

Nine Surprising (Or not so Surprising) Patterns in Growing Churches

CmWD Conference on Church Growth

(Presenter Dr. Charles Arn)

1. The single most important factor in determining whether visitors return to a church is how "friendly" they find the congregation. (If the congregation is not friendly the uplifting sermon and the excellent music might inspire them to come a second time, hoping folks will be friendlier when they return.)
2. "Friendliness" is determined in the 10 minutes after the worship service ends, and is measured in how many people reach out to say hello, not in the depth of the contact.
3. In the average numerically stable church, 1 in 10 visitors return a second time. A higher percentage of return indicates a propensity to grow.
4. On average, members who have joined in the last 2 years are enthusiastic, eager to help, and forward looking.
5. When new members are contacted by staff or ministers regarding an opportunity for involvement, they tend to judge it as less sincere or appealing as when that contact is made by a member of the church.
6. The single most important factor in determining whether new members continue to stay involved is the number of friendships they make in the congregation.
7. Old members view new members as either assets or liabilities. The default perception is liability.
8. Growing congregations have a ratio of 60 roles or tasks for every 100 members and active affiliates.
9. Growing congregations have 1 in 5 of those roles/task filled by new members.

Characteristics of an Assimilated Member

1. 6-7 friends in congregation
2. Role/task consistent with gifts, interests, skills, personality
 3. Involved in a small group
 4. Regular worship attendance
 5. Gives financially
6. Understands and identifies congregational goals
 7. Feels a sense of spiritual growth
 8. Taken a public step of affiliation
 9. Engaging spiritual practices
10. Sharing faith with friends and family