

MESSAGE TITLE

GATHERING OF THE SHEPHERDS

MESSAGE DATE(S)

SESSION 1 – 12 NOON BIBLE STUDY

This afternoon in what will be the most truncated of all our sessions, it is my goal to be as succinct as possible. I don't want to waste a moment of your precious time. Unless you're from the Cleveland area or one of our neighboring cities, you probably paid for plane tickets, hotels, and rentals to drive, food expenses, etc. That said, I want to begin this year's training with the same question I have began with since the inception of the Gathering.

SCREENS> Why did you come?

You must concretize your objectives and goals at the Genesis of this meeting.

I would argue that the majority of you came to get some substantive information regarding:

SCREENS> church growth

Most of you in this room are pastor churches that are less than 3 to 500 seen on the weekend. Remember, I'm talking "Butts in the seats," not the roll.

SCREENS> you cannot change your reality until you accept it!

SCREENS> Numbers don't lie

Now listen, because this is heavy. They are not necessarily reflective of your intelligence, integrity, or intimacy with God. But they still don't lie!!

(Really explain that!!!)

There is even a book in the bible called numbers.

Now those who have read my book know the two numbers that any credible pastor will monitor at all times:

SCREENS> Souls and offerings

What other barometer of measured success do you have?

Please don't say spirituality and holiness, because my response would be, *why hasn't that spirituality equated to evangelism and sacrificial giving?*

Most of you have read the expanded version of my doctoral thesis *Size Does Matter*. In it, I situate modern church growth within the historical trajectory of the Acts model.

SCREENS> Acts 2:41-47 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. **42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. **44** And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; **45** and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. **46** Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

SCREENS> Acts 4:4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

SCREENS> Acts 5:14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*,

Why does Luke feel the need to give us growth updates, if size does not matter?

In case I don't get a chance to teach you anything else this week, at least get this.

The 'b' clause of verse 47 says:

SCREENS> And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Now let's talk about several factors that dictate growth

SCREENS> personality

SCREENS> integrity

SCREENS> spouse

(Really brag on Lady Vernon right here!)

SCREENS> call

SCREENS> strategy

Of course strategy leads to:

SCREENS> (All on one J)

Style, creativity, marketing, outreach, etc.

Tonight I'm going to deal with and challenge your leaders, so don't miss it!!!

SCREENS> You must diagnose it, before you can deal with it.

So that unlike many conferences you go to, which is why I like the word training

By the way and this is free:

When Paul tells Timothy “Train yourself to be Godly” it’s from the Greek word “Gymnos, which means naked, we also get the American word gymnasium from it. So it literally means to exercise naked. Lean on another pastor and ask them

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE OFF SO YOU CAN GROW??

- Denomination
- Procrastination
- Hesitation
- Vacillation
- Masturbation

(Run here)

Hebrews 12:1 Let us lay aside every weight and the sin!!!

(Work here)

Three categories of churches and pastors here:

SCREENS> Do or die

SCREENS> Steady as you grow

SCREENS> Unusual favor