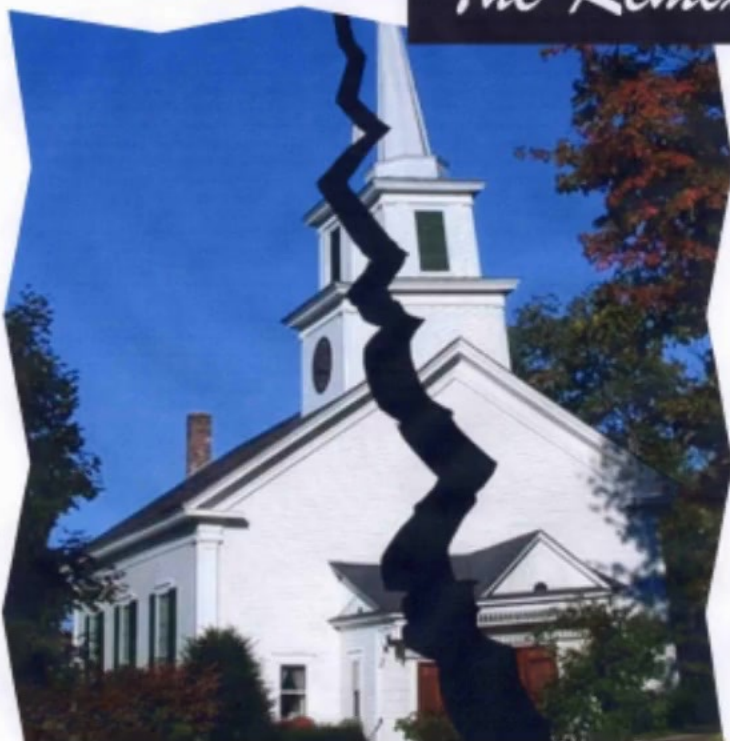


HOW TO
Grow Your Church
WITHOUT KILLING IT
The Remix



Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr.



How to Grow Your Church Without Killing It!

"A Vision for When
the Next becomes NOW!"

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MAED LTI

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According to recent research, the post-COVID church landscape shows both stabilization and fresh opportunities. Pew Research Center's 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study finds Christian affiliation holding relatively steady in recent years (about 62% of U.S. adults).

Hartford Institute's 2025 EPIC survey reports that 38% of current attenders joined their congregation in the past five years and 21% attend more than before the pandemic. Barna (2025) also notes a modest uptick in weekly attendance and that young adults are driving a resurgence—Gen Z and Millennials now attend more frequently than older generations. These shifts suggest a window for growth if congregations intentionally welcome new and returning worshipers.

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- (1) Does your church want to grow?
- (2) Do you expect new members to come to your church?
- (3) Can you name 3 reasons a person should choose your church as their church home?
- (4) What impression would someone get after visiting your church?
- (5) Do you Have Children's Church?

Today a new movement, called the Emergent Church, is becoming highly visible. These newer churches are related in two ways:

1. They are attempting to deconstruct the Protestant Church, as it relates to modernity, and reconstruct it in a new relationship to postmodernity. These emerging churches are moving beyond simplistic adaptations of old models. In fact, they seek to do away with the old models and employ brand-new approaches to ministry.

2. They are, in some measure, a reaction against the Boomer church (megachurch), seeing it as lacking in authenticity and spirituality. Specifically, they reject the rehearsed slickly presented worship service of the Boomer church. Thus these newer churches seek to employ fresh ideas for spiritual formation that are more organic than those used by Boomer churches.

There are ten characteristic views of the Emergent Church.

1. They see Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount as central to faith.

2. They see God's fingerprints everywhere.

3. They see community as more important than church.

4. They see dialogue as more important than debate.

5. They see hospitality as central to discipleship.

6. They see worship as an authentic encounter with the living God.

7. They see shared leadership as the ideal model.

8. They see culture as organic—fluid, shifting, and dynamic.

9. They see spiritual life as holistic.

10. They see church as missional.

Many of the characteristics of the younger emerging churches stress the importance of welcoming newcomers in gracious ways. For example, the stress on community, dialogue, hospitality, and mission as noted in the ten characteristics above, leads these new churches to focus quite naturally on caring for those who visit them. They are also drawn to new ways of ministry and connecting new people to the church.

When it comes to connecting new people to the church, these younger churches dislike mechanistic approaches to welcoming people. Any approach that treats people like items to be processed as an assembly line is rejected. Hence, welcoming people must be organic or natural. The flow of guests into the church takes on a more varied and complex form than in traditional churches. Assimilation, or rather the connecting of guests, takes place through the following means:

1. Sharing Compelling Stories

2. Embracing People into the Community

3. Doing Life Together

4. Engaging the Senses

5. Learning Together

6. Talking Their Talk

7. Hitting the Streets

8. Stressing the Kingdom

9. Connecting with History

10. Challenging the Culture

Emergents resist a blind acceptance of the predominate culture. They are drawn to churches that provide a biblical critique of the culture. Thus churches that seek to redeem the world as well as individuals will find guests connecting with them.

- 1.** What impact do the characteristics of the emerging generation have on your approach to connecting guests to your church?
- 2.** How do these concepts fit with your current church's values and practices?
- 3.** What challenges do these ideas present to your church and ministry?
- 4.** Which of these concepts do you find troubling? Why?
- 5.** How might you address some of these ideas in your own ministry in the coming years

The Five Basic Keys to Explosive Growth

Lead as if your church is twice its size.

STEP 01

Bring in lots of new people from outside your church.

STEP 03

Ask for explosive growth to happen and position yourself for it to happen.

STEP 02

Retain the lion's share of those new people.

STEP 04

Equip and motivate the new people to invite their networks.

STEP 05

Lead as if Your Church Were Twice Its Size

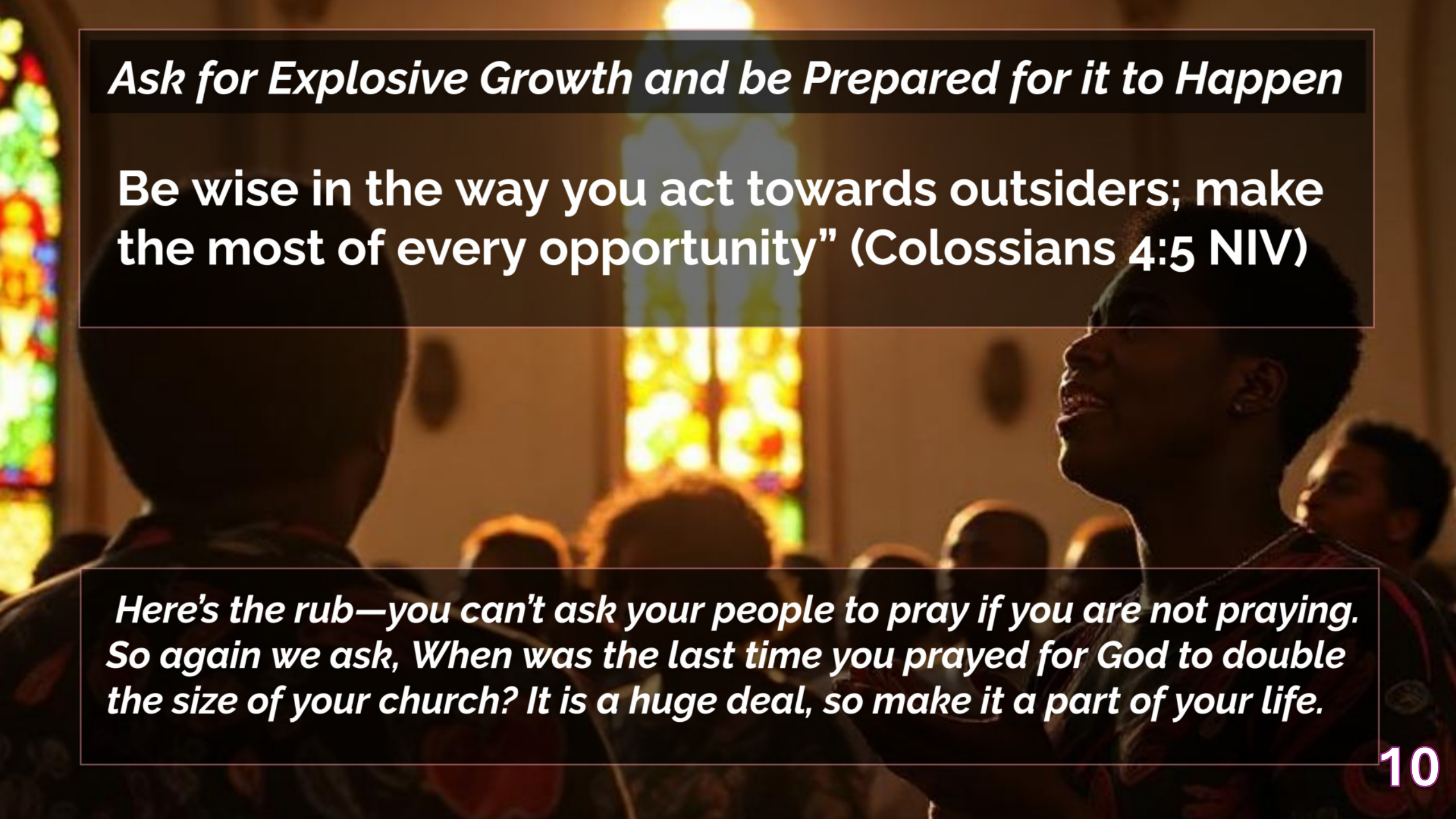
You need to picture your church as if it is twice the size it is and live into that picture. Doing so will help you get a picture of how to spend your time. You'll realize you can't continue doing some of the things you are doing and personally survive.

Question 1

What do I need to stop doing now that I've been doing?

Question 2

What do I have to begin doing that I haven't been doing?

A photograph of a church interior. In the foreground, the back of a person's head is visible on the left. In the background, several other people are seated, and a large, brightly lit stained glass window is visible. The overall atmosphere is warm and spiritual.

Ask for Explosive Growth and be Prepared for it to Happen

Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity” (Colossians 4:5 NIV)

Here's the rub—you can't ask your people to pray if you are not praying. So again we ask, When was the last time you prayed for God to double the size of your church? It is a huge deal, so make it a part of your life.

A woman with her eyes closed and arms outstretched stands in the rain. She is wearing a dark purple clerical jacket over a white collar. In the background, a church with a tall steeple is visible under a dark, overcast sky. Rain is falling heavily around her.

Don't Pray for Rain Without First Getting an Umbrella

Lots of people will pray for God to do something. But how many actually prepare for it to happen? Do you think God is going to answer the prayers of a lazy leader? We can hear God say, "How can I do that when you've not made room for them?"

You have to position yourself to receive from God.

Do you want to prepare for God to double the size of your worship attendance? If you do, you must position yourself to receive from God in at least the following ways:

- 1. SPACE**
- 2. PARKING**
- 3. SERVANTS**
- 4. MONEY**
- 5. APPEARANCE OF SPACE**

When you walk into your building, does it rival the quality of a mall or other large venue, such as a theatre? Does the atmosphere of your facility send the right message to visitors.

6. PREACHING

If your worship services were filled with more non-Christians than Christian, would your preaching need to change? You have to change your preaching style before God will bless you with visitors, and not after, because if you don't you will blow your first impression and visitors will not return.

Bring in Lots of New People from Outside Your Church

If you want a full house you need to set a date and invite your entire community to church at the same time. It's one thing to have visitors come in now and then, but we're talking about going BIG and changing a city.

**“Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full”
(Luke 14:23 NIV)**

If you invite five people, don't expect anyone to show up. But if you invite 150,000 people, you have a chance of filling the place up. So how do you invite that many people at once? Let's count the ways.

FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS!

One of the hallmarks of Jesus' ministry was his constant attack on the status quo. He challenged it every time he could. He even went out of his way to upset the religious bullies of his time (see, for example, Matthew 12). Jesus loved people too much to allow them to remain such small persons. Being nice has nothing to do with being Christian. Being nice is often nothing more than a lack of compassion for people.



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