

# You Must Be Doing Something Right

---

By Steve Higginbotham

Through the years, I've heard numerous people say, "You must be doing something right, you all are really growing." This comment has led me to conclude that there is a misconception among us that if a church is growing, someone must be doing something right. However, is "church growth" really proof that "someone is doing something right?" Would it not be just as plausible that if a church is growing, "someone must be doing something wrong?"

Are we to believe that people are attracted by truth, but not by error? While I can appreciate the compliment that is intended by this expression, it just isn't true. The reason some churches grow has nothing to do with doing something right, but has everything to do with preaching doctrines that "tickle the ear" (2 Timothy 4:3).

Brethren, we need to stop measuring churches and preachers by "growth." Not long ago, I received a "Job Description" from an eldership wanting to hire a preacher. Among their list of "measurable expectations" they had for their preacher were:

- Increase Sunday morning worship attendance by 3% each year.
- Increase Sunday evening worship attendance by 5% each year until it equals 90% of the Sunday morning worship attendance.
- Increase Bible class attendance by 3% each year.

I don't think these good men understand that church growth, or a preacher for that matter, is not measured by numbers. Under their criteria, Noah would have been a miserable failure but God compliments him as a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Cultures will experience ebb and flow with respect to repentance and interest in spiritual things. The lack of increase in numbers no more reflects negatively on a preacher or a congregation than an increase of numbers reflects positively on a preacher and a congregation.

We need to stop being preoccupied with numbers. Elders, stop letting a focus on numbers drive you to unnecessarily uproot a faithful, hard-working preacher and spend the Lord's money in preacher shuffling. Preachers, stop letting a preoccupation on numbers cause you to give up on a congregation in search of "greener grass."

Maybe we would be better served if we would stop talking about "growing the church" and get back to the biblical verbiage of our planting and watering and letting God give the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).