



Growing a **BIG** small church

Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

When someone tells me he just left a large church in favor of our small church, several responses race through my mind. First, the size of a congregation is hardly a good basis upon which to choose where one will work and worship. Above every consideration is that Bible teaching is both proclaimed and practiced.

But then I wonder when he will leave our congregation because we have grown too large. I want to tell people that it is our expressed intent to become a very large congregation. After all, the Lord's commission is to make every person His disciple. And stewardship seems to dictate that a town of our size does not warrant maintaining multiple buildings with multiple sets of ministers.

Having said that, I also recognize the attraction of the small church, where everyone knows your name and you feel like part of a family. This is one of several myths to which many people have subscribed in discussions relating to the merits of a small or a large church.

We will dispel those myths at another time. For now, consider how the small church flavor and features may be cultivated as a church grows.

Begin with the Sunday meeting. Don't sit down until you have taken the initiative to speak to every individual. More than merely speaking, greet everyone by name. Force yourself to call each person by name.

Advance to a deeper level by then discovering who this person is. Show interest in his family, occupation and hobbies.

Then introduce your new friend to one of your established friends, who will repeat this process. Soon the newcomer has met several people.

Then cultivate and nurture the intimate family dynamic by becoming involved in smaller groups, such as Bible classes. Consider your class or small group activity as a small congregation within the larger one. Continually introduce new people to the small group and then create an additional small group. Expanding the number of small groups will help to maintain a small church atmosphere in a large church.

To have a big church with a small church feel, we must build it that way. Start now!

