

**ASAMBLEA APOSTÓLICA
DE LA FE EN CRISTO JESÚS**

GLOBAL
Estrategia de Jesús

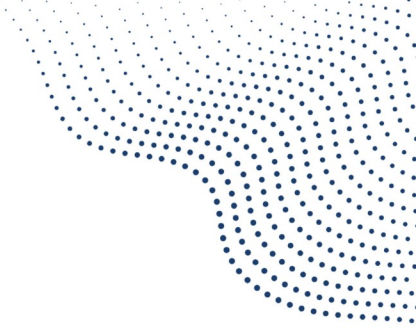
Natural Church Development

Conferencista

Ponga su nombre aqui



Introduction

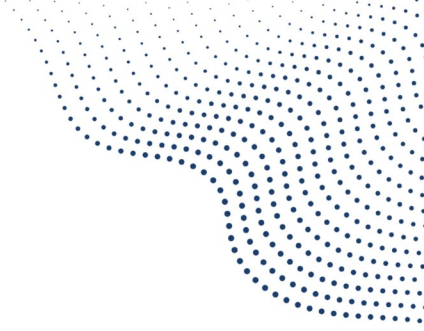


The **growth of the Church**, is one of the main concerns of the pastor.

May the church experience a holistic growth, both numerically and spiritually.

In this lesson, we will consider some essential qualities that can lead the Church to experience growth naturally.

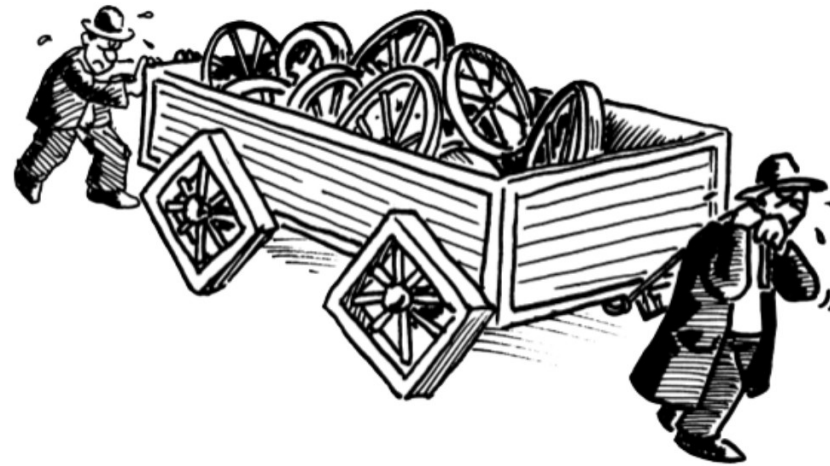




Why do we have so many difficulties with Church Growth?

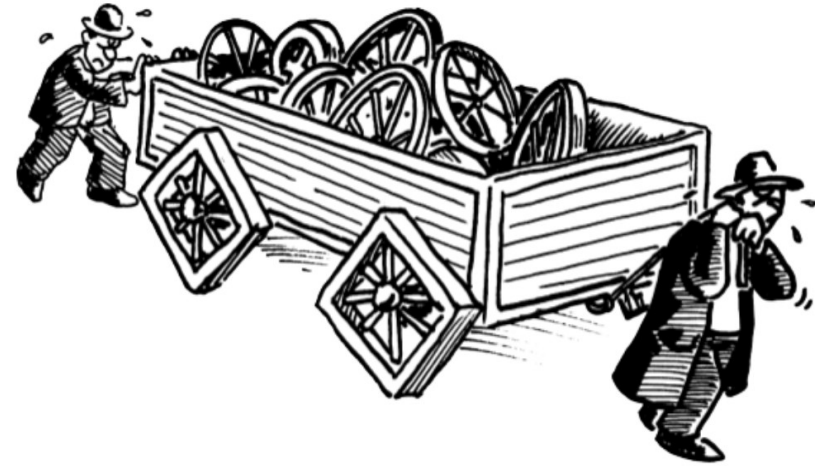
The image displays a cart with 4 square wheels.

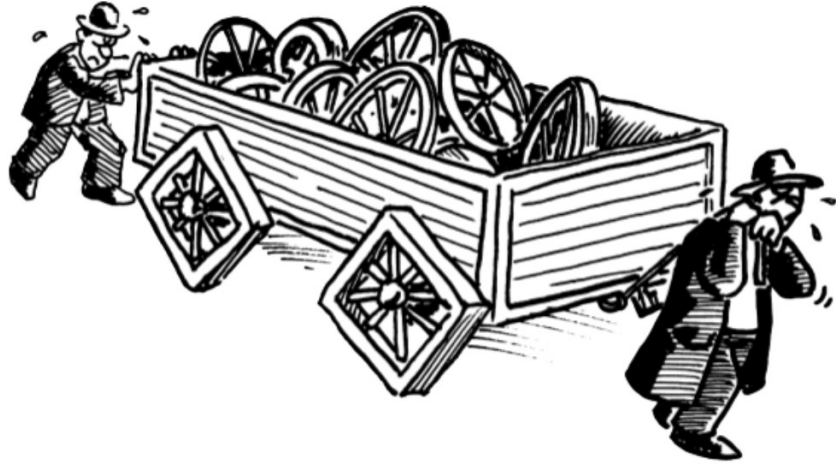
1. The cart is carrying a lot of perfectly round and highly functional wheels.



The image displays a cart with 4 square wheels.

2. Two people, who show great dedication, are pushing and pulling the cart, but are undoubtedly aware that their work is progressing extremely slow, which is quite frustrating.





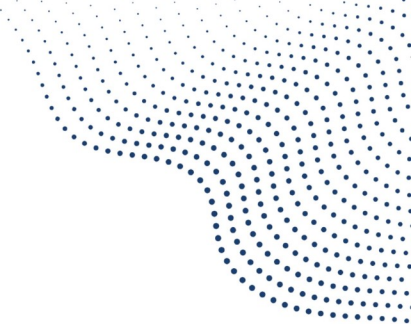
The drawing...

...is almost a prophetic description of the state of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Although the Church is moving forward, everything is happening extremely slowly.



Why is this so?



If you were to ask the two people in the drawing, one might answer:

“Because a very strong wind blows against us,” while the other might add:

2. “Because we have to take the cart up a very steep slope.”

● ● ● **Now, no one denies that, in many cases, such answers are not entirely wrong.**

From time to time, we Christians really feel the wind blowing against us, and sometimes...

The path of the Church is quite uphill.

But, the drawing reveals that these circumstances are not the real problem.

1. Even if the circumstances surrounding the Church were very favorable, the real problem would still exist.

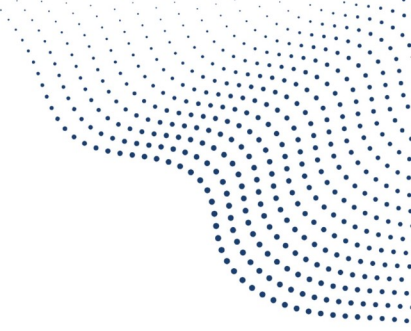
●●● This parable illustrates something essential.

Everything we need to see the Church grow, has already been provided by God.

The problem is that we have not discovered it.
Therefore, we don't make the best use of it.



Instead of using the tools God has given us...

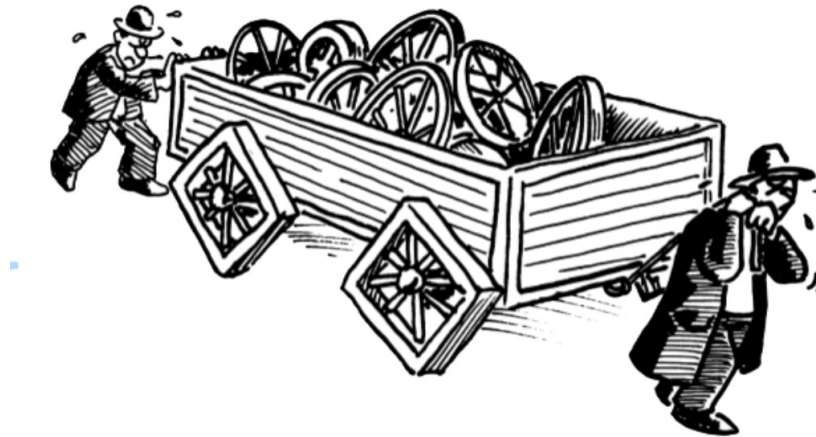


...we try to push and pull the Church with our own strength.

And maybe, we might even think that using “square wheels”, is something especially spiritual.

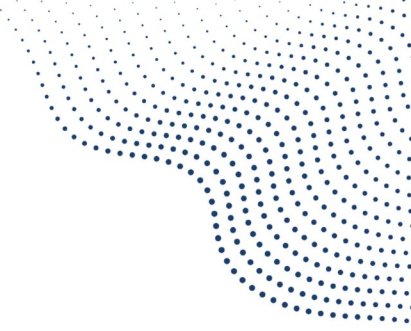
The important thing here...

...is to take those round wheels that have been so abundantly provided in the Church and put them where they belong, according to God's plan.





Christian Schwarz...



...discovered many round wheels (principles), which already exist in the Church.

The issue is that some churches use them and others don't.



How can we discover what these principles are?

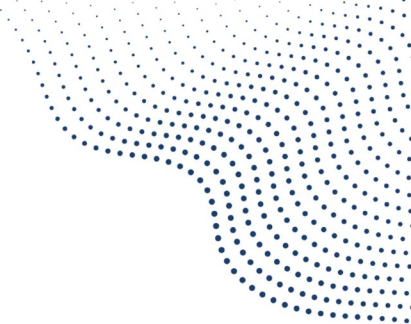


We could go and ask pastors of growing churches regarding the secret of their success.





Some of the Discoveries:



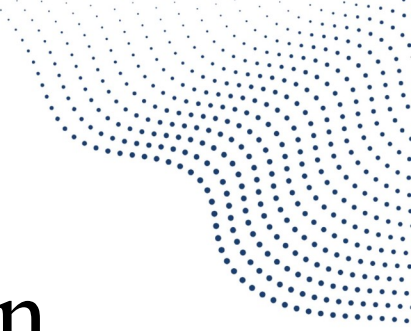
There are as many answers as there are successful churches. Some think that their secret to success is:

That they have a worship service aimed at people who don't have a religious background.

Others are sure that the key to their growth is attributed to the importance placed on praise and on the development of believers.



Some of the Discoveries:

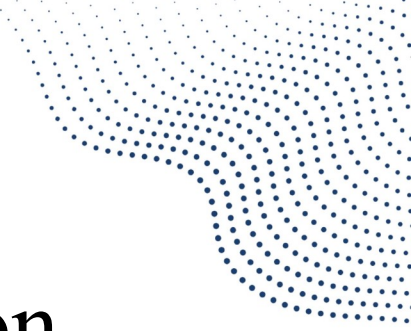


3. Others praise new marketing methods as an essential way to address church growth.

4. Others grow their Church very successfully, without ever having heard of a concept like promoting marketing techniques.



Who is right?



As convincing as all of these answers may seem on their own, each one adds to the confusion.

And when we realize that everyone seems to say, “Do as we do, and you too will be just as successful”, we really only have two options: either we appropriate a certain model or we simply give up in frustration.



There Is a Third Option



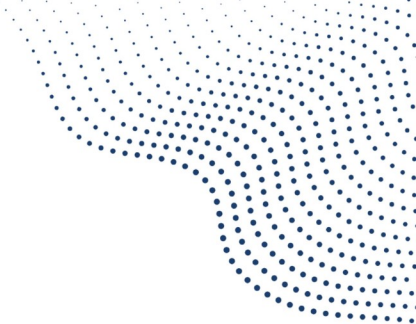
Instead of just listening to the responses of the leaders of these churches, we could do a study of the churches themselves to find out if there are any elements that distinguish all growing churches.

This way, instead of simply learning from one, we could literally investigate hundreds of model churches, large and small, to discover which of the elements of the churches being surveyed, are universally valid principles and which are perhaps interesting but not applicable to Church growth in general.





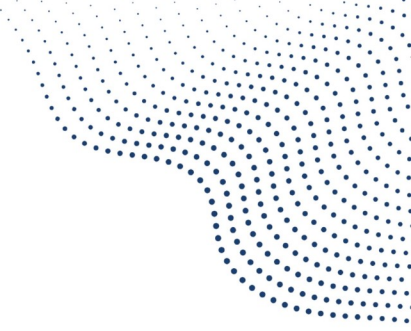
A “model” approach and a “principled” approach



“Models” are concepts that one or sometimes many churches, in some part of the world, have experienced positively. But imitating these experiences may not be at all the right response for churches that are in another situation.

“Principles”, however, are those elements that have proven to be applicable to all growing churches around the world.

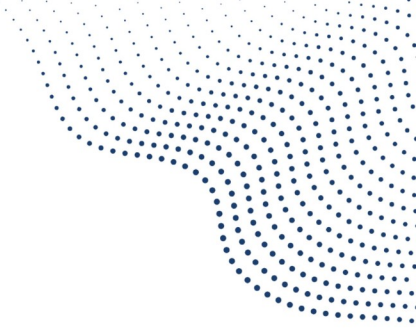




What do churches that grow do differently?



A study was done in 1000 churches on 5 continents



Churches large and small, growing and decreasing

Churches that are persecuted by the state and churches that are subsidized by the state

Outstanding and well-known churches as well as totally unknown

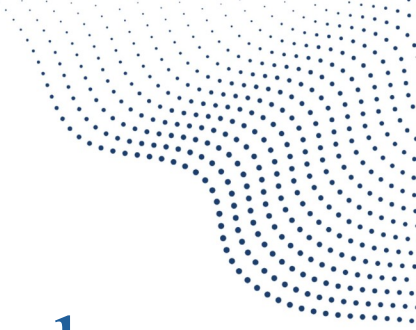
We needed churches in areas that are currently experiencing great spiritual revival (e.g., Brazil, Korea).

1. As well as regions that, according to international standards, appear as mere “spiritually underdeveloped countries” (i. e. Germany).





Churches from 32 countries participated



The questionnaire was answered by at least 30 members of each church. It had to be translated into 18 different languages.

In the end, we faced the mission of analyzing 4.2 million responses. Those responses, cut and pasted, would create a strip of paper that would stretch from Seville to Burgos or from Buenos Aires to Porto Alegre!





Something extraordinary had happened

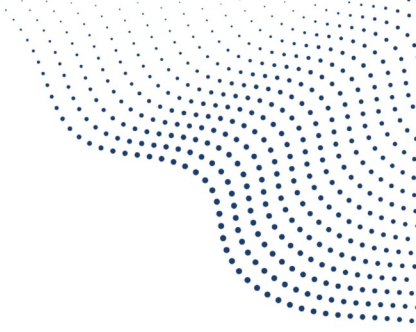


This was the first time we actually had...

...principles, which were verified, that were universally used by God to build up His Church...

– literally, from Alaska to Vladivostok, from Greenland to the Falkland Islands, from the North Cape to the Cape of Good Hope.



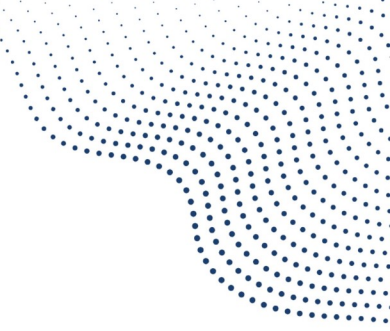


The Eight Essential Qualities of Growing Churches





The “Eight Essential Qualities” of Growing Churches



Empowering Leadership

Gift-oriented Ministry

Passionate Spirituality

Functional Structures

Inspiring Worship

Holistic Small Groups

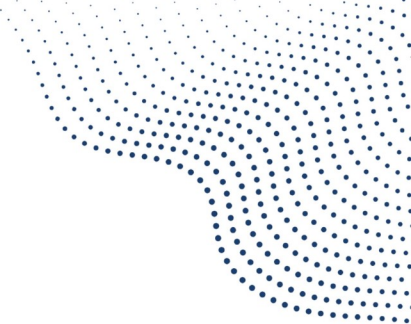
Need-oriented Evangelism

1. Loving Relationships



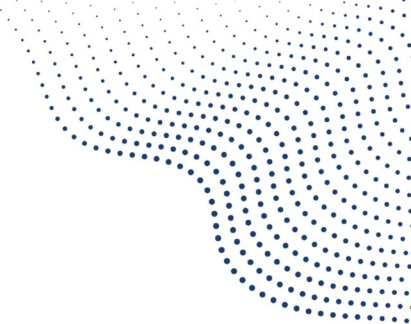


What could we do to see our Church progress better?



The answer is: Ensure that each of these eight essential qualities are developed more fully in your church!

Our research taught us that no church that wants to grow can neglect even one of these essential qualities.



Essential Quality #1: **Empowering Leadership**

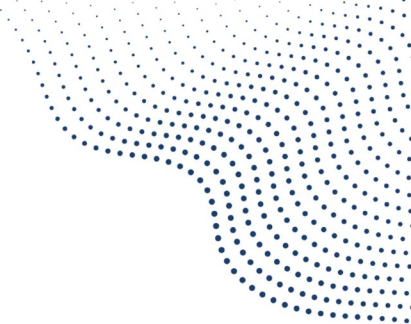
Notice that our first essential quality is not called “skilled” but “empowering” leadership.

Empowering leadership helps Christians develop greater levels of responsibility according to God’s plan.

They equip, support, motivate, and counsel individuals to become all that God wants them to become.



Essential Quality #2: **Gift-oriented Ministry**



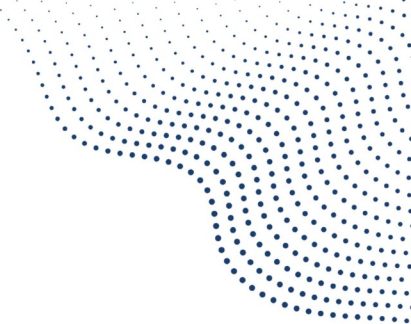
The role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that correspond with their gifts.

When you *serve according to your spiritual gifts, you no longer work in your own strength*, rather the Holy Ghost works in you.

A normal person, who uses his/her gifts, can accomplish extraordinary things. To put people in a ministry, for which they do not have the gift, is like putting square wheels on the Church.



Essential Quality #3: **Passionate Spirituality**

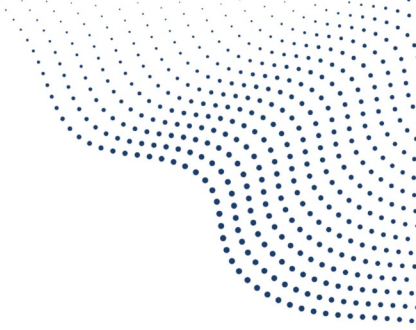


As far as Church growth is concerned, one of the results of our study indicates that the most important thing (as long as spirituality is real) is not the way in which it is expressed, but *the fact that the faith is genuinely lived out with commitment, passion, and enthusiasm.*

It has been proven that the level of spiritual passion is what differentiates growing churches from those that are not growing.



Essential Quality #4: **Functional Structures**



Do the structures in the Church fulfill their mission?

The structures of the Church are *never an end in and of themselves, but only a means to an end.*

Anything that does not measure up to this requirement
(i.e, non-functional leadership structures, inappropriate
worship schedules, or programs that do not reach their
audience effectively, work systems) ***is changed or
discarded.***





From where does the resistance to this principle come?



It's simply the result of *people's tendency to become more and more traditional throughout their life.*

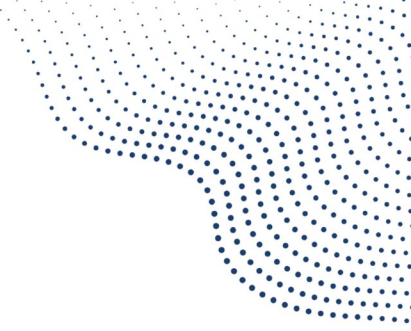
Traditionalism implies that the structures of the church have to remain as we have known them.

It is no coincidence that *traditionalism* is a factor that reveals one of the most significant negative correlations with church growth.





Essential Quality #5: **Inspiring Worship**



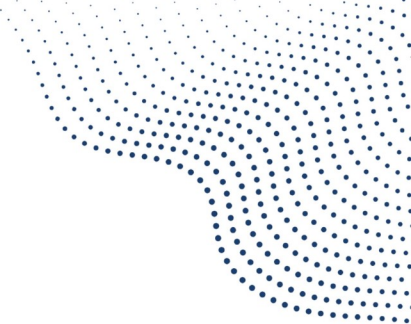
Is worship an inspiring experience for those who come to your church?

This is the area that clearly separates growing churches from non-growing ones.

People who attend inspirational services unanimously say that they “liked the service” – even though some Christians consider evaluating services by this criterion to be heresy.



Essential Quality #6: **Holistic Small Groups**

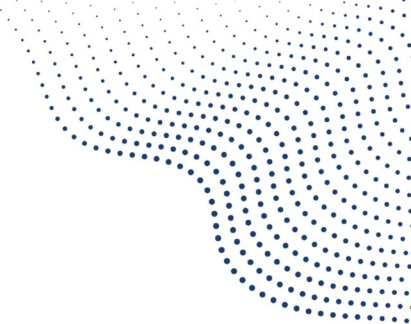


Growing churches have developed a system of small groups or cell groups, where individual Christians can find intimate fellowship, practical help, and deep spiritual interaction.

In these groups, people not only talk about Bible texts or listen to interesting explanations from experts, but also apply biblical approaches to the everyday affairs of the participants' lives.



Essential Quality #7: **Need-oriented Evangelism**



Church growth is inconceivable without evangelism.

How else will the church grow if not through the process of sharing the gospel to attract more and more people to the Church of Jesus Christ?

The secret of evangelism is to share it in a way that responds to the real questions and needs of unbelievers.

●●● Qualitative characteristic 8: Loving Relationships

Growing churches report a significantly higher *“affective quotient”* than those that are stagnant or declining.

Deep and sincere love in the relationships of the members, is essential. Spending time together, doing life together, being accepted.



No essential qualities should be missing.



We have to put round wheels on the Church.



Minimum Factor Theory

The least developed essential quality limits the growth of the Church. In other words, growth reaches the level of the essential quality least developed.

