

# Preachers' Pen Points

## The Turn-Around from Decline to Growth The Need for a Plan for Outreach



A church that seeks to grow must have a plan of outreach through which the church works as a team with a common vision and with the use of the energies and skills of all its members.

### Importance of Forging a Congregational Purpose

The first step in forging a plan is for the church to spend some time in communication so that we may hear one another and develop a sense of congregational purpose (Cf. Neh. 2:17).

### The Value of Consultation

It is wise to avail ourselves of the studied advice of those who have experience in observing and helping churches. It would be useful to knock the dust off useful material devoted to church growth, like Harold Comer's "Biblical Evangelism" series, or even consider further consultation with churches that are growing effectively in similar environments to see what is working for them (1 Thes. 1:6-7).

### Creating a Plan of Outreach

Understanding the processes of growth will enable the church to take productive steps to reach out effectively rather than waste energy and time on outdated approaches or unproductive efforts. Some of the key questions we must answer are:

- How do we define ourselves? What features do we possess that might give us appeal to people seeking a better and spiritual way of life?
- Who do we want to reach? Frankly, it is hard for groups to be "all things to everybody". This doesn't mean that we are not interested in the salvation of everybody. It is just a recogni-

tion of the limitations that smaller groups may have in using their resources effectively. Consequently, it would be useful to define a target audience and work effectively toward reaching a particular group.

- How will we engage the people we seek? After defining our target audience, we may need to think creatively about how to reach this group (i.e. with what messages and approaches).
- How will we equip and train our people for service? Each member must be given some help in how to effectively participate in the congregational goals we agree upon.
- How will we monitor and evaluate our successes? We must periodically evaluate how well we are working our plan and what alterations or adjustments need to be made.

### Implementing the Plan

Each member must embrace the plan and see how he or she can become more productive in realizing the congregation's goals. The leadership must regularly remind the church of the goals we hope to accomplish and provide continued help and encouragement (Cf. Neh. 4:14,20). When these things happen, the church will succeed in reaching others. And every success fuels enthusiasm to keep doing more. Each member feels increasing encouragement as the church begins to grow again.

### The challenge for us!

Will each of us make the effort to communicate, to get involved, and to do our part to make Perry Heights grow?  
—Johnny Felker