

General Topics :: To be a Big church or not,that is the question

To be a Big church or not,that is the question - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/4/16 18:15

To be or not to be,that is the question...

Let me start by saying THE church can be and will be as big as God requires it to be.My thoughts are along the line of local gathering of believers.Is there a new covenant view i wonder?

At what point should a fellowship of believers plant out a new or additional gathering.I have been thinking about size and all the extra cares and responsibilities that come with growing bigger.Greg has posted a link to a video download of Jim Cymbala,in the book review forum on 'fresh wind fresh fire'.Greg this is very very provoking and i will show it to the leadership team that i'm a part of

our fellowship is about 200 strong,some see a vision for a thousand others are not sure.I would be interested in others comments

Don't get me wrong if large congregations work thats great,I'm interested in how this works out on a day to day community basis.Do folk get left out are there many groups within the larger,all relating to each other.I'm interested in the dynamics etc

this is a vast subject lets see where we go! :-)

Re: To be a Big church or not,that is the question - posted by bigdaveusa (), on: 2004/4/17 14:02

I can only speak from my personal experience. I was a member of a fast growing church. It started as a gathering of a handful of old hippies and stoners. But those people believed and they wouldn't hesitate to worship, pray for you, or give you the gospel with love...the way that they had recieved it. The church began growing. In just a few years that handful had grown to over one thousand worshipping regularly during about five different services over the course of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. This was all due to our compassion, and kindness outreach. Most of these people were new converts.

Our church began to send others out to start new fellowships all over the place. We had always had small groups outside, but I for one found it difficult to get involved. Whereas we started at a place of growing and reaching out, we seemed to stagnate and implode after about ten years. The church built a new sanctuary where a couple of thousand now worship regularly. Growth seems to have come to a crawl despite huge numbers of people that have been "trained" to do outreach. The church is accepted now, and has stated recently that their vision is to reach their entire city for Christ.

The pastor who started the ministry has left to start a ministry in Scandanavia, and although I too have moved on and am serving the Lord in another city, I worship there when I am back home. It isn't the same however. There doesn't seem to be the same urgency or joy for reaching the lost. It's kind of just a big edifice now, a memorial to a previous work of God.

Take what you will from this....

Re: To be a Big church or not,that is the question - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/4/18 4:32

Hi, Big dave!

thanks for the insight,I guess things are different in the states,people travel greater distances to attend a meeting/ church.However I sense from your post that as things grow,it is so important to keep it real and true to the original vision .or else it suffers Right?

Re: - posted by bigdaveusa (), on: 2004/4/18 4:56

Good morning! I was hoping that you would show up. Yes, it is very difficult to maintain the original vision, and as we know, where there is no vision the people perish.

The only reason people travel considerable distance is that there is usually considerable distance to travel. We have a bit more of a geographical expanse. I can tell you this, no one seems to be going out of there way over here.

I certainly pray that you will gain some insight and report back what you have discovered and what has worked well for you. I will just add that, it is so important that new converts be discipled and that they understand that the body of Christ is an organism:living, breathing, and growing. I believe that discipleship is the key to communicating the vision. Small informal groups can be effective as long as they are effective in discipling.

Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/4/18 13:23

Hi Big Dave!

Quote:

-----Good morning! I was hoping that you would show up.

Hey, just remember we are up before you lot!! I did thst last post just before going to the meeting here for 10.00am HE H E

Thanks bro, for the answer,now dicipleship that MUST be the key, what's your thoughts on that...lets say, whats the definition of dicipleship in a growing church setting?

Re: - posted by bigdaveusa (), on: 2004/4/18 13:35

Okay Delboy, I'll bite. I think that making disciples in any setting means making others "fishers of men". That presuppose s much. I think that's a great place to start, however.

I don't know how insightful that is, I've certainly never been accused of having much insight, anyway.

So what time is it there anyway? :-D

Re: big or small - posted by Paulus (), on: 2004/4/18 14:23

Just a thought from Ireland. As you might expect big over here means anything over 90 people with only three churches having 200+ so I guess its all relative.

What I wanted to say is this, I think what happens is that the first group of any church are the ones who have the deepest hunger and create these fine churches as a response to their hunger, as they know they cannot find what they want elsewhere. Then along come the second generation who just find its all there and actually they just aren't that hungry, also the early members start to lose that cutting edge, as their hunger is addressed. It takes real prayer lives to keep it all real, that's why outreach is the lifeblood of church and esp mission. When we see others come to faith it stirs us to life, when we see others baptised it challenges us to die again. So I don't think its size of the church depth of hunger.

Re: - posted by bigdaveusa (), on: 2004/4/18 14:44

Greetings my Irish brother!

That is the point precisely: it is very difficult to pass on and engender what God has borne in one's heart. DelBoy's inquiry seemed to want to ascertain when big was too big. I am saying that it is, indeed, a relative question, but that discipling only becomes more difficult with the number of people that you are trying to disciple, quite naturally.

I will say, that I cannot imagine that a few hundred people would be as difficult to try to manage..from a church growth perspective. I realize this sounds very academic and seems to preclude the work of god's Holy Spirit. That, however, is the most important variable to the equation.

:-)

Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/4/18 17:54

Hi paul,Top of the morning to ya!

and Big dave,the time here is 22.49,the kids are bathed and in bed,the cats out and the wife's happy now i made her a cup of tea!

Guys i really appreciate your thoughts,So i can see the dicipleship issue,thats fine

Do you have an opinion on when a group should multiply out and start a newer group? And would this address the comfort factor and keep folk sharp?

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/4/19 12:49

I am searching for a church. Another brother suggested this book:

http://benisrael.org/OnlineBooks/truefellowship/contents.true_fellowship.htm

The thoughts in this book is crucifying me, more thoroughly, and more rapidly than I could have imagined. Art Katz defines what it means to suffer for the unity of the Body of Christ.

In Christ
Jeff