Their quality will help peoples' perception of your church. Ditto to your books and publications.

Advertisement and publicity require good strategy and good budget. Effective strategy will largely be determined by the size of the budget. It is advisable that a church should start with what she can afford.

Start small, but aim high. At the onset, your budget may only be able to cover small fliers, handbills and a few banners. Make sure they are excellently produced and strategically placed and well distributed.

Increase your publicity budget to include more banners, radio, television, newspapers and magazines. The effect of the publicity must also be assessed, so as to know which is the most effective, and where change is needed.

Your audience also will determine your publicity strategy. Their interest, preferences and center-points must be known and taken cognizance of in your advertisement strategy.

For example, if your target audience don't listen to radio, why advertise there? If your target audience have no time for television, why wasting scarce resources advertising on the television? If your target audience loves to read books, why not focus your advertisement on bookshops and libraries?

You need to advertise and keep on advertising every programme of your church in order to keep attracting new people and to keep your church in the thinking of people.

CHAPTER 23

LAW OF NICHE-MAKING

I ended the last chapter talking about targeting your audience by your publicity. To many pastors, I might be speaking Greek to them. They believed that the whole world is their audience and it is pointless focusing on some particular people to the neglect of others.

However, this argument holds no water in the light of the fact that churches grow better and faster when they have a target audience. Churches grow dynamically when they have discovered who God has sent them to and concentrate their efforts and little resources in winning them.

This is one law of dynamic church growth that we must imbibe in Africa. In church growth terminology, it is called the ‘Homogenous Unit’. It

operates by the fact that people of the same level, tribe, group, status and culture usually come to Christ in large numbers.

As an African proverb says; “Birds of the same feather flock together”. As it is true of birds, so also it is true of people. People of the same language, educational level and status usually feel free and enjoy each others’ fellowship than people of divergent backgrounds. Is this teaching exclusion of people from the church? Absolutely no.

A cursory survey of many of our big churches in Nigeria will show that naturally, churches flow along these lines. Many growing churches reflect the class, level, language and background of the founder or pastor.

That is the way the Holy Spirit have chosen to work in the church. This is not tribalism or class barriers at work, but God who has chosen to bless some group of people in a particular way.

Niche-marketing is knowing who God has sent you to reach and concentrating on winning them. Apostle Peter was sent to the Jews while Apostle Paul was sent to the Gentiles. Knowing who the Lord has sent you to reach will greatly help your growth in no small measure.

Every church that desires growth must take time to discover her particular audience. You cannot win the whole world, but you can win your world if you know it.

It is possible to discover your audience in two ways: by prayer and research. Take time to pray and seek God's face regarding your audience. When He gives you an audience. He will also give you relevant messages to them. It is not possible to win the audience you don't know.

Moreover, you can also discover your audience by simple research. Examine the kind of people in your church presently, take particular note of their status, background, educational level, interests and their perceptions of life. Their overriding level is a pointer to the people God has sent you to.

They may be poor, struggling people with little or no education: they may be middle-class people with average education but large families; or they are young men and women that are upwardly mobile and with young families.

After you might have discovered your present audience in the church, you must devise ways to reach them, minister to them and refocus your church towards wooing them wherever they are found. This is the essence of great growth in churches.

Your audience will determine your approach and strategy. Your audience will determine your message. Your audience will determine your programming style, preaching style and methods of doing ministry.

I am aware that many churches have never come to this level. They scatter their seeds everywhere and make efforts in various directions and still

wonder why they are still struggling. Until churches truly discover and focus on their target audience, growth will remain a mirage.

Every church must stop functioning as a 'wandering generality' but as a 'meaningful specific'. Churches must have a target audience. There must be a focus and direction. Churches must know who they can best reach and go for them. God will give other people as targets to other churches. Dynamic growth calls for this.

Growth in the church usually starts as addition and then move to increase and multiplication. True church growth is not personal empire, or an ego trip for a true servant of the Lord.

Church growth results in the expansion and extension of God's kingdom. The passion that is driving church growth is the fulfillment of the Great Commission by people getting saved and becoming disciples that can reach out to others.

True church growth is not a number game. Rather, it is concerned with authentic conversion of people and spreading the church to people and places where the gospel have not been preached before.

The dynamic growth of the local church is not an end in itself. It is a means to reach out to the Community, to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the world.

Growth must never cause the local church to concentrate on herself and become contented with her little growth so far. Rather, she must ever be outward looking and focus on winning much more people.

Growing churches must imbibe the spirit of harvest. The urgency of the harvest must push the church on. Harvest theology must be operating in the heart of the pastor and the people.

Harvest theology operates by the maxim which says; ‘you don’t measure your success during the time of harvest on how many you have harvested, but by how many still remained to be harvested’. Living and operating by this harvest principle will enable the church to keep the fire of evangelism burning.

If the church must move to multiplication level and literally experience Acts 16:5 “*And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily*”, she must then practise the following points:

Firstly, leaders must be raised, trained and equipped. Moving from addition to multiplication level in the growth of a church cannot become a reality if leaders are not consciously raised, trained and equipped. Churches that have no process of selecting and training leaders will lose the growth momentum midway.

When there is no real training to harness and develop the leadership potentials of the people, the church has no future. When people can be placed in positions without any form of serious training, the growth of the church will unwittingly be jeopardized.

Sustainable growth demands for meticulous selection and training of future leaders in the church. Bible School is not the first thing in a growing church, but Leadership Training Institute that will prepare the people to partake in the multiplied growth of the church. Churches that rush to start Bible Schools once they see some sputter of growth are shooting themselves in the foot.

Secondly, church planting must be vigorously pursued. The law of multiplied growth calls for effective church planting. There is no justification in bringing multiplied thousands of people, from far and near to one spot for long periods of time.

The beginning may be good, but it will soon wear the people out physically, financially and psychologically. The simple and wisest thing to do is to take the church closer to the people. Much more growth will be seen when the church is closer to the people. However, the churches must be viable churches.

Church planting must not be done just for the sake of it. There must be adequate planning and a very dynamic pastor must lead the new church. It is then the growth will continue unabated.

Selecting untrained, uncalled but educated and position-loving person to lead the new church, as some denominational churches are doing, will do much harm than good. The new church will be affected, the new people unsaved and the church at best will become a ‘glorified club of religious affairs’.

Thirdly, churches must be multiplied until saturation is achieved. Though, some people are trying to make us believe that there is proliferation of churches, yet the fact on the ground points to the opposite. What we have

is churches concentrating in one area to the detriment of other areas and region.

For example, there are more than 27 churches in a particular School Compound, competing with and disturbing each other in a particular State in Nigeria. Yet, just 3 kilometers away, one can not find a single church in a large area inhabited by thousands of unsaved people.

Saturation church planting calls for spread of churches to every nook and cranny of the nation. Every local church must plant daughter churches. Every local church must be a reproducing church. Church planting must be taken very seriously, it is then our growth will move to multiplication.

Fourthly, ministry to various segments of the society must be encouraged and allowed to thrive. Churches that muzzle and obstruct ministry of members will not move to the next level of growth.

Multiplied growth will happen when each member is encouraged to discover and develop their God-given ministry and use it humbly to woo and win others to the Lord. There is ministry in every church that God can use to increase the growth potential of the church.

Ministries of members to various segments of the community, reaching out to prostitutes, youths, prisoners, hospitals, drug addicts, single parents, widows, the poor and barren people will go a long way to multiply the growth of the church over and over again.

Churches and church leaders that deliberately quench the fire of ministry in the heart of the people, with the secret fear that if allowed can snowballed into unintended level, will have themselves to blame later on.

Finally, missions must be embraced and welcomed. Multiplication will come when the church is mission minded. The fire of mission is kindled and kept burning in the church from the altar. The church must become a missionary sending and supporting church. People are challenged regularly to either go or give to missions. Such work cannot but enjoy multiplied blessings from the Lord which will lead to mighty multiplication.

Multiplication enables the church to grow to the extent where the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the water covers the seas.

Conclusion

I am convinced that if you have gone studiously through this massive work, you will be overwhelmed and challenged. At a point you will feel challenged, elated and inspired. At other points you will feel sad, downcast and overwhelmed and your conclusion might be a despairing fear of where to really start.

Well, I am happy to inform you that great, vibrant and viable churches are not built in a day, a year or five years. It takes many years of purposeful direction and focus. It is not a programme but a clear and committed process.

In many instances, solid and sustainable growth is like the Chinese bamboo that you must plant and water everyday for five solid years. During those years of watering, it will not shoot out until it clocks five years, then it will grow out and in two weeks will grow ninety feet tall!

What I am saying in essence is that you will need to take the most appropriate laws that fit your situation and start working from there. Don't be afraid to adapt, adjust, adopt and re-create them to your particular situation. In some of the laws, you might need the help of a church consultant. Don't hesitate to call us for help and assistance. The contact address is at the beginning of the book.

What better way to end this book than to remind you that these laws are especially applicable to churches in Africa and that if you follow them, the crowd will surely flow and flock to your church. But if you ignore, reject and break them, they have a way of breaking you and your church sooner or later.

Keep growing and glowing in Him.

International Church Growth Ministries was founded in 1994. The vision of the ministry is to provide current and reliable Church Growth principles in African context to Leaders, Pastors and Ministers that will lead to better and faster growth of their churches.

We do these through books, materials, VCD and audio cassettes at relatively low cost to people engaged in leading the church.

We equally organise seminars and conferences on various aspect of Church Growth and Health. We also accept invitations from churches to help analyse them, motivate their people and generally help the growth potentials of churches.

So far we have ministered to over 20,000 Pastors and Christian Workers across many denominational lines and independent churches. The results have been tremendous and the testimonies have been wonderful and interesting.

The ministry also saw the need to really raise the growth consciousness in the Continent and decided to pioneer an Institute on Church Growth. The response has been overwhelming as so many Pastors, General Overseers, and Church Leaders have enrolled to learn more about how to practically lead their churches to growth. The impact of the Institute on these Pastors' lives have started manifesting in the phenomenal growth of their churches and expansion of their ministries.

Listed below are some of our books and resources:

Books:

1. 32 Strategic Ways to Increase Church attendance
2. The Supernatural Leader
3. Your Growth is Your Future
4. The Secrets of Financially Strong Churches
5. Our Churches and His Church
6. Why Churches Breakaway & Lose members
7. Strategic Living
8. Leading Your Church to Lasting Growth
9. 22 Dynamic Laws of Church Growth
10. Strategic Church Planting Today
11. How to Support and Strengthen Your Pastors
12. Leading From the Pulpit
13. Spiritual Warfare for Dynamic Church Growth
14. The Place of Anointing and Administration
15. Personal Growth
16. Family Growth
17. Prayer Nugget
18. Church Growth
19. Financial Growth
20. The Impact Driven Church
21. Grow the Pastor, Grow the Church.

Resources:

- a. Spiritual Warfare for church growth
- b. Helping the clergy - leading your church to growth
- c. Practical church planting
- d. Winning the society seminar
- e. Mobilizing the laity

- f. Warfare prayer for Growth
- g. Closing the Backdoor of the church
- h. Women ministry in church growth
- i. Strategic level prayer for breakthrough
- j. Signs and Wonders for church growth
- k. Research and analysing of the church
- l. How to grow a vibrant and Healthy churches
- m. Why Churches Lose Members
- n. Empowering the Church for 21st Century
- o. Healthy Leadership for Healthy Churches
- p. Tools for Tremendous and Transforming Ministry
- q. New Waves of God's Move for End Time Harvest
- r. Magnetic, Multiplying, Marketable and Maximum Impact
- s. Building a Bigger, Better and Broader Church and many others.

Audio Tapes: & VCD

- 1. Spiritual Warfare Series
- 2. Effective Ministers Series
- 3. Women Ministry Series
- 4. Closing the Backdoor Series
- 5. Warfare Prayer Series
- 6. Strategic Level Prayer Series
- 7. Church Planting Series
- 8. Healthy Church Series.

Journal:

Church Growth Journal is a quarterly teaching and news magazine that gives vital and practical information on how to grow the church.

For further information on these and other resources available, please write or contact us at our office or call the telephone lines provided in this book.