

**General Topics :: Why some churches never thrive**

Why some churches never thrive - posted by elias7291 (), on: 2012/4/14 16:35

Re: Why some churches never thrive - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2012/4/17 0:14

Or, maybe leadership that is too strong.....willed. A number of churches that I have watched fizzle were started in rebellion against some original church. When the spite-filled camaraderie began to get old, the folks turned on each other.

In a world of dominance by "Easy-Believism" (may not be a real word) churches routinely compete for the same sheep. Hoopla and razzle-dazzle seem to win this one easily.

I believe that when a wise servant of God takes a group of people through the four steps to conversion, he has a good chance of building a church of genuine fruit that will be able to fend off a satanic attack and thrive.

Four steps?

Awakening
Conviction
Repentance
Salvation in Jesus Christ.

A church full of people who either skipped or were never led through the first three is pretty much a pile of sand.

Re: - posted by lylewise, on: 2012/4/17 8:59

THE COUNTERFEIT (4) STEPS ARE ALIVE AND WELL AND JUST AS ROOTED IN THE FLESH AS EVER. THERE IS NO GREATER DECEPTION DEVISED ABOVE THIS ONE.

Re: , on: 2012/4/17 9:01

What? Care to elaborate, Lyle? (And in lower case, if ya dont mind...)

Krispy

Re: Why many churches fo not thrive., on: 2012/4/17 9:47

Simply church leaders do not feed their people the word of God. Also these leaders do not encourage their people to read and immerse themselves in the word. A thriving church is a church where people are hearing and reading the word. And I don't mean just a few verses here and there like a snack. But I mean feasting on the word. Where the scriptures, the Bible is a way of life.

I have noticed, even in this forum, more emphasis is given to sermons and books then to simply reading and immersing themselves in the only book one needs, the Bible.

The persecuted church cries only for one book and one book alone. They are not asking for Ravenhill or Tozer or Murrary. Though these are godly men. They cry for the Bible. Many times saints will walk for days to get a copy of the Bible. Then when they get one they cry and hug it. Then they feast on it. And the persecuted church is thriving and growing.

So let us get back to the Bible in our churches and you will see a thriving church. So simple it scares you.

Posted by Bearmaster.

Re: Why some churches never thrive - posted by elias7291 (), on: 2012/4/17 10:15

Amen! Bearmaster,

I also know that the other important ingredient is prayer. I know in one sense that has been lacking in the church. If we are to get to revival, prayer is key. I know the persecuted church prays. It is everything to them like the Word.

Re: - posted by jochbaptist (), on: 2012/4/17 10:17

lylewise -

You have me curious too. What deception?

Re: , on: 2012/4/17 10:26

Where is the first post of this thread? Everyone seems to be commenting but where is the intro?

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/17 10:46

Read the subject title as part of the OP.

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/4/17 13:00

It is interesting to compare many of the thoughts being expressed in this thread with the events that transpired within the church in the book of Acts.

A few of those statements in this thread have been-

BEGIN QUOTES-

-I guess its cuz of a lack of strong leadership or willful neglect of certain issues by the leadership. God Help us all

-Simply church leaders do not feed their people the word of God. Also these leaders do not encourage their people to read and immerse themselves in the word. A thriving church is a church where people are hearing and reading the word.

-So let us get back to the Bible in our churches and you will see a thriving church. So simple it scares you.
END QUOTES

By many of the statements made thus far you would think that the Apostles never preached the word, were not immersed in it, were only ticking ears and just in it for the show.

I think we are all in agreement that those things were not true for the Apostles. However, it is also just as true that they were not a bunch of "thriving" churches either. ...at least not as has been defined as "thriving" on the thread.

Please consider a few thoughts if you would be so kind-

1. THE CHURCH IN CORINTH - founded by the Apostle Paul was, "fleshly, full of contentions, factions (dare I say almost "denominationalism" ?), shallow, unable to eat strong spiritual food (so...perhaps it isn't always that the minister isn't bringing a meat filled message... Paul says that just maybe it's the folks listening who can't receive it thus he must still use milk), it had envy, strife, division, unappreciative of the sacrifices that the Apostles had made, accused Paul's teaching of being "shallow" and not as "good" as some others (hmm... similar to a few posts on this thread), unforgiving and quick to sue each other, violating the consciences of weaker brothers, not serving each other, getting drunk and being gluttons in the church, often divisive, and allowed sexual immorality (step parent incest) to go unchecked in the fellowship".

These are all listed by Paul in 1 and 2 Corinthians. According to many of the posts in this thread so far it would have been Paul's fault that these circumstances existed.

2. THE CHURCH AT GALATIA - Founded by the Apostle Paul. It was in danger of returning to a position of trusting in the keeping of the law as the means of salvation. So much so that Paul was concerned that he had wasted his time in founding it. Concerning some Paul said that by returning to trusting the law instead of grace that, "you have fallen away from grace". Gal 5:4b, One Apostle had to stand and publicly rebuke another Apostle (Peter) in front of the church, the return

General Topics :: Why some churches never thrive

rn to trust in circumcision as a means to salvation was so strong Paul said of those false teachers that, " I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!" Gal 5:12. It appears certain that Paul was concerned that the very existence of the Galatians Church was far from a certainty.

REVELATIONS - We can find similar issues with most of the churches of the New Testament. Reread the letters to the angels of the churches in Revelations. You will see that the same type, and worse, circumstances were evident in almost all the New Testament Churches.

It also appears that Paul may have well walked of this planet and into the heavenly world wondering if the churches he founded would survive. He said he had run his race and finished his course. He was confident and assured he had done God's will for his life... but also seems to wonder if the individual works he poured himself into would survive the enemies onslaught. He warned several of them about its coming after he departed.

So in summary... by many of the posts on this thread the Apostle Paul would be the object of blame and criticism for the many of the churches he started "not thriving".

However, there is another thing that one might glean from the study of the churches Paul founded. It is this- the churches were made up of people. Yes, people that sinned, made mistakes, were sometimes flesh and emotionally driven, prideful, sometimes bigots, sometimes arrogant, and often guilty of putting themselves first at the expense of others. No different now than it was then.

If you want to see the primary reason your church is not thriving take a good long look into the mirror. First fix everything wrong with that person before you start blasting the minister for not meeting your expectations of what you think is a proper job of teaching.

If you, and we all, will work on keeping our critical tongues in check and making the person in the mirror look like Jesus THEN you (we) will see thriving churches. Quit passing the blame... stand up and take responsibility....stand up and say that the real reason your church may not be thriving is because you (we) are not being Jesus to the world. Focus on fixing yourself (ourselves) a lot more and focus on criticizing leadership a lot less.... THAT will create thriving churches.

Who would disagree that people that exemplify Jesus in their words, thoughts, actions and deeds to those who do not know Christ would thrive?!?!?!?

Re: - posted by elias7291 (), on: 2012/4/17 13:12

Brother i agree with you.

however, if leadership is not allowing Christ to reign supreme would that mean that it is still the people's fault that the fire is not burning?

Re: , on: 2012/4/17 13:25

You are absolutely correct Solomon. Our feeding comes from God Himself, our daily bread from His mouth not from men. This is the Catholic Church all over again under a different banner. "You sit in the pew and we'll tell you what you need to know".

Churches thrive under these conditions because it removes the responsibility from the person to seek God for himself, the ministry does it for us. No wonder the division. These congregation never bear fruit, they are hindered. The only way to bear fruit it to get out from among that and hear God speak seeds of faith into our spirit. Spirit must commune with spirit. Oh yes, some might bear fruit but not to the degree to which God would have it.

What about holy Spirit inspired preaching in these places? That is few and far between, it's all men oriented. "They say" it's anointed. If it was anointed changes would come as a result of it. But no changes come, only the flesh was shaken, just shaken enough to get to Burger King after the sermon to stuff ourselves as if sacrificing to an idol and then eating it. Gee, that is a message in itself. We are not quite yet in a time of reformation, but the momentum is building.

General Topics :: Why some churches never thrive

Re: , on: 2012/4/17 13:32

Quote:
----- if leadership is not allowing Christ to reign supreme would that mean that it is still the people's fault that the fire is not burning?

Taking examples from Jesus, Jesus came hard against the Scribes and Pharisees and other religious groups that were supposed to be experts of the law. Jesus hardly ever condemned the people, they were "sheep without a shepherd". They were the sheep of His pasture but were abandoned to wander around and they didn't know where they were going, no one was discipling them into the truth. Only those that know the truth and refuse to enter therein and hinder those that are trying to come in are the ones that the Lord will judge sharply, as for the people, they would be "sheep without a shepherd", workers standing around doing nothing because no man would take them under their wing.

Re: Why some churches never thrive - posted by Lysa (), on: 2012/4/17 13:41

I'm sure there are many reasons but one reason I'm pretty positive of is that they left the Holy Spirit behind and thought they (flesh) could do it better! Some people get an idea and pray for God to bless 'their' idea instead of waiting on God to bless them to do what He wants them to do.

Just so you know, I'm not talking about numbers making a church thriving. I got saved in a small but powerful in the Spirit church where the Lord told the ministers that He would use them to be a hospital where those who needed healed, delivered, rest for their weary souls would find it and then they would return to their churches.

All this out in po-dunk Indiana!! I mean you really wanted deliverance if you drove two hours to get there!! LOL It was a awesome what God did there. Growing up in that, it has my hopes up that God will find someone who is willing and obedient and do it again somewhere else! Praise His holy name!

Looking back what I find incredible was how they actually listened to God instruct them to not get their hopes up in numbers VS. man's wisdom today is totally the opposite. I thank God for the early instruction I was brought up in by the Holy Spirit.

God bless us all as we seek HIS will for us,
Lisa

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/17 13:52

The reason many churches don't "thrive", as you put it, is because those that are preaching the Word are afraid to preach the "whole counsel of God". Because if they preached the whole counsel of God they would either have to live it first or fire themselves (be disqualified).

One thing the Apostles did was live it so they were not cast off (disqualified).

Many congregations get spoon fed from their "leader" and are actually being conformed to his image and not Christ's because they see no need to go beyond what the leader exemplifies.

If the leader is fleshly, then the congregation will be. If the leader pretends spirituality the congregation will do the same.

Like children reflect their parents, congregations that look to their "leaders" for nourishment and guidance, usually reflect them, too.

We are not supposed to stay children, but rather to grow up in HIM.

The reason they don't thrive is because the congregation has made their leaders into idols and vice-versa.

Pilgrim

Re: - posted by learjet, on: 2012/4/17 14:08

I wrote about this very issue on my blog a while back, here's an excerpt:

Quote:
-----When we go beyond taking care of people and start instituting a hybrid temple system that is run by new-Levites, by default WE (as a body) are no longer a kingdom of priests, THEY are a kingdom of priests, and your only responsibility is financial support.

In my opinion, the danger of THEM being a kingdom of priests makes the fulfillment of The Great Commission impossible because rather than accept it individually, we look to the 'priests' to fulfill it rather than ourselves, and by default it becomes 'their' responsibility.

The unwritten agreement then becomes priests who are happy to accept money and live lavish lifestyles (no, I'm not painting with a broad brush here, and in no way am I saying that all men who earn their living from preaching the gospel are corrupt) coupled with hearers that are happy to try and 'buy' their way into the Kingdom. One man is happy because he has a bunch of money, the other man is happy because nothing is expected of him other than giving money and so these two types of mindsets feed off one another. The Lord however, is not deceived by this!

This is in the same neighborhood as pilgrim's response.

The rest can be found here:

Part 1
<http://detroitrevival.org/devotions/48-the-new-levites>

Part II
<http://detroitrevival.org/devotions/52-the-new-levites-part-ii>

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/4/17 14:17

Elias & Approved-

Just a couple of thoughts-

I again refer you to my more lengthy post.

1. Was it Paul's fault when the "fire was not burning" but strife, division, and discord was running rough shod in the churches he founded? Obviously not. My original point was that the primary reason is that we humans are fallen creatures. Any group of them that get together have issues to deal with that can wreck "hot spirituality" in that fellowship. However, if you can press past that and obtain hunger and unity then it is a glorious thing to be a part of. The Lord has allowed me to help lead/guide/be involved in 3 regional outpourings of His presence. The hunger of the people and ability to put aside one's personal desires for the greater good of the kingdom were key to those happening.

2. Ultimately no one is responsible for how the fire in my soul burns but me. I can not blame leadership, my pastor, the community, or anything else. I will be as close to God as I am willing to pay the price tags to be. If I am cold or shallow in my relationship to Him then it will change only if I decide I want Him badly enough to pursue Him with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength. No leader or man on earth controls the flame of our spirit. God will ignite it if we want it badly enough.

I believe it was Ravenhill that said the only reason we do not have a visitation from God is that we are content to live without it. OUCH! but oh so true!

3. As for leadership hindering the ability of "Christ to reign supreme"... let me ask then...

Have they said you can not win the lost for Christ?
Have they said you can not pray for the sick?
Have they said you can not fast, pray, and seek God?
Have they said you can not visit the shut ins and bring Christ's love?
Have they said you can not read the Word?
Have they said you can not memorize scripture?
Have they said you can not teach your children the scriptures and to pray?
Have they said you can not visit folks in the hospital and minister to them?

General Topics :: Why some churches never thrive

- Have they said you can not invite neighbors over, love them, and share your faith?
- Have they said you can not support missions in prayer or finances?
- Have they said you can not engage in short term missions yourself?
- Have they said you can not ask a couple of believer to your home for coffee and then pray for each others needs?
- Have they said not to ask God to pour out His Spirit in your community?
- Have they said not to help meet the needs of the impoverished?
- Have they said not to help the single parent, widow, or orphan?

I of course am doubtful that these activities are ones any church leadership has spoken against.

If you in fact CAN do all of these things then pray tell how will any leadership impede my spiritual fire, relationship with God, or ministry to others?

Church history is filled with individuals that just sought God, prayed, read the word, witnessed, shared their faith, and shook the world they lived in.

Even Roberts, John Wesley, David Brainerd, are a few more well known examples. However, there are countless people that have done so. I know dozens and dozens of them myself.

4. I read a lot of negativity in your statements about church "leadership". I am by no means blind to it. I have seen far more leadership failures than most given where I was at and the things I was made aware of as a result of it. It also seems to me that you may have been personally hurt by a leader at some point. I may be wrong and if so forgive me. However, if someone betrayed you in some way please do not let that keep you from receiving from others who would not.

I am friends with lots of ministers of varying ministries. The vast majority are very solid, spiritually sensitive, very ethical, spiritually hungry individuals that earnestly desire a great out pouring of Gods conviction of sin and joyful renewal. I am unsure of where you are that all the leadership is so weak in your eyes. That is not the case for me at all. I am seeing a great amount of tremendously gifted and devoted leadership in the circles I typically associate. Perhaps if you can take a step back and let the persons credibility be established by their own actions and not judge "all leaders as corrupt" it might be helpful. Some posts on this thread, (it may not have been yours) were blanket statements "leaders don't feed their people the word...its all a show... etc". There are certainly those who do that. However, the vast majority of those that I know and work with are solid preachers and teachers of the Word. I once had a deacon spit in my face and tell me it was his mission in life to publicly destroy me. This was all because he had lost some influence as lots of people got saved, came into the church, and didn't give him the respect he thought he deserved. In his mind the only way to get his "respect" back was to try to destroy me, run those new converts off, and resume his post as the deacon board "godfather". It would be unjust for me to judge all deacons/elders/board members based on his actions. Don't make the mistake of doing it with the pastors, bishops, etc. either.

Seek Him. Keep your own fire burning. Believe the best in people unless they actually prove you can't. That will take you far in my opinion.

Re: - posted by learjet, on: 2012/4/17 14:18

Quote:
-----Four steps?

- Awakening
 - Conviction
 - Repentance
 - Salvation in Jesus Christ
-

Hi Sidewalk,

This is a good observation, I was reading George Whitfield's sermon called "The New Birth" last Sunday from a practical standpoint and notice that these are the exact steps that he walks through in his sermon.

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/17 15:01

Quote:

----- Was it Paul's fault when the "fire was not burning"

One thing notable about Paul is that he did not draw people to himself. Things are a lot different, today.

You are right, Solomon that we have no one to blame but ourselves.

I can only refer "leadership" to the Lord's example and to the Apostles.

Mar 10:42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

Mar 10:43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

Mar 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Mar 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Whenever I hear someone going on and on about "my pastor" I just think it is really unhealthy. I don't even see anyone talking like that in the NT. Has not the church given men today, too much influence over their lives? Even given him a title that differentiates himself from you. You hear it in people's speech over and over. They talk more about their "pastor" than the Lord. It's good to bless and affirm one another, but not good to worship someone.

Personally, I cannot call another brother "my pastor". I don't refer to another brother as "my prophet", "my teacher", "my apostle" or "my evangelist". Probably, because of my Catholic upbringing.

"My Pastor" is Jesus. Same with my prophet, my teacher, my apostle, and my evangelist are all Jesus Christ.

When using the personal possessive in spiritual terms, I never refer to another brother as "my pastor". Even Jesus said not to call any man Father, or Rabbi or Teacher. In other words, He was telling us not to give men spiritual titles that describe them in terms of spiritual authority over you.

I have even dropped the title and greeted a "pastor" by their first name of Bob or Frank or whatever. Some were clearly offended. I would be introduced to a Pastor by someone. They would say, "This is my Pastor, Pastor Bob". "I would say, Hi Bob, nice to meet you". That response would not go over too well. How dare I put myself on the same level as he!

I think for too long, the Church has been conditioned in this way. Even using the term "my church". It has engendered competition and marketing within the church. I have heard Christians talking about "my church" or "my pastor" or "our worship band" in terms that sound very competitive.

I know a friend who heard a "Pastor Jim" introduce himself to a 5 year old as "Pastor Jim". My friend said, "Come on Jim, give it a rest, he's only a 5 year old".

Most men today with titles don't even stop to think twice about why they are referred to with a title. They just think that it is normal (as far as Christianity goes, not Scriptures) and that they earned the title in some way, whether it be by education or being promoted by other men.

Titles only serve one purpose and that is to divide the sheep from the "more honored sheep".

1Cor 9:22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

1Cor 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

John 12:43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

General Topics :: Why some churches never thrive

We always have to stay away from situations that would appeal to our pride.

These are but a few reasons that "churches don't thrive".

Pilgrim

Re: , on: 2012/4/17 16:09

So the first post is gone...

My question would be "what does a thriving church look like to you?" It seems like a rather subjective thing to consider.

Krispy

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/17 18:26

Krispy,

You are right? The definition of "thriving" is quite subjective. Maybe Revelation 2 and 3 could help us.

I think in an attempt to communicate, several posts including mine talked more about what is not healthy.

We have no model in Scripture of "thriving" churches because people (afterall) make up the church. We do have a model of what healthy elder brothers should look like, though (from the Bible). And we have real life examples, today of the good, the bad and the ugly.

Pilgrim

Re: , on: 2012/4/17 19:38

I would suggest you look at the first part of Acts. That is where the first thriving church was found. For modern day examples look at the persecuted church in the 10/40 window. The house churches in China and Iran are a good example.

Posted by Bearmaster.

Re: - posted by elias7291 (), on: 2012/4/17 19:52

Beloved,

Please end this thread. It wasn't my intention to spark debate and some replies on this thread don't seem very beneficial. Please ignore this thread for the sake of peace.

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/17 20:00

Very good point, bearmaster.