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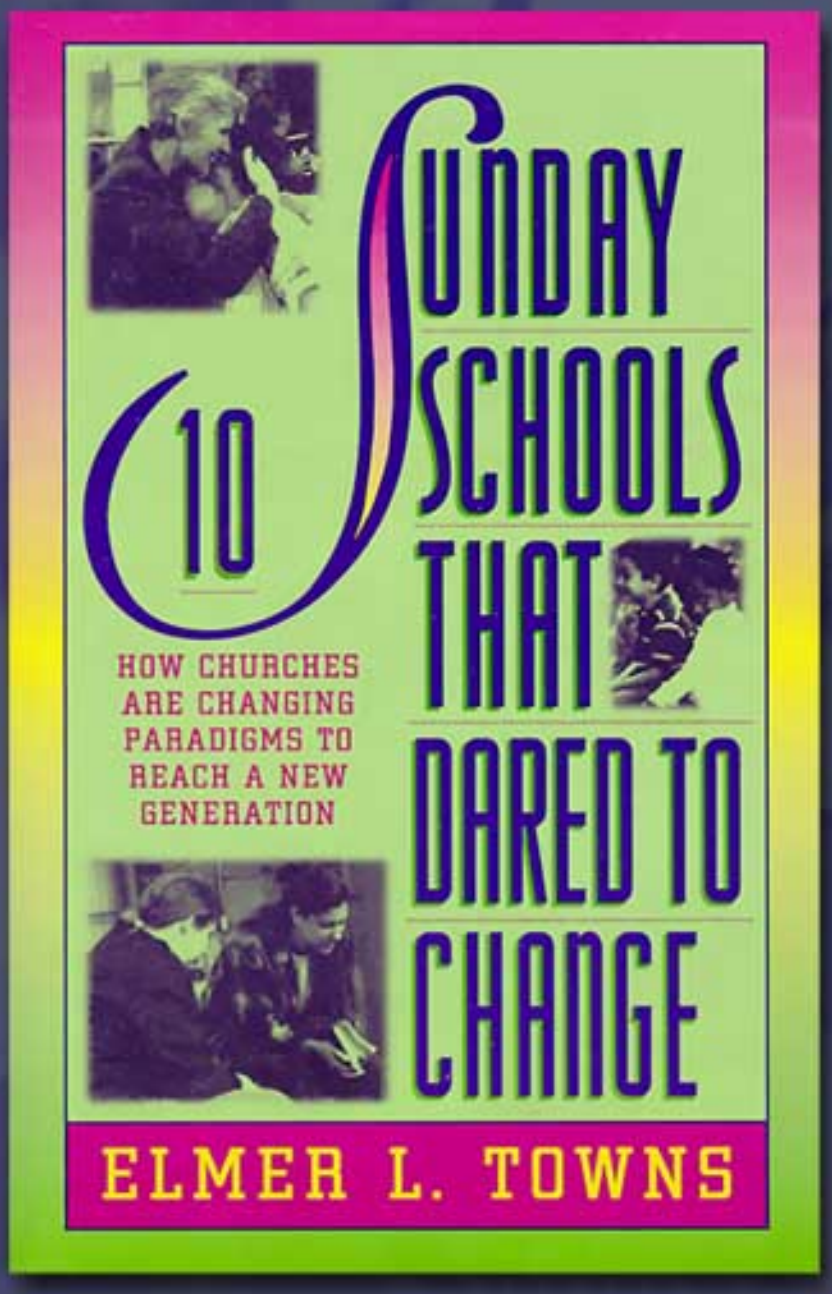

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PREFACE

TEN SUNDAY SCHOOLS THAT DARED TO CHANGE

Dr. Elmer Towns

In my opinion, the greatest Sunday School teacher in the world is the one who reached me for Jesus Christ and became an influential teacher in my life. Jimmy Breland was an unassuming man with simple likes and purposes in life. In 1938, he was a Jewel Tea Coffee salesman in Savannah, Georgia, trying to make a living at the end of the depression when everyone was poor and most families had little money. Jimmy Breland was in the living room showing my mother the different kinds of coffee and tea when he turned and said, "Would you like to go to Sunday School?"

"What's Sunday School?" I asked in my childlike simplicity. As a young boy, I was taught to respect adults and always be polite. So my question was not a sarcastic or belligerent, it was simply a request for information.

"Sunday School is where you have fun!" Jimmy Breland answered with a twinkle in his eye. This tall, skinny man with had an Adam's apple that stuck out over his tie. It bounced when he talked. "Sunday School is a place where we sing, tell stories, and have a lot of fun." His enthusiasm was infectious. "We even have a sand table. We'll make a sand mountain and I'll show you how Jesus walked across the mountains." Jimmy Breland used his two fingers to simulate a man walking.

"Wow, a sand table!" I thought. And in my childish bewilderment I asked, "Doesn't the sand fall off?"

"We have a ledge to keep it on," Jimmy Breland answered. Then he went on to tell me that with a mirror he would make a lake. Then again with his walking fingers he showed how Jesus would walk right across the top of the water.

"He walked on water?" I remembered exclaiming. Then turning to my mother I blurted out, "I want to go to Sunday School! I want to go to Sunday School!"

Being a thoughtful and protective mother she asked the coffee salesman, "What kind of Sunday School are you talking about?"

Jimmy Breland was very deliberate in his answer, "The Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church is an outstanding place to learn the Word of God."

My mother was probably concerned that he was recruiting me for a cult. However, mother had been married in a small Presbyterian church in South Carolina, so she was willing for me to attend a Presbyterian church, but she inquired, "Where is this church?"

When Jimmy Breland told her the church was on the other side of Savannah, Georgia (some five miles away), Mother again raised an objection, "He's such a little boy, he would get lost walking five miles to Sunday School."

Jimmy Breland turned and pointed out the screen door out to a big, black panel truck with the words "Jewel Tea & Coffee" on the side of the truck. "You wanna' ride my truck to Sunday School?" he asked.

"I wanna' ride in the truck! I wanna' ride in the big, black truck!" I begged my mother to let me go.

But mother had yet another objection. She pointed out that it was a strange crowd, and I might get lost among the other people. She mentioned the open fields around the church where I might wander off. So she compromised, "He can go to Sunday School when he goes to the first grade."

"I'll come back and get you then," Jimmy Breland promised. Each time he came to sell coffee, he reminded me, "Don't forget you are going to Sunday School with me when you go to the first grade."

In September, 1938, I attended the first grade, so I was ready for Sunday School. On a rainy Sunday morning I was dressed in white short pants, and stood at the edge of the top step waiting for Jimmy Breland. Then his black truck came splashing down through the mud.

I ran through the light rain to the back of the black paneled truck and wondered where I would sit. Previously I had peaked through the rear truck window and saw big coffee boxes. When Jimmy Breland opened the back door, the truck was empty. I sat on the floor as he drove to the next street to pick four boys with the last name of Amar. Then he went five blocks and picked up the two Drigger children. He then cut through a housing project gathering up children on his way to Sunday School.

Jimmy Breland picked me up in his truck every week, and I did not miss a single Sunday thereafter - for fourteen years. My mother wanted me to get a pin for perfect attendance, like the other children. I got a gold pin for one year of perfect attendance, a gold wreath for a second year and a bar for every year thereafter.

My mother was a woman of great character and insisted that I go every Sunday and warned, "If I send you to Sunday School, you had better not skip school and play. . ." I knew what she meant, so I never missed for fourteen years.

One morning I said, "Mom, I don't want to go to Sunday School I am sick. . ."

"You're not sick, you just feel that way." My mother's determined personality drove her to believe both she and her children could rise above any circumstances. She never allowed us to be sick. So I went to Sunday School every Sunday heeding her warning, "If you stay home, you have to take castor oil."

The inner strength of my mother and the faithfulness of Jimmy Breland changed my life. In the third grade I was standing in front of the church one Sunday morning when Jimmy Breland pointed out a man tapping a lucky strike before lighting up for a smoke. "Don't ever smoke your first cigarette," Jimmy said to me and the other boys in an informal circle.
"Why not?"

"It's dumb. . ." He continued, "Smoking wastes money." Jimmy Breland was a miser who hated to spend money. He never bought a house, but always lived in a garage apartment or in a housing project. He bragged that he never bought a car in his life, always driving a company truck because it saved money. The company paid for the truck, insurance, and even put gas in the tank.

"Smoking wastes allot of money," Jimmy Berlin's eyes twinkled as he said, "You might as well get you some grass, (It didn't mean marijuana in those days) and roll your own in a dollar bill, and burn up a dollar bill."
Then Jimmy looked around the circle and pointed at me.

"You like to burn up dollar bills?"

"Not me," I responded with nine year old naiveté and I never had my first cigarette.

My mother came from a family of eleven. As a young mother she smoked (but later quit) and all of my uncles from her family side smoked, but I never did. My father came from a family of nine, and all of my uncles on my father's side smoked but I never did.

Two weeks later, Jimmy Breland continued his conversation. He pointed out two men who wanted to be officers of the church but couldn't because they drank alcoholic beverages. Then Jimmy turned to a group of boys where I was standing and said, "Don't ever take your first drink of liquor!"

"Why not?" I asked, being the inquisitive member of the crowd.

Jimmy didn't preach morality; his answer reflected his stingy nature. "Drinking wastes a lot of money!" Then with a twinkle in his eye, he reasoned, "You may as well take that bottle to the commode and pour your money away." Then turning to me, he asked, "You like to pour money down the toilet?"

"Not me!" I said.

All of my uncles on my mother's side of the family were hard-liquor-drinking, southern dirt farmers, but I never had my first sip of alcohol because of Jimmy Breland. My father was an alcoholic and died of cirrhosis of the liver, plus complications with cancer. Even though drinking killed my father and even though other uncles on my father's side were alcoholics, I never took my first drink because of Jimmy Breland.

The power of Sunday School is still in the power of the teacher who influences students. This volume points out that when teachers become primarily interested in academic content and delivering lessons by lecture, the whole Sunday School loses its influence on the church and on society, but most of all, it is no longer an influence on the lives of those who attend.

I was one of approximately twenty-five students in Jimmy Breland's Sunday School class. When a count was made, approximately nineteen of us entered full-time Christian service. We went into all types of denominations; some into the Southern Baptists, Freewill Baptists, Presbyterian, Christian Ministerial Alliance, and Pentecostal Holiness. Three were college presidents. Others became foreign missionaries or taught in Christian day schools. Dr. Frank Perry pastored one of the largest Southern Baptist churches on the north side of Atlanta, and Dr. Albert Freundt became Professor of Church History at Reformed Presbyterian Seminary. We were children from poor homes, yet we never thought of ourselves as being economically deprived. We had a Sunday School teacher who lit a fire and gave us a vision of what we could do. Jimmy Breland made us believe that even though we were average with limited resources, facing insurmountable obstacles; we could climb the mountains with God's help.

The message of these ten Sunday Schools is that a teacher must cast a vision into the hearts of pupils, and when that happens; the flame in the heart of the student is rekindled for the glory of God.

These Sunday Schools are not doing anything that is new or different; they are basically taking yesterday's vision that was grounded in eternity, yet getting the job done with up-to-date tools. Those who used yesterday's tools to try to meet today's challenge are not equipped for tomorrow's ministry.

INTRODUCTION

The Sundays Schools of America have a bright future . . . if we can turn them around. If we will turn them around properly, they will grow internally and externally. Sunday Schools are like a sailing ship whose sails are not turned into the wind. They're dead in the water. A few Sunday Schools are growing, many are drifting backwards, but most of them are just dead in the water. They are not moving anywhere.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS THAT MODEL THE FUTURE

First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, found itself landlocked in the downtown heart of the old part of the city. A trip downtown on Sunday morning faced barriers. Also, the building was saturated at approximately 1500 attenders. There was no space to grow. But a few leaders turned its problems into chariot wheels to ride over barriers.
Because people wouldn't come to the Sunday School, Mrs. Tilly Bergin led the church to take the Sunday School to the people. Today, over 134 mission Sunday Schools/Bible Studies meet in various locations (mostly apartment buildings) throughout greater Arlington, Texas. Dedicated laymen, in the spirit of Sunday School founder Robert Raikes, take Sunday School to pupils. Workers walk through an apartment complex gathering people for Sunday School that meets in any available space, i.e., around the pool or in the recreational room. At approximately 11:00 a.m. they begin singing Christian songs, teaching the Word of God, and fulfilling in their own apartment complex the original purpose for Sunday School.

Many plateaued Sunday Schools can begin growing again by taking Sunday School to where people are.

Larry Lamb saw the explosive multiplication of condominiums and houses for young baby boomers north of San Diego, California and knew the traditional American Church would not reach them. He wanted a non-traditional church that was seeker-sensitive, user-friendly; yet evangelical in doctrine and evangelistic in thrust. He planned an all-day Vision Day to communicate to all of the attendees the unique methods of this church so everyone would be on the same starting line in the new venture.

Sunday Schools can be revitalized by new vision of expectations and perception.

Pastor Rick Warren tried to build the largest Sunday School in California at the Saddleback Valley Community Church approximately 40 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. But he found that the suburbanite of California in the 90's was not tuned into Sunday School. While he could build a large worship service, Sunday School wasn't "clicking" with the lifestyle of southern California. He changed the orientation from the traditional ongoing Sunday School curriculum to a new approach. Now the adult curriculum emphasizes communicating skills and Christian maturity that every new believer must acquire to live and serve Jesus Christ. The curriculum is growth-graded to take a person from his unsaved state, to salvation, to growth in knowledge and finally to where they can reach out to others. Pastor Warren said that in the traditional Sunday School there was always another curriculum book to be covered. But in Warren's new Sunday School

curriculum strategy, a student does not move on until he learns skills and attitudes. A person graduates when he reaches the final course of study. He is equipped to be a teacher to lead others through the process. This "Sunday School process" does not take place on Sunday morning, rather it takes place in the evening, afternoon and morning from Monday through Saturday in rented schools, convention centers and even in other church and school facilities.

Sunday Schools must be purpose-driven to teach life-changing skills and Christian maturity.

Pastor Bill Monroe planted the Florence Baptist Temple, Florence, South Carolina in 1969, and built a congregation of over 1400 using the evangelistic outreach of Sunday School bussing to reach children and a large adult auditorium Bible class to reach adults. He faced a barrier when his Auditorium Bible Class could not break 400 in attendance, and a bussing church could not break the 1400 barrier. After some strategy change, the church is again on a path of growth. The adult class has been broken into many small adult Bible study groups of approximately ten each. The new classes produce more adult leadership because many adults are involved in leading Bible studies. When the church was primarily a bussing church, workers went to the front door of a home to invite people to ride a bus to Sunday School. Now, most people drive to church because Sunday School enrollment is emphasized and workers approach prospects asking, "May we enroll you in Bible study?" Pastor Monroe sees outreach as a conveyor belt of influence moving people from being a prospect, to enrolling in Sunday School,

to becoming a believer, to becoming a disciple and then training them to help reach others.

A return emphasis of Sunday School enrollment will create new loyalty of pupils to their classes.

"We do everything through the Sunday School" said Pastor Edwin Young of The Second Baptist Church, Houston, Texas. This church does not follow the traditional age-graded and gender-graded classes of approximately ten adults per class that have been traditional in Southern Baptist churches. They have larger adult classes of 30 to over 200, well-organized to involve everyone so everyone receives ministry and growth. Each class has both a man and woman teacher (teaching alternate weeks) plus an assortment of leaders and workers. Just as the body grows by the division of cells, so the church grows by adding new adult Sunday School cells that inter-relate members to one another and to the class purpose.

Churches thrive when adult classes give total ministry to its members.

First Assembly of God, Phoenix, Arizona faced a space barrier because the church moved to the north side of the city, leaving the neighborhoods on the south side where they had been successful in the Sunday School bus ministry. So Pastor Tommy Barnett motivated his workers to create multiple Sunday Schools on the south side on Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, using available space; i.e., rented public schools, picnic tables in city parks, and they even bought old houses where children were taught the Word of God. Because they could not create a permanent bond between the child and the church in city parks, the students and their parents are bussed to the facilities on the north side for special events. Every week their parents are

bussed to the church for a Sunday night service. This mega church of over 10,000 in attendance has shown an innovative approach to solve time and space logistical problems.

Taking Sunday School to the streets will reinforce its original evangelistic purpose.

Grove City Nazarene Church, a Sunday School of 250 on the south edge of Columbus, Ohio had so many people in its facilities that it couldn't grow. Pastor Huffaker led the people to offer Sunday School on Sunday evening. Beginning at 6:00 p.m., families attend a unified worship service, then break up into age classes to study God's Word. The evening Sunday School attendance has shown steady growth over the a.m. Sunday School, but new space provided explosive growth for the Sunday morning worship crowd. Also, the evening Sunday School is much larger than the previous evening preaching service. The first attendance of visitors is the worship service, not Sunday School. Therefore, Sunday School leaders know that the best fishing for prospects is in the "worship pool" with a view of attracting them to Sunday School. So Grove City Nazarene Church does outreach on Sunday mornings and discipleship on Sunday evenings.

By meeting on Sunday evening the Sunday Schools can provide a better foundation for the total church ministry.

When Skyline Wesleyan Church didn't have enough facilities for evangelistic outreach and growth - a second, third and fourth Sunday Schools were added on Sunday mornings, helping attendance to grow from 1,000 to 4,000 over the past decade. Because extra space does not cause attendance growth, the teacher's task was changed to "class leader," rather than following the traditional role of just an instructor of Bible knowledge.

In an age of spiraling building costs, multiple use of existing classrooms provides needed space for possible evangelism and growth.

Pastor Knute Larson didn't follow the traditional American church organizational pattern, but incorporated the three Biblical function - sizes at the Chapel on University Hill, Akron, Ohio. He uses *cells* for small group intimacy, *celebration* for large group worship, and *congregational* function takes place in Adult Bible Fellowships that meet on Sunday morning during the four worship services. The adult classes were re-constituted from lecture-driven centers to places of Bible study with fellowship.

Whereas the celebration (morning worship) attracts people to a church, they bond to the church through relationships and Bible study in small groups.

The children's classes of Highlands Community Church instituted learning centers that focus on activity, excitement and Bible learning. Rather than merely telling stories and giving pictures to color, this Sunday School in greater Seattle, Washington made learning fun.

Learning is deeper and longer-lasting when it is fun, action-oriented and Bible based.

NEW PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

My uncle Gene was a small-time farmer who understood what it took to break out of the rut, although he personally never did it. As a barefoot boy picking cotton for just a penny a pound, I remember him telling me:

"If you always do
what you've always done;
you'll always be
where you've always been."

Sunday Schools will not turn around if we continue in the rut into which we've fallen, even if we do it better or do it with better trained teachers. Let's not try to improve our rut, let's get out and do Sunday School differently. Let's go back to the original roots of Sunday School. Let's turn it around!

TURNAROUND PERCEPTION

If Sunday School is a sailing ship that is dead in the water, getting a better steersman, better equipped tailsman, and better sails is not going to make it sail any better. We need to find the breeze to get us moving again. We need some changes.

The Sunday Schools of America can sail again, but it is going to take more than improved teaching methods, improved teacher preparation and even better facilities.

How do people perceive Sunday School? They perceive Sunday School as a place where teachers talk, and pupils listen. The problem is, perception. They perceive teachers as teachers, pupils as pupils, and the Sunday School as a school.

This book suggests that we no longer call them teachers, rather we call them leaders. We should no longer call them classes or schools, rather lets call them Adult Bible Fellowships. We should no longer call it teaching, rather lets call it Bible Study. We don't need to improve expectations and perceptions. We need to change expectations and perception.

NEW MODELS CREATE NEW PERCEPTIONS

Twenty-five years ago I wrote *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools And What Made Them Grow* which became a best-seller and according to *Christian Life* editor, Robert Walker, "hit the American church like a thunder clap." That book described 10 churches as a models for the revitalization of all Sunday Schools in America. That book created new perceptions of Sunday School. The message was that Sunday Schools could be revitalized by aggressive evangelistic outreach, door-to-door visitation, Sunday School bussing, and the improvement of traditional teaching methods. That book brought a revitalization to many churches and introduced America to the mega church.

Now, this book is different. It suggests many models for revitalization. There is no one prescription that will work in every situation. As you read this volume, watch for the model that appears closest to your community and church. While there is only one Gospel that saves, and doctrine never changes; methods vary from culture to culture. (Sunday School bussing never worked in the Andes mountains or the Amazon jungle.) Methods also vary from age to age. (Sunday School bussing did not work three hundred years ago when there were no modern highways or vehicles to move the masses over great distances.)

Each chapter presents a model of innovation for Sunday School revitalization and growth. The Sunday School in each chapter is described to give credibility to the principle that is being described. I believe it will motivate the reader. Yet, each chapter ends with an appendix (to explain

the strategy and principle). The chapter is *descriptive* (what has been done), the appendix is *prescriptive* (how to do it).

I want to thank the staff of Gospel Light Publishing Company for their encouragement in this manuscript. Also, thanks goes to Linda Murphrey, Vanessa Van Eaton and Linda Barkley for typing the manuscript.

May God use the description of the energies of many Sunday School workers in this book to revitalize others. Let us all pray for a Sunday School revival in America.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Elmer L. Towns

Fall, 1992
Lynchburg, Virginia

CHAPTER ONE

SUNDAY SCHOOL WITH A MISSION

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ARLINGTON, TEXAS

First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, sits in a downtown area that is experiencing suburban flight; families have moved to suburbia. Even though the massive campus of the University of Texas - Arlington is located next door to the church with over 22,000 students, an average suburbanite would not travel to downtown Arlington for church, for there are too many barriers. As a result, Dr. Charles Wade, Pastor, saw his Sunday School of 1,500 plateaued. Those who commuted downtown to the church came on Sunday morning, but it was difficult to attract visitors to the center of Arlington.

So Pastor Wade along with Tillie Burgin, Missions Director, conceived an idea to take weekly Bible studies out to apartment complexes. An old adage says, "If you can't bring 'em to the mountain, you take the mountain to them." Charles Wade notices, "We do not have space for 4,000 people if all of them came to the church house," so he describes the Bible studies as a bus ministry without the buses.

Years ago workers went visiting in outlying areas to invite children to Sunday School to hear the Word of God. Now over 300 workers travel out to 134 apartment complexes to lead weekly Bible studies-taking the Bible to "where people are."

"We don't call it Sunday School," said Tillie. She went on to explain, "The folks where we minister don't understand what Sunday School is, so we call it Bible study." When pressed for a definition, she said that a Bible study is like a church, but not a church. "We do it seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. It's not a Sunday happening, although the people come together to study the Word of God on Sunday."

The First Baptist Church belongs to the Southern Baptist Convention, a convention of almost 40,000 churches and 3,800 missions. Those are constituted missions on the way to becoming churches. Technically, the 134 Bible studies in Arlington do not count in the Southern Baptist list because they are not constituted missions.

"Do you try to get the people to go to any other church?" Tillie was asked.

"Absolutely not!" she said. "We do everything for the people that a church does." As she takes visitors on a Sunday morning tour called a "Tillie tour," she describes each Bible study as "their church."

"Are the Bible studies planning on constructing buildings?"

"No." Said Tillie. "We use what we have. We study the Bible around the pool, in the recreation room, laundry room, or even an empty apartment. Some of them meet in mobile home parks. Many in charge of apartments see the great life-changing influence on people and loan us empty apartments that are not rented out. Sometimes, those in charge of the apartments are the biggest supporters we have."

One Baptist associational worker then said to Tillie, "You're not a church!"

"As far as the Lord is concerned, we are," answered Tillie. "We've got believers who are assembled together. That's a body of believers that we call a church."

Because the Sunday Schools meet by the pool, in the laundry room of an apartment complex, around a picnic table in a mobile home, or even a few in rented storefront buildings; she calls them "the property." Technically they don't have a building, some of them move weekly, like

children playing hopscotch, they move from one sidewalk to another. So in the same way, the mission Sunday Schools are not described by a building, they are described by a group of people.

One of the groups became a local church when it organized itself from missions status into a local Baptist church. But that is not the plan for any of the Bible studies. Tillie indicated "that approximately ninety to ninety-five percent of the people in the Bible studies do not attend church anywhere. This is their church."

"What do you call your workers?" Tillie was asked.

Tillie thought a moment, then said, "They are Bible study leaders, or you can call them pastors.

She was asked, "What's the difference between a Bible study leader and a pastor."

"I used to think that men were pastors, and that ladies were Bible study leaders," Tillie noted her years of experience on the foreign mission field as a Southern Baptist missionary and then she told the story, "One day in the middle of a Bible study, a little baby died. Immediately, they got me and I came quickly. When I got there the people asked, `Can Virginia, the Bible study leader, bury our baby?' Virginia looked at me and said, `Can I?' Before I could answer, the people said, `Virginia's the only pastor we've ever had.'"

Tillie commented that regardless of what we call leaders, the most important thing is what they do. Whether they are called chaplains, Bible study leaders, or pastors, they are a group of lay people doing ministry seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, where they lead people to study God's Word, come to know Jesus Christ, and meet their spiritual needs.

"They are pastors and this is church," she concluded.

Many leaders of the Bible Studies are seminary students, lawyers, and workers at First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas. Because of the success, workers have come from other churches in the area, simply because they believe in the task.

The activities of each Bible Study are similar. First, the workers arrive somewhere around 10:00 a.m. to begin going door-to-door to inviting everyone to the Bible study. In the old days the bus workers would visit on Saturday morning inviting people to ride the bus Sunday morning. But now appeal is for immediate response that morning.

On many of the properties, people sit on the floor because they use an empty apartment. Some sit in chairs around a pool, or in the chairs of a recreation room.

"Worship is first," explains Tillie Bergin. "Everyone comes together to worship, including all of the children." They sing, using tape recorders, portable keyboards, guitars or just whatever is available to the people at the time. The offering is usually taken during this time, including announcements followed by special music.

Each group keeps its own money to use in ministry. While they report the amount, the offering does not go back to the First Baptist Church or a central treasury.

After approximately 15 - 20 minutes, the group breaks into age divisions for Bible Study. Usually, this means a children's group, a youth group and an adult Bible study.

"I tell them to begin with John 3:16 for the adults," says Tillie. "If they stay close to John 3:16, it will bring people to Jesus Christ and develop the group." While Tillie says a group can spend a year on John 3:16, they move on to other areas. Also, the workers write the children's material.

"We've done away with the excuse that people give, `I don't have anything to wear.' We have done a good job of convincing them they don't have to dress up for Bible study."

Every Sunday afternoon all the workers have a training session at 4:00 p.m. "That's the most important time of the week. We don't take anything away from focus on the Scriptures that is to be taught by the workers." Tillie says this is not where she teaches the lesson to them, "It's worship time for us."

They began the workers training session with music, both special music and group singing. They then shared testimonies of what had happened on each property for that day. They have prayer . . . praying one for another.

"Then they fill out the numbers," says Tillie. This involves the amount of offering, attendance of children, youth and adults and other pertinent information."

When asked how large the ministry would grow, Tillie said, "It's according to how many workers we have. If we can get workers, it is easy to find the property and to get a Bible study started."

"We have approximately 350 to 400 volunteers right now." Tillie went on to say, "I don't ask people to come down and help; most people don't respond to that type of appeal. They come to see what's going on and I give them a specific job. I ask them to help with the teaching, leading, singing or knocking on doors to get people to attend." She believes God's people respond to that type of appeal. "Most of our volunteers come as a result of prayer."

One worker who had worked at LTV testified that in his traditional Sunday School class he seemed like he was doing the same thing Sunday after Sunday - listening to a talk then going home. One day he asked his Sunday School teacher, "Why don't we do stuff like Jesus?" A great hush came over the class.

"Do you know Tillie Burgin?" the teacher asked.

"No."

"Tillie has a mission in this church but I don't know what it is called. I want you to go with her on Sunday to take the `Tillie tour.'" That day he tried to get around to see all of the missions in operation.

The man responded after they visited three or four apartments, "I have never seen anything like this, people sitting on the floor, singing, clapping, and listening to the Word of God."

The bottom line, "It really inspired me to do something, so I got involved." Today he is a Bible study leader, with his own property, i.e., Sunday School.

When asked if he wanted to be a pastor, he said, "I don't want to go through seminary or anything like that. I just want to take care of the people in my apartment building, bury the dead, lead people to Christ, baptize them when they get saved and teach them the Word of God every week."

A worker named Tom was asked about his ministry each Sunday. "Is it Bible study or is it preaching that you do?"

"We compress the Word of God together and we do Sunday School and church together. I don't know what you call it, I just do it."

Many of the apartment managers support Tillie Burgin because they see the change in the lives of those who attend Bible study. They have seen Tillie carrying groceries to the poor and on occasions she has paid their rent. Many apartment managers will loan her the key to an empty apartment for a Bible study as long as the apartment is not needed. "We have been moved five times in five weeks," Tillie responds. On some occasions, the Bible Study has had to pay rent because all of the apartments were filled and they could not stay in the apartment complex without paying for it.

The magazine of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board entitled *Mission U.S.A.* called Tillie Burgin, "Leader of the Band" in the May/June issue 1991. "Born a block from the center - called Mission Arlington - Burgin now conducts a fine-tuned orchestra of volunteers playing to an audience of physically and spiritually Texans."

The work began when Burgin, who with her husband Bob, as a missionary to Korea for ten years became the church's Missions Minister. Because great works always grow out of great vision, the vision she had for the unchurched, unsaved neighborhood in which she grew up, became the driving force that produced the outreach of over 2,000 people each week.

The magazine tells the story of how the first Bible study was begun in Virginia Maanani's apartment. Virginia and two teenage daughters moved to Arlington from New York to escape what she called "an abusive husband." Because Virginia had financial needs, when Tillie first came to her apartment Virginia said, "I was afraid to let her in. I thought she was a bill collector or someone coming to evict me." Later that day, Burgin came back with four bags of groceries and returned the next week with a check for the rent. Then she paid the electric bill. Virginia commented how Tillie "would just pop in sometimes to say how she cared about us." With the help of Mission Arlington and Tillie Burgin, Virginia Maanani got back on her feet both spiritually and financially, she was able to move into a duplex, but she still comes back to the apartment complex to help in ministry. She now leads two Bible studies on her own. Virginia told *Mission U.S.A.*, "This is not just a mission field. It is my life."

In addition to the Sunday ministry, there are fifty to sixty people who come daily to the mission seeking food, clothing, transportation to work or just money for rent and utilities. The mission has a shelter where the homeless may come and stay each day. It has a "jobs office" where people call in looking for day laborers. But beyond all that, there are counselors to help people trapped in drugs, alcohol or any other problem. For those who are there, there is a Bible study every morning pointing people to Jesus Christ. Although there are 350-400 volunteers in Mission Arlington, approximately 200 lead the Bible Studies each Sunday.

Many of those living in the apartment complexes are single-parent women without fathers in the home. Therefore, many of the Bible studies plan an afternoon "Fun-Day" where the leaders play with the children and help them with their homework. Sometimes Fun-Day is Saturday, when some workers are visiting every apartment. At other times it is on a Wednesday afternoon.

Because it is true that when people get saved they become more responsible, many apartment managers see a change in the way people take care of the their apartments and then the way they began taking care of the halls, balconies, stairways and the general facilities.

Tillie Burgin says there are approximately 3,000 apartment complexes in the greater Arlington area, with only 200 Bible studies, which is not enough. Two years ago she said she knew fourteen apartment complexes waiting for a Bible study. All she needed was available volunteers to go and start them.

CONCLUSION

Sunday School has been defined as "the reaching, teaching, winning, and nurturing arm of the church." The outreach of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas certainly fits that description. However, the reaching arm is so unusual that it could trigger a revival in America if every church would follow its example.

When people won't come to Sunday School, perhaps Sunday School should be taken to the people. When that is done it will bring revitalization to the American church, and will make an impact on our cities for Christ.

CHAPTER TWO
SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS WITH CHILDREN

HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY CHURCH, RENTON, WASHINGTON

Cindy Wentworth, a young mother, visited Highlands Community Church and decided to stay. When asked her reason, she replied, "My two-year-old daughter came out of Sunday School laughing." The previous week they had visited another church and she came out crying. That was basically all she remembered about visiting other churches, but when she visited Highlands Community Church, she got in the car and said, "Mom, let's come back here." They have been there for seven years.

"A little boy cried and screamed when left in the Sunday School. Every week it was the same thing," said Brenda Chance, preschool departmental superintendent. "I hate Sunday School," the child blurted out. After they changed to learning centers in Sunday School, he was happy. His mom said he actually looked forward to coming. According to Brenda, "It is exciting to see a child who you have written off, turn his attitude around. Now he takes an active part in class."

The Sunday School at Highlands Community Church has many things going for it, but when asked what he likes most about the Sunday School, John Burilie said, "We came here because it is family-oriented." One family came because, "Our children's program was the best thing for our children. It attracts other parents and the Sunday School keeps growing."

"Our Sunday School is best because we have teachers who love children," said Art Hoyt.

A man named Smith said that the Sunday School focus on children is "the best thing about Highlands Community Church." He went on to say, "We have an incredibly strong children's ministry and the increased resources we are attempting to pour into that ministry makes it a priority for the future."

Brenda Chance now uses Gospel Light literature. "I was not pleased with the program we use to have, because we just talked (told stories) to the children and made them color pictures at a table." Today Brenda leads a group of teachers using a learning center approach to children's ministry. She said, "When I adapted Gospel Light curriculum to learning centers, I was able to let the kids be kids."

"Kids this young will formulate their ideas about Jesus, the church, and the future." Brenda went on to say, "If you influence them as children, your ministry continues as they become youth and adults . . . you influence them for life."

"But more than just ministry to children, we minister to their parents as well," said Brenda. "Parents want to attend where their children are happy. One of her primary aims is to make children happy. A secondary aim is learning, but it is really not secondary. "Happy children learn and unhappy children learn, it is just that happy children learn the right things."

"When we switched to learning centers, it took a much larger staff than just one teacher and assistant per class. Instead of being a teacher, I had to become a manager of teachers, then each preschool class took a teacher and three to six helpers depending on the size of the class. As the classes have grown, the number of workers have grown. When they switched to learning centers there were 75 children on the roll; now they average 210 to 230 on the roll.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Technically, the biggest problem facing any Sunday School in America is recruitment. First, teachers must be found who will volunteer to take ownership of a class. Second, when a teacher is absent for one week he must find a substitute to fill in for him.

"Our philosophy is to reproduce workers, rather than recruit workers," said Pastor Wilson, when thinking of finding some teachers to help in an expanding Sunday School.

Recruitment is done several ways at Highlands Community Church. Much of it is done personally. Brenda called a teacher of special education in the public schools and asked her to think about helping in the children's Sunday School class, specifically asking, "Will you pray about it?"

She responded, "Sure I will."

The next September she was rather reluctant, but she came back and became one of the best teachers in the department. The following fall she came in to volunteer to work on an administration level.

On another occasion Janine Hoyt, a high school girl, came and said she wanted to teach. Brenda was skeptical, "I didn't know how to respond to her, so we met and we talked over a few things. She said she was ready, so she comes prepared every Sunday. As a matter of fact, I think she's better prepared than some of our adult teachers. She is excited and I have complete confidence in her." While she is used on a learning team of teachers, she would never go in and take a class by herself. But Janine goes in and takes control of the situation. She has her schedule and tells everybody what she is going to do, and how they will respond. She hands a schedule to everyone and is always well-prepared. Even though she is a high schooler, Brenda says, "I can trust her." When she asks the whole class to be quiet for prayer, they respond. Since July, 1992, Janine, along with the rest of her family, is now serving as career missionaries in the Philippines. In her last letter she shared that she and her sister are involved in outreach for the Philippino children. She further shared that her pre-school training is now invaluable.

Becky and Mike Mayer taught in the learning center as a husband and wife team, even though Mike more or less stood in the background while Becky (the outgoing one) was more forward. She was the teacher and Mike was the helper. When the church did not have a first grade teacher, Mike volunteered to be the lead teacher for first grade boys. He asked to teach with another man, all this was unknown to Becky. When they got home from church he told her that he had volunteered to take on a class by himself. Becky offered to come help him, but he said he could do it by himself. Now he and his high school son, Robbie, have an exciting class.

UNUSUAL RECRUITMENT

They see AWANAs as an active pool from which they get workers for the total church.

Several years ago they used Boys Brigade and Pioneer Girls, having approximately 50 pupils in each of the programs. But when the program didn't seem to meet the needs of the church they switched to AWANAs. Today they have approximately 500 in the program, in addition to the excitement of games, Scripture memory, and development of children. The church feels that its secret weapon is the development of staff through the AWANA's program. It is easy to recruit AWANA workers because they see the weekly reinforcement of learning verses, and weekly progress. Previously, they had approximately nineteen leaders working with Boys Brigade and Pioneer Girls, today they have over 100 leaders working in AWANA.

The AWANA's introductory program of Cubbies works with children, most of whom

cannot read. After their parents hear their verses and sign the Cubbie book, they get involved as leaders in the program.

The church does some recruitment through public announcements. Of course, most churches use this approach, but the leadership of Highlands is looking for reliable, committed people who say, "Yes, I will show up," and then actually show up.

In the fall of 1991, the church did not have enough teachers for the first grade Sunday School class, so they canceled it for three weeks at the beginning of the fall term. A letter was written to the parents telling them that until teachers were recruited, there would be no class for their children. Immediately, three ladies came forward to teach the girls and a couple of men came forward to teach the boys.

Even though some in the church were not in favor of canceling the first grade Sunday School, Brenda said, "I think part of the recruitment umbrella is that when you make a statement that there are going to be three children to one adult in the learning center, we need to stick with it." Brenda talked about not backing down in the heat of the moment, but to do things right for the health of the total program.

When they did not have a pre-school teacher, someone walked in and said, "I will go in with the kids." Brenda said, "No, you won't." Brenda insisted that a teacher must be prepared. "I do not want babysitting, and we do not have babysitting." She went on to explain that if they had given in to that heat of the moment, they would still have a philosophy of babysitting."

People think that someone else will do it, but that is not always the case. Highlands has another approach to recruitment. If your children come to Sunday School, parents are required to work in Sunday School (or some place else in the church). As a result, even though there is a strong outreach program to needy areas, they expect the parents of those families who come to Highlands, to work with children at Highlands.

The reason we want parents working in Sunday School is to focus on the total family. We're not here to provide religious education just for kids, we're here to assist the family in providing religious education for the parents and their kids."

MEN WITH CHILDREN

"One of the exciting things about the learning center concept is that men are becoming actively involved in children's education and according to Brenda, "That's exciting!"

She went on to say, "I have made it a practice to have a man in every one of the classrooms. Men bring a different tone to the classroom, and make a big difference. As an illustration, children from a single mother's home just cling to the male teacher."

The men are not just in the background as a male image. They come in, sit and talk with the children, and have a willing attitude to teach. "Also, the aspect of touching is important with men. Kids like to sit on their lap, hug them, and men communicate so much through touch," said Brenda. "It seems like it takes a longer time for a man to say that he will teach, but once a commitment is made, they do a super job."

When asked why men are reluctant to teach with children, several barriers come up. First, there is the initial hesitation that it is a demeaning job. Second is the false expectation that Sunday School teaching is a woman's job. Then, sometimes men have a fear of little kids or don't feel comfortable with little ones. But in spite of all this, men have become outstanding teachers with children at Highlands Community Church.

A HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S WORK

The church was planted by Pastor Wallace Wilson in 1948, as a product of a children's outreach camp in the area. Pastor Wallace and Inez Wilson used a log cabin, pumped their water by hand, and ministered to the children in a local camp in the Highlands area.

There was a temporary war housing project in the area for people who came to build bombers for World War II. When the war was over, the apartment complex closed and the people were supposed to leave the area. Some did, but many came back because they liked the area.

Wallace Wilson said, "When I came to the Highlands area, there was no Sunday School, yet about 10,000 people living in the temporary project that was soon to be dismantled.

Wilson began a Sunday School in the community hall and gymnasium. During the week children were visited and led to Christ. Then they were enrolled in summer camps. The work was called Highlands Community Sunday School and in 1950 was organized into a local church and incorporated by the State of Washington. There were about 30 adults and 300 children when they were organized into a church. Because the work was growing, Wilson asked for help from the School of Religion at Seattle Pacific University (at that time Simpson Bible Institute). Bible School students helped give Biblical direction to the work.

In the early days of the church, they still focused primarily on children. They had contests that were effective in that day. Wilson testified, "In the summertime we had a parade with the police department, the fire department and any other department that would work with us. We did everything we could to attract children to Sunday School and Vacation Bible School."

After nine years of attempting to negotiate with the government to buy the property for their building, Wilson finally went to Senator Henry (Scoop) Jackson who made a senatorial inquiry into the Federal Housing Administration. Within a few days they were able to purchase the property. At first they had 2.56 acres, and since that time have purchased an additional 5 acres.

The first unit was built in 1958 and shortly thereafter was too small. The church offered two services and in 1962 ground was broken for a second building. Soon the church returned to dual Sunday Schools and dual worship services. Within a period of time three church services were offered.

Beginning in 1963, the church added staff members and at one time had eight men and one woman. But then because of its commitment to Sunday School, the church began adding women in ministry. Wilson noted, "The most rapidly growing part of our Sunday School was the nursery and preschool, so we looked for women to head up those programs and found Bev Jackson, an excellent teacher in the Renton School District, who did a great job in the Sunday School."

GETTING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

When a "problem child" is found in the Sunday School, first the parents are invited to meet with the teachers to talk about the problem. Often, Sunday School teachers find parents saying things like, "I just don't know what to do with this kid." This is an excellent opportunity for spiritual ministry to the parents. The answer is not always punitive discipline; the answer is often corrective discipline and direction for the parents, as well as the child.

If the child is disruptive in the class, Brenda says, "We have taken discipline away from the teacher." By that she means if there is a problem, the teacher sends the child to the superintendent's office. There the child is counseled and dealt with appropriately. If it happens again, the superintendent meets with the parents and if the parents are not cooperative, they ask the child not to return to class without a parent being present for the entirety of the class. When parents are uncooperative, they are told, "We are sorry, but we cannot permit the child to remain in Sunday School."

No one at the Sunday School would ever physically touch a child by corporal punishment. On a few occasions, when the mother has been called to deal with a child, the mother has spanked her own child. As a result, when the child sees a mother coming, it's an effective way to solve a problem.

The church had a strong bus ministry in the past and today has a minority ministry with children from different cultures, from lower class homes, as well as a mixture of races. As a result of the differences in children, a class is held in the Royal Hills neighborhood. This Sunday School has a strong, disciplined approach to teaching rather than the learning center approach. There is a bus that is run through the neighborhood and on Wednesday night there is an AWANA program. A second neighborhood, called the Sunset Terrace area, is also dealt with in the same way.

One of the things that most excites Marlene Spann is the interest in teaching as a family - i.e., husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter. She explained that as they worked together in a ministry relationship, the family is not only strengthened, but their ministry becomes more effective."

A few years ago Kevin Grayson a five-year-old was dying of cancer. Before he died he was able to share his life through his Sunday School. He testified, "Jesus loves me a whole lot more, because I get to go there first and to see Him before you do." As a result of Kevin's testimony, he stretched his four-year-old friends' little minds far beyond their normal maturity level. He helped children deal with death through the eyes of Scripture. The Sunday School teacher was then able to deal with the issue in a very positive and open way.

The church had a memorial service for Kevin and bought a climber for the kindergarten class, called "Kevin's climber." Kevin's funeral was on Thursday and on Sunday morning when his mother went to her car to come to church, there were five or six children waiting for a ride. They wanted to learn about "Kevin's Jesus."

CONCLUSION

According to the Gallup Poll, the young adult, age 18-35 is the fastest growing segment of the American church population. However, their group will not remain in the church as there is not an adequate program for their children. Analysts are not sure if young adults attend because of their children, or they come because of their unique need which arises because they have children; but whatever the motive, it is clear that a church must have a vibrant program to teach children if the church wants to reach their parents.

CHAPTER THREE

A PURPOSE-DRIVEN SUNDAY SCHOOL

SADDLEBACK VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH, MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA

Where did this dynamic church of six thousand originate? Did it begin when Rick Warren met in the home of Don Dale for Bible study with seven people in January of 1980? Did it begin when Rick Warren rented facilities for the first church service on Easter, 1980? Or did the church begin when Rick Warren, as a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, searched the library for every book he could find on church growth, and read all seventy-two of them? Did the church begin when Rick Warren walked up and down the streets of Orange County knocking on doors asking five questions (see appendix):

Rick Warren is a fourth-generation Southern Baptist pastor whose great grandfather was converted under Dr. Charles Spurgeon. Did this church begin in the heart of his ancestors who prayed that their children would follow their legacy?

Rick Warren arrived in Greater Los Angeles in January, 1980, with his wife, Kay, their four-month-old daughter, Amy, and all their belongings packed into a U-Haul trailer and hit the rush hour gridlock of Southern California traffic. Because he didn't know anyone, he found a real estate office and met Don Dale. "I am here to start a church," the church planter said. "I need a place to live and I don't have any money!"

Within two hours Dale had found him a condominium with the first month's rent free, and next Friday the Dale family and Warren family met for Bible study at what was to become Saddleback Valley Community Church.

Now the church averages 6,000 in attendance and more than 15,000 attended the twelfth anniversary of the church on Easter Sunday, 1992. It has been listed as the twelfth fastest growing church in America by Church Growth Today magazine.

What has made this growth so unusual is that it is located within driving distance of outstanding pulpiteers such as Robert Schuller, Crystal Cathedral, Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel and Charles Swindoll of the Evangelical Free Church.

What did Rick Warren find out in answer to his questions at the front door? He found that there were four major barriers to getting people into church. First, they said sermons were boring and not relevant to their lives. Second, churches were unfriendly to visitors. Third, churches were more interested in money than people, and fourth, churches did not provide quality child care. Warren has used the answers to develop a "seeker sensitive" church that tries to meet the needs of its neighborhood.

Warren came up with a four-fold strategy to attract Orange County residents: 1) Quality child care is necessary to attract young families. 2) He preaches humorous sermons that are practical to their lives and solve their problems. These sermons are based upon Bible answers. 3) He has organized the church to be friendly. He tells people to, "Shake hands with seventy-five people." 4) He makes it known that visitors are never asked to contribute financially, instead they are asked to fill out cards to receive a free tape of the service.

Because Warren had a double zeal - first a missionary to win souls, but secondly a marketing expert to understand people; he knew that he would have to develop a profile for his target audience. Warren coined the phrase "Saddleback Sam" to describe a typical resident he was trying to reach.

Saddleback Sam had several characteristics. He believed in God but did not go to church. He made good money but did not make enough to cover his desires. He is a nice guy, but stressed out and searching for answers in life.

Recently Warren asked the question in a sermon, "Why do we buy things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't even like?" Such questions shows his insight into the people to whom he preaches.

The church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention but Warren did not use the word Baptist in the title because in California many people thought that it would be a "Southern cultured church." Also, many Southern Californian's think that Baptists only preach against things. As a result of not using the name Baptist, he has a large slice of Roman Catholics, main-line denominational members, as well as people who have never been members of any church. The church attracts all ages, although the majority are baby boomers.

The church service features the heavy boom of contemporary rock beat, but is decidedly Christian in lyrics. The people sing, sway, and clap their hands to the rhythmic music. It's obvious that they enjoy themselves at Saddleback. Also, the audience comes on Sunday morning laid back and comfortable in Izods, Reeboks, blue jeans. Pastor Warren seldom wears a coat, and is often without a tie.

As of yet, the church does not own its facilities so they meet in rented public school auditoriums. In 13 years, the church has used 57 different building. They baptize in swimming pools or whirlpools, coined by Warren "jacuzzis for Jesus." They have baptized as many as 207 adults on a single Sunday. Over 70% of the members of Saddleback were converted and baptized at the church. Saddleback has grown largely through conversion growth rather than by transfer growth.

At the present time, they do not have a standard Sunday School program for adults but they do have one for children. There are three Sunday morning Sunday Schools that meet simultaneously with the worship service. When they went to a Saturday night worship, they also started a Saturday night Sunday School for children. At the present time they have approximately 1400 children in the Sunday Schools. They use several different curriculum, based on the purpose of the class.

In grades 6-12, a "rally type" approach is used in Sunday School. The youth director speaks, so they write their own curriculum. As a result, many junior and senior high are not in the church service.

As a matter of fact, Warren says, "We do not want people to stay for more than one service on Sunday morning. We need for them to leave." When he says this, Warren is referring to parking spaces. He has said on occasions, "Please don't stay for two services, you take up the space of someone coming for the next worship."

At the present time they have only a few adult Sunday School classes. Warren calls these "token classes for the traditionalist." Even though they are a small attendance at present, these are necessary to meet the needs of all the people.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PILGRIMAGE

When Warren began the church in 1980, he reached an attendance of 200 by the end of the first year. At that time Warren said, "I felt I was running an orphanage because everyone in the church was a new Christian." Because they didn't have strong leadership, there was no Sunday

School at the beginning. However, shortly after beginning, Warren did install a standard Sunday School.

After visiting Korea, the young pastor began thinking about starting cell groups, or navigator Bible studies or something like Ralph Neighbor had started, "touch groups." For various reasons, these types of small groups did not get off the ground at Saddleback Valley Community Church.

About 1983, Warren asked, "Why don't we give a standard Sunday School our best shot?" He knew that North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Arizona, could attract nearly 7,000 in attendance and they were in the west, so he thought, "Why couldn't we have that many in California?" Warren gave the Sunday School his best effort. He first went to the Southern Baptist Growth Spiral program, as introduced by Andy Anderson. This program was built on setting clear growth goals.

Warren also began teaching the Sunday School lesson to the teachers each week, simply because the new believers needed help in learning content and preparing lessons. In addition, he did Sunday School retreats, Sunday School conferences, and brought in specialists to train the workers. However, Sunday School attendance was never larger than thirty percent of the worship attendance. The worship grew, but the Sunday School lagged behind in attendance.

Then Warren noticed that the Sunday School stayed at 300 while the church jumped from 500 to 750 to 1,000 to 1,500 and then to 2,000.

"I discovered that in Southern California there was a sociological issue, not a theological issue." For that reason, the pressure of culture kept people from Sunday School, not due to a doctrinal reason."

"I discovered that people in our area had money, and money meant options. Because Southern Californians had more money, they had more options."

Warren perceived the standard Sunday School as a conveyor belt mentality - where everybody studied the same thing at the same place at the same time. He heard the Southern Californians balking, saying that they just were not going to do it. He discovered that they wanted four things:

1. Options in Time
2. Options in Service
3. Options in Curriculum

Options in Methods of Learning

As a result the pastor changed his Sunday School program from fixed curriculum to the elective type of curriculum. Allowing every Sunday School class to choose its topic, or allowing the teacher to choose a topic, he told all of the teachers, "I release you."
He didn't care when classes studied the Bible, as long as they studied the Bible some time during the week!"

Also, this fourth-generation Southern Baptist pastor released them from the Southern Baptist Sunday School curriculum. Each teacher was given a list of approved curriculum to choose cafeteria style. Finally, they printed up a brochure listing the classes by affinity groups, stages of life, or interests. Each listing of a class emphasized the qualifications of the teacher.

Originally the attendance of the classes exploded, but after a period of time they drifted back down to where they were before. "I knew I was on to something as far as giving people options, but I realized a total hands-off approach of our staff was not working."

Warren examined the success of the small groups of Dale Galloway at New Life Community Church, Portland, Oregon, as well as other people who were making small groups work.

At the same time, he went to visit one of the largest Southern Baptist Churches with one of the most expensive Sunday School facilities, and came away discouraged. He did not want to spend millions upon millions for a building that would only be used for one hour each week. "When I looked at their multi-million-dollar Sunday School building, I thought that it was the last of the dinosaurs." Not many churches will ever be able to afford this in the 1990's. Warren decided it was better stewardship to use the homes of members.

"I want to use homes because they are geographical expandable. I felt that the use of homes would be good stewardship of our money and that it would promote fellowship." So the church moved all adult Sunday Schools into home groups. Warren noted, "If you put a man in a Sunday School class and stand a teacher in front of him, he will probably clam up and not say a word all morning." But then he noted, "Place the same man on a couch on Friday evening without his coat and tie, with a cup of coffee in his hands, and he will 'talk his head off'!" From this point, the small groups in Saddleback Valley Community Church began to grow.

The church offers five types of small groups, based on the five purposes of the church: Worship, Evangelism, Edification, Fellowship, and Ministry. Each group specializes and emphasizes primarily one purpose. This gives people options.

PURPOSE

Warren believes that a church must be built through purpose. Saddleback draws its purposes from two key Scriptures: The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

SADDLEBACK'S SLOGAN:

"A Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a Great Church."

"We are a purpose-driven church," Warren said. "Because we are in the disciple-development business, my goal is to build a church that builds great Christians."

Warren explained, "My goal at Saddleback is to build the most spiritually mature church in the nation by the year 2000." While some feel that might be an auspicious goal, the new Sunday School programs were developed to lead to that goal. Whereas most churches develop a Sunday School program that goes from lesson to lesson, Warren has developed a program that builds upon five objectives: knowledge, perspective, conviction, character, and skills. The goal is to produce "doers of the Word, not hearers only."

"Sunday School is a strategy," said Warren, "Sunday School is not a program." He points to Arthur Flake who was the architect of the Southern Baptist Sunday School system. Warren indicates that the growth principles of Flake apply to a church but they principles don't necessarily have to be worked on Sunday morning in small Sunday School classes. The double growth of

Warren's church is first in their small group program that gives pastoral care to people and second, in their CLASS program that produces maturity in people.

"Typically, most churches get stuck into teaching content, never teaching skills and maturity," Warren observed. Warren pointed out that Saddleback's purpose-driven strategy is explained and symbolized by two diagrams: five concentric circles and a baseball diamond. These two diagrams reflect their CLASS strategy. (See appendix for diagrams.)

SADDLEBACK'S FIVE CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT

The Inner Circle: "The Core" - Committed - Warren estimates he has approximately 1,000 people who are considered core members. These are identifiable lay-ministers in the church who are involved somewhere in approximately 69 different ministries of the church. To keep this coordinated, two people are in charge of job placement that plug people into the 69 different places of ministry. The people in the core ministry have gone through the four base classes of the baseball diamond to learn skills and maturity, and have signed a ministry covenant. They sign a ministry covenant. (See appendix for a ministry covenant.) Now they are involved in ministering to others.

Second Circle - Committed to Maturity - Warren calls those in the second circle, good people who are committed to becoming godly. "These people love the Lord but for one reason or another have not yet found a ministry in which to serve." To reach this level, a person must commit to three basic habits and sign a covenant that involves their time, money, and relationships. (See appendix for maturity covenant.) They commit themselves to 1) a daily quiet time with God, 2) a weekly tithe to God and 3) to be a part of a small group. These are the essential habits for staying "spiritually fit." The church has over 2400 people in this committed group who have signed a maturity covenant.

Third Circle- The Congregation - These people are the official adult members of the church who have committed to its membership. These adult members have gone through the four-and-a-half-hour membership class and have signed the membership covenant. (See appendix for membership covenant.) In this class they are taught the statements, strategy, and structure of the church.

The church has approximately 3,000 adult members and Warren noted, "We do not count children or non-residents." Each year people are taken off the roll if they are not active. "We remove several hundred names each year," the young pastor noted. In the first ten years of the church, approximately 4,000 people joined. Warren noted, "We are interested in a small membership that really means something, rather than having a large number of names on the list."

Fourth Circle- The Crowd - Warren describes the fourth group as the people who show up on Sunday morning for the worship service. They are the "regular attenders." There are approximately 5,000 to 7,000 in the crowd who come each Sunday, depending on the week. The crowd varies according to circumstances. The strategy is to move casual attendees in the crowd to a commitment membership. Many in the crowd are not yet believers. Warren says, "A crowd is not a church. But you can turn a crowd into a church, and if you want a large church, you must attract a large crowd first."

Fifth Circle- The Community - Warren indicated that the largest group is the community they want to reach. Two elements involve the community: "First, the community is the uncommitted and non-attenders whom we want to reach for Jesus Christ. We target our ministry to the "Saddleback Sams and Samanthas." More specifically, we consider the community as anyone who attends at least four times a year, i.e. Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day and one other occasion."

The church has approximately 18,000 who attended at least four times in 1992. "We believe you need a specific strategy to meet the spiritual needs of those in each circle, and help move them closer to God." Warren feels that the average church has a shotgun strategy which aims at all people instead of targeting the different levels of commitment into which people may fall.

"Our strategy is to get the community into the crowd; that means we must get them attending every week. We preach practical sermons, directed toward their needs, and contemporary music is provided." The entire service is designed to move people from being spectators to participants.

The next strategy to move the crowd into the congregation. This means we must get people committed to Christ and His church. "The difference between an attender and a member is commitment," said Warren. "It's like the difference between a man and woman just living together and their actually getting married."

"Everything we do at Saddleback is aimed at moving people through the circles of commitment to get every person into the core where they have a ministry in the church and a mission in the world."

COVENANTS

For a person to move from one circle to another requires commitment on their part. Warren calls these commitments covenants and people are asked to sign a covenant as they move through the circles.

The membership covenant (see appendix) is a commitment to Christ in the Saddleback family. It is more than putting a name on a roll. Warren says, "These are the two most basic commitments. This gets you to first base. This is done by taking CLASS 101, 'Discovering Saddleback Membership'." It is taught every month. In November, 1992, over 450 took the class - a record for Saddleback.

The next commitment is the maturity covenant (see appendix) which is a commitment to the habits of life that are necessary for spiritual growth. People take CLASS 201 which builds them up in maturity. It is called "Discovering Spiritual Maturity."

The next commitment level is the ministry covenant (see appendix) and is the third stage of development. At this level, a person should discover and use his spiritual gifts and abilities to serve God and others. As a person takes CLASS 301, "Discovering My Ministry," they learn how to serve Christ. Then a personal interview with a pastor helps members discover their place of service. The ministry covenant is then signed and they are ready to go on to the next level.

The last level is the mission covenant (see appendix) where they commit themselves in CLASS 401, "Discovering My Mission," to share the Good News with other people through mission opportunities of the church.

"I judge the spiritual health of the church not on its seating capacity or its size, but on its 'sending capacity,' said Warren. We have 1,000 people in the core that we are sending into ministry." Warren spoke about those who had just come back from distributing over 200,000 Bibles in Russia, those who had gone for ministry in Australia, those who had just built two churches in Guatemala; plus the many who were involved weekly in missions in the Saddleback Valley Community Church outreach programs. The Saddleback Church has started over 30 daughter churches in California.

SHAPE

Warren says that a church is much bigger than its building; it is as big as its ministry. He feels that every believer has a unique SHAPE for ministry. Using the verse from Scripture that speaks of God's Hands having formed and shaped us, Warren teaches that there are five elements of our God-given SHAPE.

S = my Spiritual gift (where I am gifted)
H = my Heart (what I have passion to do)
A = my Abilities (my natural talents and skills for service)
P = my Personality (a reflection of my attitudes and characteristics)
E = my Experiences (the sum total of my spiritual, educational, vocational, and painful experiences)

"These five things determine what a new believer loves, what he/she wants to do, what he/she is good at, and will have success in doing." When Warren gets a person to commit to the ministry covenant, they have studied and identified their SHAPE.

"We say that spiritual gifts are not enough for ministry," the young pastor observed. As a matter of fact, Warren takes the opposite approach from most churches. Whereas many teachers of spiritual gifts say that a new believer must discover his spiritual gifts first, and then find his ministry; Warren teaches the reverse strategy. "I say that a person must first serve the Lord, then through his successful service he discovers his gifts."

Warren uses himself as an illustration, "I didn't know I had the gift of preaching until I started doing it. I could have taken every spiritual gift test under the sun and never have known that I had that gift." So he uses his acrostic, SHAPE, to help a person find his/her ministry.

"We give people a lot of freedom to experiment with finding the ministry that is best for them. Warren tells them, "At the end of a year you will know more clearly what your spiritual gift is by having actually tried out different ministries."

When Warren was asked the difference between a spiritual gift and natural ability, he said that natural abilities are given at birth, while spiritual gifts are given at salvation.

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SERVICE SEMINARS

The baseball diamond best reflects the curriculum approach to Saddleback's program of teaching and training.

"When I first started the church, I tried to get everyone to make a deep complete commitment to Christ at the membership class. For example, I wanted them to make a commitment to church membership, to ministry, to witnessing and to separation from sin. I found that approach didn't work in Southern California. I had to learn to lead people by steps -- one step at a time. People must be led gradually to increase their commitment."

As a result, from his experience, Warren came up with a teaching program that he calls, "A Sunday School without walls". He also describes it as a Sunday School that graduates people when they complete the curriculum. It is called "C.L.A.S.S."

"Typically, most adults in Sunday School get stuck in one class and just study one quarterly after another. A guy can go to Sunday School for years and the most he gets out of it is maybe an attendance pin."

At Saddleback Valley Community Church, people move through four levels, advancing on only after they have completed a previous level.

"A church is defined by what it is committed to do," said Warren, "and our adult Sunday School is committed to moving our people into membership, then maturity, then ministry, then mission."

CONCLUSION

Pastor Warren said, "We believe the shoe must never tell the foot how big it should grow. We've never let the lack of a building stop us from growing. But after using 57 different buildings in our history, we laugh and say, 'This is the church where, if you can figure out where we are this week, you get to come!'"

CHAPTER FOUR

A RETURN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

FLORENCE BAPTIST TEMPLE, FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

When a Sunday School plateaus and stops growing, how can a leader get it growing again? Many Sunday Schools get stuck at plateaus and do not know how to move off dead center. Does the leader find a new program? Does he hire a new personality with new zeal? Rev. Bill Monroe planted the Florence Baptist Temple in Florence, South Carolina in December, 1969, and the very methods he used to make it successful also contained the seeds of limitation. Pastor Monroe had to go back to square one and change his strategy to get his church growing again.

Bill Monroe was leading music in a church in Indianapolis, Indiana, during the late 60's when he read the book, *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow*. The book gave him a vision of a great Sunday School, stretching his faith to plant one. He thought of his home state of South Carolina, realizing he didn't know of a great Sunday School or church anywhere in the state. Bill looked at the Sunday morning Gospel invitation in his church and realized that twelve people had come forward to receive Christ. He thought, "I don't know of a single church in South Carolina that has this many getting saved every Sunday." He resigned his job, left his music position, and moved his family to South Carolina to begin a church.

A friend told him that Florence, South Carolina, needed a great church. He went to the

city of 32,000, rented an abandoned theater building for $58.50 a month at the local airport and began contacting people to come to his Sunday School. His strategy was confrontational.

He was absolutely sure that God had led him, but that Saturday night as he realized that he had never preached a sermon in his life. "What did you do, Bill?" I asked him.

"I had taught Sunday School on many occasions," the church-planter answered. "So I just prepared a Sunday School lesson . . . and shouted it!" That was the beginning of a church that would influence the city and surrounding counties.

The roof to the building leaked, and one time during a hard rain, the roof sprang a leak, drenching him with water. During the next two years, the church service was canceled several times because of rain. According to Monroe, "No one took his coat off that first winter: Two hundred dollars a month spent on fuel oil couldn't keep the building warm. Sunday School was held in a room out back, which was nothing more than tin wrapped around studs in a concrete floor. The ladies stuffed rags in the holes in the nursery wall to keep it warm and had to watch the children carefully lest they rip decaying beaver board off the walls!"

In March, 1970, he had one of his greatest victories: the congregation prayed for 55 in Sunday School. He gave away a "Judas coin" to everyone who came. Monroe testifies, "People kept coming, more than I had ever seen, and we hit 55 that day."

In May, they went for a goal of 100, giving away goldfish and sponsoring a local quartet; they had 102 in Sunday School. On the church's first anniversary in November, attendance reached 200 for the first time. The young church, with its youthful pastor, was on the march. Still the church had no capital assets, but were paying the pastor a full time salary. Monroe signed a note at the bank for $1,100 and bought three old buses. Attendance pushed its way to 140 in Sunday School, a phenomenal growth, judged by the history of the church.

Monroe was looking for property all over Florence when a 10-acre tract on highway 301 came to his attention. He remembers asking a tenant farmer about the property. The man went

inside to phone the owner and Monroe stood on the porch out of the rain, praying for God's will. They agreed upon $50,000 for the land, but Monroe only had $1,000 in the building fund. Immediately the church went into a $200,000 bond sale. Because Monroe had built a solid foundation in the theater building, there was enough income to pay the bonds as they came due. The small congregation that had nothing, then needed to buy everything:

Building & Interest	$131,800.00
Land	50,000.00
Hard Top	5,000.00
Driveway & Parking Lots	5,000.00
Illuminated Sign	2,200.00
Printing Press & Equipment	1,500.00
Office Equipment	1,500.00
School Desks & Chalkboards	2,000.00
	=========
	$199,000.00

The congregation moved into 15,000 square feet of new facilities on April 9, 1972. They then had room for expansion. The new auditorium would seat 300, and the eight classrooms furnished space for the Sunday School on the first Sunday they moved into their new building. Monroe feels that represented a great victory because there were 32 church additions. The community knew that the church was there to stay.

By 1980, Sunday School reached 1,200; there were 700 riders on the Sunday School bus, which is another way of saying that there were 500 attendees who were the solid members of the church. Between 1980 and 1985 Sunday School stagnated at approximately 1,200 and the young pastor was wanting to break the 2,000 barrier. He thought that smaller adult classes were the way to get it done. So in September, 1984, Bill Monroe brought all of his deacons together, asked several to teach an adult Sunday School class and did away with his large auditorium Bible class. He felt that if each of these classes would grow, perhaps doubling in attendance, that the Sunday School would continue to grow. However, within a few weeks there were problems. Monroe indicated, "Poor teaching was driving people away at a faster rate than good outreach could bring them in." Many of the deacons were not trained to teach and had no real strategy in their Sunday School class. Attendance started drifting down, rather than up.

Monroe canceled all of the classes and brought the adults back into the auditorium for the large Pastor's Bible Class. The Sunday School kept separate the Senior Saints of approximately 40 people, the Young Married of 60 people, and the Women's Bible Class of 15 ladies. "That experiment didn't work," replied Monroe, "because I didn't train the teachers and I didn't properly organize the classes."

Monroe watched the Southern Baptist Convention and knew their plan of Sunday School enrollment worked. He also knew that his Sunday School roll was nothing more than names in a book. Sunday School enrollment had no meaning to the pupil, little meaning to the teacher, in essence enrollment was just a list of names, addresses and phone numbers to assist in contacting pupils. Monroe knew that Southern Baptists taught that Sunday School attendance will equal forty percent of enrollment. Therefore to build the Sunday School, add people to the enrollment and attendance will follow.

In 1988, Leon Kilbreth, a Southern Baptist evangelist, preached a Sunday School revival at the church. This was a turning point in the Sunday School strategy and outreach. Because of an ice storm, Kilbreath was not able to preach to great crowds, but he did teach Pastor Monroe and the staff a new philosophy of Sunday School enrollment.

Now Monroe says that Sunday School enrollment is the door of entry into the church.

This does not mean that every person who is enrolled in Sunday School is converted nor has he joined the church. "To me, enrollment means that the person has given the church permission to minister to them," said Monroe.

"In the old days, we were driven by decisions, and we would do anything to get a crowd," Pastor Monroe replied. "A church worker went to the front door and asked the person to make a decision for Christ. If that person said 'no,' we had no 'fallback' position to make a second attempt and could never reach that person again," said Monroe. "It seemed as though decisions governed everything we did."

"Now I see evangelism as a conveyor belt that moves people from one pool to another. First, there is a large pool of prospects. At the present time, we have 2,800 prospects in whom I am interested." Monroe went on to explain, "The second pool are those who have enrolled in our Sunday School, whom we are trying to get saved or get them baptized and into church membership. We have 3,100 people who are on our Sunday School roll and we are trying to move them to the third pool. The third pool is made up of those who have made professions in Christ and have been baptized. We continue our process of discipleship to get all attenders (members enrolled, etc.) serving and reproducing for Christ." Monroe went on to explain that he presently has 1,200 attending Sunday School, some who are members of the church, many are enrolled only in Sunday School, or some perhaps just visitors."

Monroe defined ministry as "moving people from the prospect file to enrollment, to membership, and on to discipleship." He realizes that some of his former friends are uncomfortable with his strategy, because the church cannot point to as large a number of decisions for Christ on visitation, or a large number of people coming forward on a particular Sunday to make decisions. He states, "My ministry is much broader than decision-making, even though it represents getting people to make decisions." Monroe is concerned that he remains true to the fundamentals of the Word of God, and true to evangelistic outreach.

"Our prospects plus our enrollment equal our ministry," he notes.

Then Monroe noted that at the present time, they have 5,100 people to whom they minister, rather than the 1,400 they used to have in Sunday School when they were a bussing church. He concluded, "To catch more fish, get bigger pools."

The church is still running approximately 1,400 in Sunday School, the same as twelve years ago. However, the adult attendance has more than doubled. They are no longer a bussing church; most of the people drive to church; only 100 still come on buses. But back when it was a bussing church, the average offering was around $15,000 per week, which equals $10 per capita giving (per capita is measured by dividing attendance into total offering). Today the church is receiving an average of $37,000 a week or close the $26.00 per capita giving.

As Bill Monroe looks at his present strategy, he feels Sunday School enrollment is the foundation for future growth. He observes that the great Baptist churches in the south that excel in evangelism, are weak in disciple-making; they have many who come in the front door but go out the back door. Then Monroe looks at the great Bible churches and sees discipleship, but very few getting converted. "If Sunday School enrollment is the best of both worlds, why not go for it."

CONCLUSION

Monroe is convinced if American churches would return to an emphasis on Sunday School enrollment, with the strategy of bonding prospects to the church we could turn around the Sunday School of America. "The most important student in Sunday School is the enrolled student who does not attend." By this, Monroe explained, "This student has told me that he wants to follow Christ, he wants me to minister to him and I have a good possibility of bringing him into New Testament discipleship."

CHAPTER FIVE

WE DO EVERYTHING THROUGH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

One of the largest and most strategic churches in America also has one of the most unique adult Sunday School programs - unique because this Southern Baptist church doesn't confine itself to the format suggested by denominational educators.

This is a strategic church because its pastor, Dr. Edwin Young, President of the fifteen-million-member Southern Baptist Convention, says, "We do all our ministry through the Sunday School." This is a strong statement considering that many are giving up on Sunday School.

This is a powerful church because it averages over 12,000 worshippers weekly in preaching and 9,000 in Sunday School. It receives an annual income of approximately $20 million and baptizes over 1,000 new converts yearly.

Some think the thirty-four-million-dollar worship center (built in 1985) that seats 6,200 is the most beautiful for its size. If nothing else, the five-story-tall stained glass windows are breathtaking.

Each adult class is co-educational with a man and woman teacher, who alternate every other week. The smallest class has 30, the largest has 300. The director is responsible for the effective running of each class and nine coordinators make each area of the class ministry, from missions to recreation, function. A visitor can't get lost in this massive church because the class will find him/her. A drop-out will definitely be contacted and approached many times to play basketball, sing in the choir, join a prayer team, work in the nursery, become involved in a small shepherd group, or attend an outreach party to reach the unchurched. There is no place to hide in this big church!

In 1979, when Dr. Edwin Young came as Pastor, there were approximately 300 in the Sunday School. Today over 20 times that number attend each week.

The church did not plan its growth with its present structure in mind. "Our Sunday School structure did not come into place suddenly; it grew out of a passion to reach people," said Dr. Edwin Young. "We didn't sit down and draw this on a chart; it grew out of helping people and building a church."

When Young first came, he began several other programs, using the same people in all of the programs. First, he "beefed up" the training union on Sunday evening, as well as inaugurating a strong mission outreach. Later they went to small groups, using Ralph Neighbor's concept of small groups. Again, they were depending on the same leadership. Young concluded, "We were wiping out our leaders, because we were using them seven days a week."

Pastor Ed Young came to the conclusion that the strength of the Sunday School gave strength to the total church, yet by adding all these other good things they were weakening the Sunday School.

Slowly Young came to the conclusion that "Sunday School must remain our number one thing." When he explained this, he also noted, "We do everything through the Sunday School." All other programs flow from the Sunday School or rise to support it. As a result, the church runs its small groups, leadership training, fellowship and sports program through the Sunday School. The majority of adult Bible study classes meet in the Family Life Building, a massive brick building surrounded by a parking lot as large as a modern day mall. When walking in, the visitor sees a large

three-story atrium, with a mirrored wall reaching from the first to the top floor. The visitor hears the sound of splashing water in a fountain. The floors sparkle with marble and there are touches of elegance everywhere, but not too much.

On a Sunday morning, a visitor will see forty carts with coffee containers, each waiting to be rolled down the hall for use in an adult Bible study class. While the class supplies the donuts, the church supplies the coffee because it believes in Bible study with fellowship.

The church has three gyms - the original gym and a new modern olympic-size that divides into two sections. Because of the modern weight room, lockers and positive surroundings, you'll find members of the Houston Rockets there most weeks, working out.

When asked the secret of growth, Young responds, "Leadership . . . leadership . . . leadership."

He feels that pastors lead from their knees where they get their vision from God. Because all leaders use dreams and visions for power and direction, Young is a man of vision and big dreams. The visionary-pastor is the key to leadership.

Another thing that caused the growth is worship. Young says, "We work on worship, looking at worship as the bride - beautiful for Christ." He mentioned that for worship a pastor must plan . . . prepare . . . do . . . evaluate . . . then be ready to change to make it better next week.

The adult Sunday School is another source of their growth. They reported that 85 percent of their Sunday School was adult, and when I first looked at that figure, I told Dr. Young that there must be some mistake. But upon checking, we found that their Sunday School *is* 85 percent adults.

The smallest adult class has perhaps 30 pupils; the largest class has over 300. The average adult class has about 80 in attendance.

"We don't call it Sunday School. Adults think Sunday School is only for children." They call it Bible Study.

When asked why he calls it Bible Study rather than Sunday School, he replied, "Because that is what people want to do; they want to study the Bible." Young explained that many of their people come to the church from denominations other than Southern Baptist. "Many of our visitors and new members think that Sunday School is for children. We do not want to use that barrier term; rather we want to use a *function* - what they are doing, rather than a *description* - what they are."

Every adult class has two teachers, a man and woman, but they are never husband and wife. Young said, "We need a man and woman to appeal to secular thinking." The teachers alternate every other Sunday and are given thirty-five minutes to teach.

Because they teach every other Sunday, they have fourteen days to prepare, hence they do a better job. Young estimated that the average adult teacher in his church gave about twenty hours of preparation per lesson.

"The secret of the successful class is the giftedness of leadership," the Pastor noted. "I'll take a risk and use a new Christian who has the gift of teaching in that task; rather than put an old Christian there without that gift." Young believes that many Sunday Schools fail because they use fine, wonderful Christians who don't have the gift of teaching. He thinks in terms of spiritual gifts when giving direction to the Sunday School.

When he mentioned this, Young noted, "There is a director who is the manager of each class. That person must have the gift of administration or leadership. This is the person who makes the class go and grow, not the teacher.

"For a Sunday School class to grow it must have two teachers who have the spiritual gift of teaching and a director who has the spiritual gift of administration."

Most of the people who are coordinators in the adult Sunday School class have the gift of shepherding, not the gift of teaching. So adults in Bible Study follow those who have the gifts of group leadership and those who have the gift of teaching feed the class.

When Young observed the great Bible churches up north, he noted their deep commitment to teaching. But when he examines the classes deeply, he does not see any outreach or growth. When Young examined the great Southern Baptist Churches, he found outreach, but did not find a depth of Bible teaching and individual growth in the Word of God. He feels their adult classes are a balance with both good Bible teaching and aggressive outreach.

When asked what makes their Sunday School great, Young believes it is because they have a gifted person who has a passion to teach with a complimenting personality that is outgoing and committed to the Word of God. Next they have outstanding Sunday School class directors in each class with the gift of administration, getting everyone in the class to work. "Unless the Sunday School class director can delegate and get the job done, he is handicapped in his ministry, and the class will not grow."

NINE LEADERS

Underneath the class director, each Sunday School class has nine coordinators or workers, each with a separate task that makes the Sunday School class function. These nine people are able to get more involvement from more class members than is found in most other Sunday Schools.

1. *Shepherd group coordinator* - The main purpose of this leader is "inreach." He/she gets people into shepherd groups that usually meet once a month for fellowship, discussion and to build relationships. These groups are not for Bible study. Whereas many churches are organizing small group ministry *apart* from Sunday School, this church does it *through* Sunday School. In a true sense, the shepherd group coordinator is really the "pastor" of the class. This person has a committee of shepherd leaders to help him in his shepherding responsibility.

2. *Outreach coordinator* - This person should have the gift of evangelism to reach out to the lost. First, the outreach coordinator meets all visitors each Sunday morning. The class secretary is responsible to the outreach coordinator, who works with him/her to provide information about prospects. The outreach coordinator guides the visitation teams who follow up in the homes of all who visit the class. When names are passed to the class from the church, the outreach coordinator makes sure that these prospects are contacted.

3. *Discipleship coordinator* - This person is responsible for the discipling branch of the class. He/she is responsible for training leaders and developing disciples. The Southern Baptists' *MasterLife* program is taught through the class and supervised by the discipleship coordinator. In a sense, the traditional Southern Baptist training union (BTU), which used to meet every Sunday evening before church is now organized and administered through the adult Sunday School class. Some of the discipleship activities meet on Sunday afternoon (4:45 p.m.), and some meet on Monday or Tuesday evenings.

The prayer coordinator works under the discipleship coordinator. The Second Baptist Church has an outstanding prayer program. Beginning in 1985, they began a chain of prayer in the prayer chapel that has not been broken since it was inaugurated. Someone is always at the church on their knees praying. Those who pray at the church are described as a part of the First Watch. Others can't meet at the church, but have committed to pray for one hour each week at home. They are called the Second Watch. There are over 1,100 people who pray in the Second

Watch. (The term comes from Jesus who said, "Could you not watch with me one hour?") The prayer coordinator makes sure that there are enough people to keep the prayer chain going.

4. *The social coordinator* - This person plans the outreach events, which bring outsiders into the class. These may be class parties, fellowships, or any other events to promote the social life of the church. People with the gift of hospitality are well-suited for this job.

5. *Nursery coordinator* - Second Baptist Church has a nursery building with a number of rooms for every two months of the babies' growth cycle. Obviously, a vast number of volunteers are needed to operate the nursery. The nursery coordinator not only recruits, but makes sure that those who sign up actually show up for the job. This person must have the gift of helps or service.

6. *Special projects coordinator* - This person coordinates volunteers for the large-scale special events that are conducted by Second Baptist Church, such as the Christmas program, revivals, the Electric Light Parade and Angels of Light at Christmas and the other outreach programs.

7. *Choir recruiter* - The choir recruiter operates under the special projects coordinator, and is responsible primarily for recruiting people for the two choirs of the church. There are approximately 450 choir members in each of the two morning choirs. The choir recruiter in each Sunday School class is constantly on watch for new choir prospects.

8. *Recreation coordinator* - Second Baptist Church has 72 softball teams, stretching from small children and T-ball, up to senior saints with "slow-pitch" softball. The 72 teams only give part of the picture. The church has 45 different leagues from basketball, flag football, volleyball; and these are male, female, mixed or any other variety that will attract players. There are a total of 280 teams in all sports.

The recreation coordinator tries to fill approximately one-half to one-third of each team with non-churched prospects. The recreation coordinator works only with adult teams. The children's teams are coordinated by the athletic department of the church.

The church has five softball fields, a football field, a soccer field and three gymnasiums. It has racquetball courts, eight bowling lanes, a weight room, an aerobics room.

9. *Ministry network coordinator* - The main purpose of this person is to involve class members in ministry. He/she seeks to involve people in the various support groups of the church, including those for the handicapped, those with addictions, prisoners, crisis pregnancy groups, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

This church has revitalized its total ministry by involving all adults through the various ministries of the Sunday School classes. Rather than using the traditional approach of small adult classes, the classes are organized to use the best Bible teaching available, yet have effective evangelistic outreach and nurture. The success of this church argues its approach.

CHAPTER SIX

BUS OUTREACH FUELS GROWTH

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

"Every member is a minister" - a motto that helps fuel the growth of First Assembly of God, Phoenix, Arizona. Under the leadership of Tommy Barnett, church attendance has grown from 250 in December, 1979, to more than 10,000 today. The church has constructed a new 6,500-seat auditorium, one of the largest church auditoriums in Arizona. The church sponsors spectacular events such as an Easter passion play where over 150,000 people came to Shadow Mountain where the church is located on 75 acres to witness an Easter drama, live animals, the preaching of the Gospel and a great soul-winning harvest. The church also sponsors the "Living Christmas Tree" and the "Living Flag" on the Fourth of July.

In addition to these, there are many things that make First Assembly of God grow - among them the evangelistic preaching of Tommy Barnett, the bus ministry outreach, the humanitarian programs such as ministries to feed the hungry, or outreach to the HIV positive, the single parent, the addicted, etc. Over 140 ministries reach out in nearly every conceivable way.

But one of the pillars underneath this massive church is its unique bus ministry. When asked how he could build a twelve-million-dollar sanctuary within five years of only running 250 people, Tommy Barnett noted that, "The building is just a tool. We use the church to build people rather than using the people to build the church." The fifty-five-year-old pastor went on to say, "These were probably the most unlikely church members to ever construct a building like this. They were not wealthy and not outstanding in the community; they were just a group of people who loved to win souls."

Pastor Barnett loves to break records. Within three weeks of arriving in December, 1979, he held a Christmas rally that attracted 2,700 people. Within a year attendance exploded to over 4,800 the following Easter and over 8,000 a year later at Christmas. So much so that *Moody Monthly* magazine and the International Christian Education Association recognized him as having built the "fastest growing church in America" in October, 1981. The following year he again won the award when attendance reached 5,462.

To accommodate Sunday School growth, the church reached out to lease the facilities of two city schools, plus a number of classes were held around picnic tables in city parks and other public arenas.

Anyone can draw a crowd, but the strength of Tommy Barnett is in his preaching the Gospel and giving an altar call. There have been as many as 1600 people come forward for salvation, followed up with hundreds being baptized. Even though he's an Assembly of God preacher, Barnett has said to the author on several occasions, "I learned to give an altar call from my dad and was inspired to build a great church by the Baptist churches. To this Barnett adds, "I get power from the Pentecostal experience."

"Why are you still in bus ministry?" Barnett was asked, pointing out that many others had given up the bus ministry.

"Because it's still the greatest way to reach souls for Christ!" Barnett responded.

Barnett went on to explain that for many years he used buses to *just* reach children, but he said, "I had always had a dream of reaching adults through the bus ministry. One day I decided that if I could reach children through buses, I could use those same buses to reach all people."

Now they send the buses out over South Phoenix on Sunday afternoon to pick up children and their parents. They bring them back to the north side of Phoenix (over 20 miles) where they are fed a Sunday night meal, attend the Sunday night service, and many are led to Jesus Christ.

"We just blitz a block in one hour," Barnett described a Sunday afternoon work period. "We go to a place and get as many parents and children as we can to ride a bus to our facility on the north side." He explained that children cannot come on Sunday night if their parents do not attend.

The bus ministry begins on Saturday morning or Saturday afternoon when workers go to the south area of Phoenix to reach people for Jesus Christ. It might be noted that the church was in downtown Phoenix when Barnett came in 1979. He reached south to the poor and brought them back to the church, but when the church moved to the north side of Phoenix, to Shadow Mountain, the church was re-located 20 miles from the poor on the south side. On the north side, the church is surrounded by middle class suburbia. But Barnett did not forget his roots. On Saturday morning the buses roll into the south part of Phoenix, picking up children and taking them to a pre-arranged place on the south side for Bible teaching. It can be an indoor school, an outdoor picnic table, or any other place that they have determined that a crowd can gather. Sometimes they set up a stage to present the Gospel by outdoor children's church. They teach the Gospel to children, and win them to Jesus Christ. The program is repeated on Saturday afternoon. They pick up children and teach them the Word of God.

On Sunday morning the buses run in the immediate middle class neighborhood around Shadow Mountain bringing children back to the main church location. Approximately 1500 students are brought into the main location for Sunday School every Sunday morning.

"On Sunday, we run routes right around the main church, perhaps reaching out for a 12-mile radius. The children are brought to the gymnasium for Sunday School and children's church. Because of the nature of the community, the kids who come on Sunday morning to the main location have difficulty getting their parents to ride the bus with them on Sunday night, so those routes are not run again on Sunday. The south side children are brought to the church on Sunday night. "We feel those children who ride the bus on Sunday morning can get their parents to drive them to the Sunday evening service."

Also, there's an inner-city church down on the south side of Phoenix. In addition to the inner-city church there are seven houses on the South side that are used for ministry. This is more of a mission outreach than anything else. This ministry to the poor and minorities, includes ministry to the total person. This includes feeding, clothing, and helping with the temporal needs.

THE MASTER'S COMMISSION

To run such a vast program it takes a great number of dedicated workers, workers who will go out two or three times a weekend to make the program happen. Barnett was asked how he recruits workers to carry out the work.

"One of the greatest things that has helped us carry out our mission is the 'Master's Commission'," Barnett explained. The Master's Commission, is 75 young people who take one year out of their life to totally dedicate it to the Lord's work. He describes this program as similar to the Mormons who take time before entering their vocation or profession to do missionary work for the Mormon church. Barnett describes that over half of those in the Master's Commission come from other churches around the nation, many of them Assembly of God churches. These young people live in the homes of their members, who provide room and board for one year. The young people come to the church and pray from 7:00 - 8:00 each morning. From 8:00 - 9:00 they memorize

Scripture and from 9:00 - 11:00, they take the Berean Bible course, which allows them to have the Christian workers papers when they finish the course. "In 1991, the young people from the Master's Commission led over 100,000 people to the Lord," Barnett noted. "About half of our bus routes are operated by the Master's Commission."

LEADERSHIP BY DREAMS

Barnett is an outstanding leader, because he dreams big. When he first came to the church of 250 people, he began to lift their vision. The local newspaper noted, "When Barnett, forty-seven, handsome and perpetually hoarse from preaching, hit town from Iowa five years ago; he took over the Moribond 250-member Phoenix First Assembly of God in downtown Phoenix. He made the congregation see a huge new church filled with 5,000 people every week."

From the very beginning, he stretched their faith to see a church on Shadow Mountain, to see thousands coming to receive Christ, to see the power of God. "I believe in people. I know a lot of pastors who say that people won't work, but if people believe in what you are doing and believe in God's dream, they'll do it. They'll jump in and break their necks and they'll just do it."

When he first came, he stretched the people's evangelistic vision to see a thousand in attendance each week. Now he stretches them to see results. "The number one thing is people finding Christ. I believe there is going to come a time when in a single Sunday service there will be 2,000 people. . .who will make a commitment to Christ."

"When I decided I wanted to be in a big city," he said, "I knew that there are no limits to what can happen here because there are no limits with God."

SPECIAL PEOPLE

Every year Tommy Barnett has a program called "The Church with a Heart," as part of his Pastors' and Leaders' School, which nearly 6,000 church leaders from many denominations attended in 1992. During this special conference he shows to the people all of the various ministries of the church. One of the most touching is when the handicapped come on stage in wheelchairs. One of the workers, Sharon Henning said, "A lot of these people hadn't been in church in years." As the people roll across the aisle in wheelchairs, Barnett calls them "the holy rollers"! Each week approximately 120 come in five church buses and seven special buses provided by church members who are handicapped or work with the handicapped.

As he stands on the large church platform, he points to the aisles that they are filled with wheelchairs, noting with pride that the church reaches out to the handicapped providing them with a way to receive Jesus Christ and to walk in the Spirit.

THE BUS FLEET

When Barnett first came to Phoenix, he started out with two buses. He noted that the idea of a bus was a novelty in Phoenix, but he made it work. Barnett had pastored the West Side Assembly of God in Davenport, Iowa, before coming to Arizona, also using buses extensively. He had developed a national reputation for building a fast growing church. From 1971 to 1979 the Iowa church grew from an average of 76 attenders each week to 4,400 during his last year there. In 1976, he was recognized for having built the fastest growing Sunday School in the United States.

Christian Life magazine selected Tommy Barnett as "One of the Ten Sunday School Newsmakers of the Decade."

Barnett left Iowa when things were going well and he could have settled down for the rest of his life for a fruitful ministry. But he said he wanted to go to a big city with a big challenge.

PROGRAMS

Barnett is a man who believes in programs, promotes programs, and uses them to reach people. While the church claims 142 different ministries, these programs are simply a means to an end. Barnett said, "The Bible teaches that we should find a hurt and heal it." Then he added, "We should also find a need and meet it." By this he talks about the ministries to prostitutes, mentally handicapped, feeding the transients, ministry for HIV positive people, visitation to nursing homes, detention centers, delivering food to the needy, work among the elderly, college and career, Spanish, as well as home cell groups. A multitude of people and their needs demand a multitude of programs, yet the church only has twelve full-time pastors. When asked why the staff was so small, Barnett replied, "If you have a big pastoral staff, you take ministry out of the hands of the people."

Tommy Barnett has been called the "master organizer for the Lord." A local pastor, Mark Buckley, who pastors Living Streams Christian Church in Phoenix, wrote of Barnett, "He believes in programs. He promotes programs. He makes programs work." Buckley wrote in an article that when he was holding a prayer meeting in a member's home, a couple from Barnett's church came and knocked on the door trying to witness for Jesus Christ. Buckley noted that wasn't the first time that Barnett's people had visited in the homes of his members while they were having a prayer meeting. Barnett has been quoted as saying, "You know how I love programs." He uses them to reach people for Jesus Christ.

"We simply did not have the room to grow at the other location downtown," Barnett said. "I had a vision for a really big church." Barnett noted that it takes a big vision to produce a big church. Then he said, "You have to have a big church to make an impact on a city this size."

DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

Barnett reported that they have over three hundred deacons and deaconesses who are the servants of the church and conduct visitation and follow-up. The city is divided by zip codes, and deacons and deaconesses follow up any visitor to the church, as well as visiting and caring for existing church families. They are asked to visit two hours each week. Barnett indicates, "I give them cards to follow up our visitors."

Barnett indicates that he plans to keep on building Sunday School buildings. At the present time they have 36 adult elective classes, some of them preparing people for ministry. A few of those are permanent classes that are based on fellowship and cohesiveness. There is a class for soul winning, plus some classes that cover books of the Bible.

Many of these classes meet in the church auditorium simply because they do not have enough classrooms. The largest class has 250 people.

There is a total of more than 10,000 in the Saturday School, the Sunday School, and the outreach ministries of the church.

CONCLUSION

The First Assembly of God uses every available method to reach every available person, and bussing is one of those methods. They use picnic tables, rental schools, and any other public place to reach and teach for Jesus Christ. In addition to Sunday morning, they also do it on Saturday and Sunday p.m.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUNDAY EVENING SUNDAY SCHOOL

GROVE CITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, GROVE CITY, OHIO

In September of 1990, the Grove City Church of the Nazarene, just a few miles south of the beltway around Columbus, Ohio, faced some real challenges. An increase in attendance precipitated the need to go to two morning services. Pastor Bob Huffaker felt that offering Sunday School between two worship services posed a problem for them. At first he said, "What I had read about the flip-flop Sunday School and worship service would have produced hassle." He felt it necessary to find a better way.

Second, Huffaker felt his people didn't need another preaching service on Sunday evening. He recognized that he, like most pastors, put most of his emphasis on preparing for Sunday morning because that's where the crowd attended, including visitors and casual attendance. Even though he loved preaching on Sunday evening, he did not have the same depth of commitment to his Sunday evening sermon as to Sunday morning.

Third, the Sunday evening service had been a large evangelistic outreach. In years gone by, the Grove City Church of the Nazarene, like most American churches, had visitors on Sunday evening. That was the place where the Gospel was preached, a great evangelistic song service was held, and the lost were led to Christ. Huffaker recognized that visitors rarely attended on Sunday night, including many of his Sunday morning visitors. Sunday night was no longer an effective evangelistic outreach.

Pastor Huffaker came to the conclusion it was logical that he focus his Sunday evening hour on education, while he focused Sunday morning on worship.

HOW THEY DID IT

It is not easy to sell a church on Sunday evening Sunday School, especially if they've never done it that way before. When Huffaker first mentioned the change to his church, some were opposed, even though he had personally done it when pastoring in Hereford, Texas. He had worked an evening Sunday School there and wanted to do it in Ohio.

The Sunday morning service was in a process of changing from the traditional Nazarene church service. Many baby boomers situated in the new suburbs around Grove City were beginning to come to the church. Huffaker wanted to have an alive "praise and worship/ celebration" type of worship service. When he did that, the time of the traditional worship was curtailed. He needed more than one hour for the worship service. Therefore, to reach the young couples and to give them an adequate worship service, Huffaker was committed to a longer and more exciting worship service.

Huffaker came up with three options, showing both the positive and negative of each option. The options were first shown to the church board, the Sunday School teachers, and other people in leadership. (see Appendix)

The church was never asked to make a permanent commitment to evening Sunday School. They were asked to make a six-month commitment. It is always easier to get people to try a new thing if you call it an "experiment." Some oppose innovative methods, thinking this change will permanently stretch into the unknown future. Huffaker promised that after six months the

church would review the results of Sunday evening Sunday School, and proceed from there.

A few adults didn't want to make the change; therefore, one adult Sunday morning class was offered for those who could not or did not want to attend in the evening. That Sunday School class meets at 9:15 a.m., and is over in one hour. Those adults go to the second service. Approximately twenty people attend this Sunday School class. This was an important concession to those who otherwise might have opposed the entire project.

The church did not offer any Sunday School for children in the morning. The boomers wanted their children in children's church while they were in the main sanctuary. So Grove City Church of the Nazarene offered church for children while the boomers were also worshipping. On Sunday morning the family came together, worshipped together, and left together. It was only logical that without adult classes, they could not have children's classes.

After the decision was made to go to the Sunday evening Sunday School, there were some complaints about not having Sunday evening preaching or what many call the Sunday Night evangelistic service. Addressing this problem, Huffaker decided to use the month with five Sundays to have a large evangelistic rally. This meant that every quarter the church has an old-fashioned revival service on Sunday night. This seems to satisfy those who were saying they were getting away from Sunday evening preaching.

There was another opposition to the change. Some said they didn't want to come back for Sunday School on Sunday evening. These were the people who only wanted to attend once each Sunday. To be realistic, initially the church did lose a few of their Sunday School attendance. However, they gained about the same amount of people who came to Sunday night Sunday School who didn't attend on Sunday morning, or were employed on Sunday morning. According to Pastor Huffaker, "I think they balanced out each other."

"If a church changing to a Sunday evening Sunday School just for the numbers, this is not the way to go," Pastor Huffaker said. "We added Sunday evening Sunday School for quality," said the Pastor. While describing why they got more quality, he observed, "People are not as rushed, children haven't been grabbed out of the bed with no breakfast, and people are not rushing in and out of the building from Sunday School to worship."

"On Sunday evening the pastor leads the entire church in a family worship period from 6:00 - 6:30 p.m., with singing, special songs, offering, testimonies, etc. Following the worship period, the people are dismissed to their respective Sunday School classes for a time of relaxed study of the Word without interruption. When Sunday School is over, no one is rushed into a worship service, as frequently happens following a morning Sunday School. With such a casual atmosphere, many couples will stay for a time of fellowship and recreation.

Because the pastor is not obligated to preaching a message, he is given the opportunity to hold specialized classes, membership classes, and occasionally visit various Sunday School classes.

Another advantage to the evening Sunday School is that it allows for greater variation, such as cell groups and Bible studies being conducted in homes while the children meet at the church for Sunday School. This also frees up rooms at the church for additional class space.

Also helpful is the fact that the church does not have to provide two full music programs on Sunday morning; one for worship (both worship services have identical music), the other for Sunday School. "We've taken the demand off of those that are involved in music," said the pastor.

After two years in the program, Pastor Huffaker noted that attendance has tripled on Sunday evening, even though this does not mean Sunday School has tripled. In September of 1990, average attendance was 491; by September of 1992, average attendance was up to 590, a gain of only 100,

as quality is the added plus. But there are three times as many attending the church on Sunday evening than before when they had a sermon.

ADVANTAGES OF SUNDAY EVENING

The first advantage mentioned by Pastor Huffaker is that there is more room to grow, because their parking problem was solved. By taking a thirty-minute break between the two Sunday morning services, it gives time for the parking lot to empty out and be used a second time.

Another advantage of Sunday evening Sunday School is the added time that allows the leaders to diversify in the types of classes offered. Because we have more time, we can use films, videos, and/or specialized classes," the pastor noted.

Also another advantage to the Sunday evening Sunday School is that "people can dress casual," said Huffaker. "This is a plus because it removes one barrier that keeps some from coming."

"On Sunday morning, we were time-bound and people were rushing from Sunday School to church. With thirty minutes between worship services, people have more time to fellowship with one another, which added another plus to our church. Also, the choir had a thirty-minute break between the first and second service, as did the orchestra."

Huffaker felt he needed to have an identical type of worship in both services. He said, "I didn't want people to have to make a selection in the type of worship they wanted to attend." In an age when some churches are offering two different types of worship services, this church has chosen to make them identical.

When it comes to preparing sermons, Huffaker pointed out that his focus all week is on the high point, the sermon he is going to deliver on Sunday morning. Therefore, his personal prayer time, message, preparation, and focus is more pointed. Under this schedule, he doesn't have to prepare two sermons, but he preaches one sermon twice. In response he said, "I love it!"

One year after moving Sunday School to the evening, the board reviewed what had happened. They were unanimous about continuing with the Sunday evening Sunday School, noting it had been a positive move for the church.

CONCLUSION

By moving Sunday School to the evening, this church was able to begin two innovative Sunday morning services, and triple the Sunday evening Sunday School attendance over those who came previously for the traditional Sunday evening church service.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MULTIPLE SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN THE SAME BUILDING

SKYLINE WESLEYAN CHURCH, LEMON GROVE, CALIFORNIA

Skyline Wesleyan Church is one of the most innovative Sunday Schools in America because of 1)the equipping role of the teachers, 2)the growth through multiple Sunday Schools and 3)the leadership of Dr. John Maxwell, Senior Pastor, who understands how to manage change for church growth.

When teachers are asked what their main contribution is to their class, they do not answer "my communication of content, my Bible knowledge, or my teaching skills."

"I give leadership and vision to the class," responded a teacher. By this, the teachers realize their main task is to give direction to the class.

"We are an equipping church," said John Maxwell, Pastor. He does not see their church as primarily a praise worship church like Jack Hayford's church, or a Bible-expositional church like John MacArthur's church, or a soul-winning, evangelistic church like Tommy Barnett's. Although they minister in these areas, Maxwell sees his church's main task is equipping members for ministry. Maxwell sees his main contribution as "a leader of leaders."

Each Sunday School teacher is a class leader, by which they are outreach leaders, spiritual life leaders, prayer leaders, and discipling leaders. "The main duty of the Sunday School teacher is to equip everyone in the class to become a leader in the church. Every person should minister according to the gifts God has given to him/her," noted Dan Reiland, former Minister of Education, who is now Executive Pastor.

TWO SUNDAY SCHOOLS

When John Maxwell became Pastor in 1981, there were approximately 800-1000 in attendance in both the Sunday School and church. When Maxwell came, the church had two morning services, but one Sunday School. A leader realizes that multiple Sunday Schools do not produce growth. Rather, he feels the opposite: a second Sunday School is a tool to facilitate growth.

"We were committed to church growth, but we were facility-bound," notes Dan Reiland, who was the Minister of Education who led them into two Sunday Schools. Our growth came from the worship service. That is where our visitors first attended; they came to the sanctuary. Both of the services were filled and we could not grow."

"So we expanded to two fully-graded Sunday Schools and three worship services for growth," the Minister of Education noted.

"Again, a church will not grow by adding a second Sunday School. It must be committed to the Great Commission and to church growth . . . that's the picture the Pastor must paint before the Sunday School leaders before the entire congregation will respond and grow." noted John Maxwell.

At the present time, Skyline Wesleyan Church has four fully-graded Sunday Schools, three on their present property in Lemon Grove and a fourth on a second campus 14 miles away in East County, where they are planning to re-locate in the mid-90's.

"We plan to go to five Sunday Schools within a year," said John Maxwell. "The fifth will probably be a Saturday night worship service and a fully-graded Sunday School."

Why Saturday night? "We're absolutely committed to growth and we cannot grow without another service. We do not have the space on Sunday morning, so it appears that the next best time is Saturday evening," said Dan Reiland.

The church is building a twenty-two-million-dollar complex on 110 acres that stretches for one mile on a San Diego freeway. This new location will enable the church to seat 5,000 in attendance and continue to reach people for Jesus Christ.

"We must begin a fifth Sunday School and church service to raise the financial base of our congregation to over 4,000, in order to be able to sustain the immediate financial impact of our new property and building," noted Dan Reiland. "We are really building a financial base, as well as a people base, to be able to manage the financial load and debt service for the new property." The church does not consider just adding worship services to reach people. "We do not want to become a 'platform church' or just a Sunday morning crowd," said Maxwell.

"For us Sunday School is so integral to all that we are, that we cannot have a worship service without adding a Sunday School," noted Dan Reiland.

Another reason for going to multiple Sunday Schools is to provide options for its members. Dan remarks, "Our goal is to provide as many worship and teaching options as we can. The more options we have in Sunday School, the more our people can vary their daily patterns of life. By offering three Sunday Schools, people have more choices. For example, if a family attends the middle hour worship service, they can attend Sunday School during the first or third hour. Many who have to work at 11:00 or noon will attend the first Sunday School and attend the middle worship service."

Another advantage to multiple Sunday Schools is the flexibility to plan worship. Dan Reiland has added new Sunday School classes at the first or third hour, simply because everyone wants to go to church at the middle hour - 9:40 a.m. After a class is established at the first or third hour and people are bonded to that class; then Reiland moves the class to the middle hour, forcing the people to attend church at the first or third hour. Because attendance at the first or third hour is less, this adjustment frees up space in the middle hour for more visitors.

PROBLEMS

Each time Skyline has added another Sunday School, they have experienced growth. But added attendance did not come without added problems.

"Our primary problems are all based on time issues," Dan Reiland noted. "And these problems spin off the area of parking. If the preacher goes overtime, there is a major people-bottleneck regarding parking, changing classes, and moving people into their next location. So three smoothly-run Sunday Schools depend upon starting and finishing every hour exactly on time . . . which they rarely do!"

The church plans on twenty minutes between sessions. "People in a class can get out of a room and the next group can get in class in about eight minutes, if everything runs on schedule. When a teacher runs over for more than ten minutes, we have real problems," explained Dan Reiland. "Actually, the younger the age, the greater the difficulty in turning around a classroom." He went on to explain that it takes longer for infants and toddlers to check in than adults who simply walk into the room and begin drinking coffee and fellowshipping.

Finding teachers is obviously a problem. Reiland mentioned that when they have multiple sections, there are only a certain amount of "best" people who are volunteers. He finds that a person can stay for two hours and serve, but it is unreasonable to ask them to stay for three hours or to drive between the campuses and teach in both campuses.

Obviously, with multiple services, Dan Reiland noted that it doubles, triples and quadruples the number of staff needed to fill all the teaching slots.

The least attended hour is the third hour on Sunday morning. However, when they began multiple sections, the early hour was the weakest. After a period of time, people gravitated to the early hour and after six years, it is the most popular hour for Sunday School. (The middle remains the most popular hour for worship.)

When Dan Reiland began to add extra Sunday Schools, he put young adults into the middle hour only. Because they tend to be a homogeneous unit, desiring to attend with their friends, they resist being broken up into two groups. Also, that pushes young adults into the early or late church service - the lesser-attended services.

For the same reason, this pattern is also followed for high schoolers. They want to stay together for fellowship.

Even though the Sunday School is fully-graded through all three sessions, children's church is grouped only for the middle hour. Children are grouped first through third grade and fourth through sixth grade. At the fourth service in East County, they only have children's church for five divisions: nursery, two and three-year-olds, four and five-year-olds, first through third grades, and fourth through sixth grades. At the present time, their ministry is dictated by their facilities. They only have a few rooms at East County for Sunday School.

The growth of East County has been phenomenal. It immediately jumped to approximately 700 in attendance. However, at the beginning that was only a "crowd" who came to watch a performance or hear good preaching. Maxwell quickly began to preach commitment to the new people, pushing them to become involved in membership, stewardship/tithing, and service. The crowd filtered down to 500 (a significant attendance for most churches in America).

Reiland feels a class is successful when attendance reaches approximately 50 or more and people bond into fellowship and become involved in ministry. Then the class is moved into the middle hour. That pushes class members to attend the first or third worship hour. Reiland also says, "We have a simple 'rule of the largest,' which means that whoever has the largest class gets the largest rooms and these rooms are available the first and third hour."

CONTROLLING CURRICULUM

The children's curriculum is chosen for the teachers and assigned to them. However, adult teachers are given a great deal of freedom. Reiland said, "We believe in matching their authority and responsibility to their accountability." As they demonstrate maturity, "we give them equal authority to choose their curriculum, but we do have guidelines to monitor their choices."

Reiland maintains a system of accountability so that all curriculum choices are approved by him. "We require text, title and theme for 6-12 weeks in advance from each teacher so we have an idea of where they are going with content. When they use printed textbooks or curriculum, we simply take a look at it for approval."

CHOICE OF CURRICULUM

"We are not a curriculum-based, elective-based or content-based Sunday School," noted Dan Reiland. He went on the explain, "We are a fellowship-based Sunday School." He mentioned that, "A young married class can literally grow through life and die together. We group them so individuals are not promoted out of the class at any age break. They simply stay together as a group."

Reiland was asked if people drift from the first to the third hour. "No," his answer was very simple. "People drift from one worship service to another, but because of the "bonding" aspect of the Sunday School class, once they get into a class, they tend to stay there."

THE PURPOSE OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Maxwell noted that Skyline has a very strong "attraction-based" platform. By this he meant that the platform attracts most people to the church. As a result, the church's visitation program is not organized to invite people to church. Visitation targets visitors with a view of presenting Jesus Christ to them. Following a different focus, Sunday School visitation does not target on evangelism, but to get visitors into the class.

"Sunday School is not the reaching arm of Skyline Church," noted Dan Reiland. He mentioned that the worship service reaches visitors for Christ, and said, "Sunday School is the teaching, fellowshipping, equipping arm of Skyline."

Therefore, in light of this purpose, what would be required of every adult teacher? Reiland noted, "1) leadership, 2) shepherding and 3) teaching."

Reiland explained that the teacher exercises his/her leadership by spotting, recruiting and developing people so they can get their foot in ministry somewhere in the church. He went on to say that a good teacher is always looking for people to get them involved in ministry.

The shepherding care of the class is exercised in counseling, social activities and just plain good old-fashioned fellowship.

The third value that a teacher brings to a class, and by no means less important, is strong Sunday School teaching. Reiland noted, "You cannot build a class on poor teaching, but good teaching alone does not build a class."

"Our people won't tolerate poor teaching. So to work in our Sunday School, a person had better be a good teacher." The first quality he looks for in recruitment is not just in teaching along; the person must first be a good leader and a good shepherd. Then Reiland recruits a person because he/she is an above-average teacher.

Skyline Wesleyan Church has one Sunday School superintendent who is over all of their schools. This lay person is an elected member of the official church board. This person is a trouble-shooter, coordinator, and problem-solver. The recruitment, training, assigning and empowering of teachers is done by the Minister of Education, not the lay Sunday School superintendent.

The Sunday School superintendent is the liaison to the local board of administration. He serves primarily as an encourager and a public relations person for the Sunday School staff. "On Sunday mornings, there are literally dozens and dozens of mind-boggling needs and problems that arise within a period of four hours at Skyline. The Sunday School superintendent is responsible to solve these problems as they occur. Next, the superintendent manages the office

staff, which is at least a half dozen people each session. In addition to this, the superintendent answers the phone, meets and directs new people to class, helps the ushers when services run overtime and he is just a solver of problems.

RESULTS

What have been the results of adding four Sunday Schools? "Growth," was the immediate response from Maxwell and Reiland.

Does the addition of extra Sunday Schools cause growth or facilitate growth? "We have seen that additional Sunday Schools facilitate our growth. Every class has outreach people who are looking for visitors in the worship service to bring them to class. As such, Skyline does not have a total structured Sunday School visitation program. Each class follows up visitors and absentees. Names and addresses of visitors to the worship service are given to outreach leaders to contact."

Many of the classes have "spotters" in the sanctuary who are actually looking for visitors when they stand to be recognized. Basically, a spotter extends an invitation to attend the class immediately following the worship service. "It's fun and enthusiastic when four or five 'spotters' go up to one visitor and try to persuade them to attend their class! This makes visitors really feel wanted." Reiland described the process, "Each class gives away different things to entice visitors to their class. For example, one class gave away a mug that changes when hot coffee is poured in it. When hot, it says "Joint Venture." When the mug is cool, it says "Family Living at its Best." Other classes give away books, tapes and other gifts to first-time visitors. Reiland indicated that it is fun to "watch" visitors walk around with mugs, books, or other things that they have received by attending Sunday School class.

Reiland was asked whether or not it was a problem for visitors to be "fair game" for all adult classes. "It tends to work because we are so spread out in so many different worship services and not every class is as aggressive as others. I don't think we overdominate or intimidate a guest. Far more guests slip out without an invitation than who get 'mobbed'!"

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Dan Reiland said, "It is not a complicated process to add a second Sunday School if the leadership is committed to church growth. It is not hard to add a second service if the people are committed to soul winning and evangelism and are willing to hang in there through what I call the 'change valley.'" Reiland explains that a "change valley" usually lasts about six months. He noted that many Sunday School leaders in other churches give up on an additional Sunday School in transition before it has a chance to work. They give up too quickly. Because the typical church is resistant to change and will run into things they don't expect, they simply give up. It takes vision to see beyond the problems to the results of the second service. Vision will make it happen.

Reiland was asked whether or not a church that doesn't have a commitment to evangelism can successfully go to two Sunday Schools. His reply was, "Yes, it can, but I do not believe the people will have enough motivation to sustain a double Sunday School. Even though the average church will gain 12-15 percent overnight by going to two services, just adding an additional option is too much effort if people are not committed to the results."

"The people must decide that they WILL make the second service work!" said John Maxwell.

As Skyline added multiple services, they had to move a long-standing class that had been in existence for 25 years and had been in the same room for 25 years and didn't want to change rooms. Maxwell and Reiland visited the class to encourage and motivate them, primarily to give the class the "big picture" of what was happening. Their class had decreased in attendance and the room was needed for a much larger youth department.

When the class got the "big picture," they got excited! One Sunday morning their teacher dressed up like Moses, got a large staff and they pretended to cross the wilderness into the Promised Land. On the "move" Sunday, Moses led the people across the four-lane highway to the new class, all of the people following him off of the church properties into rented facilities across the street.

Then Reiland noted, "After six months they liked the new room so well, that they would have fought if someone tried to take away the new room." To him the problem of getting the old class out of their former facilities is the problem in most churches: People just do not like change.

CONCLUSION

When a church offers more than one Sunday School on Sunday morning, it is going against tradition. This church offered multiple Sunday Schools on Sunday morning as a part of its strategy for growth.

CHAPTER NINE

ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS

THE CHAPEL, AKRON, OHIO

The Chapel, Akron, Ohio, is a large church; they have 4,800 in the four morning worship services, with another 1,200 children in nursery and children's church. The church has four morning worship services: 7:45, 9:00, 10:25 and 11:45 a.m. Next year they will probably re-start a Saturday evening "seekers" service. The church receives $4.5 million dollars per year and, like most large churches, it would be difficult for a visitor to crack the "anonymity barrier" because of its size. However, the Adult Bible Fellowships (ABF's) bridge that barrier.

"Visitors to ABF's get the feel of a small church," testifies Pastor Knute Larson, pastor since 1983. "When I stand before Christ and He asks me what I have done about the 'one another' commands in the Bible, I will not be embarrassed," said Larson. "I will point to the ABF's, our 'churches within the church'."

At the present time, the church has over 30 Adult Bible Fellowships, with approximately 1,700 in attendance every Sunday morning.

What is an ABF?

It is a group or community of people committed to know and apply the Word together in a caring fellowship, with organization to bring about pastoral care, discipleship and outreach - usually divided by age groupings so there is natural affinity and strong.

In Knute Larson's previous pastorate in Ashland, Ohio, he used the same ABF approach to adult Sunday School as he uses in Akron. In the book he wrote entitled *Growing Adults on Sunday Morning*, Victor Books, 1991, he gives five purposes for the ABF. [1]

1) Fellowship - The main purpose is for adults to have fellowship. Larson states that every survey why adults come to Sunday School reveals that the number one reason is to have fellowship. This is more than Bible teaching. He says, "They can get Bible teaching from sermons, tapes, the radio, and home Bible studies." But only in ABF's do they have a broad base of fellowship.

2) Bible - He wants the ABF to be grounded in Bible communication, but more than Bible content as found in most Sunday Schools curriculum. An ABF deals with issues, practical application and answers to the problems that face adults. These are all approached with a Biblical orientation and study.

3) Outreach - One of the primary purposes of ABF is to "bring those on the fringe of the church into these smaller groups," says Knute Larson. He goes on the explain that "ABF's are encouraged fish in the pool of the sanctuary." A great number of people who only casually attend church are targeted for ABF. Even though it is against policy, several classes have distributed leaflets outside of the sanctuary trying to get visitors to attend that week. The acceptable means is to get a list, contact casual visitors and try to pull them in to the ABF.

4) Pastoral Care - Larson is concerned about the vast number of people who are only casual visitors to the Chapel. He says that ABF employs the "Exodus 18 principle," whereby Moses broke

the people down into groups of 50's and 10's for accountability and responsibility. He says, "People are being cared for and many are helping do that."

5) Ministry - Another main purpose of an ABF is to involve more people in ministry than would be possible through the average small Sunday School class or in the typical large church service.

What Are Adult Bible Fellowships?

Some people like to call them Sunday Schools. All right. But they are more. They are what they say they are.

Adult: They are for college age and up, to meet their special needs.

Bible: They major on the teaching and application of the Word of God to daily living.

Fellowship: They also major on relationships and caring love, a huge need in our world.

Adult Bible Fellowships are groups for study and fellowship, organized around the Sunday morning adult Bible study hour, often called Sunday School. They have guidelines and goals, and much variety.

CONGREGATIONS

Knute Larson feels that the Adult Bible Fellowships are the answer to a missing ingredient in most local churches, i.e. congregations. Knute points out that C. Peter Wagner calls for three groups in every New Testament church: cells, congregation and celebration[4] (Your Church Can Be Healthy, by C. Peter Wagner, Abingdon Press, p. 23).

1) Celebration - Pete Wagner says that celebration is a group of 200 or more when a church comes together to celebrate its faith and Christianity.

Knute Larson likes to smile and say that the celebration can grow as large as 900,000 (?) and he mentions attending a Billy Graham service where 87,000 gathered in a stadium and sang "How Great Thou Art!" He realized that the purpose was not to know everyone and no one complained that it was getting too big.

The stadium experience, according to Knute, is where the Christian "feels" the spirit of Easter, recognizing that Christ is alive and that Christians share resurrection joy. The celebration experience needs to be alive with enthusiasm and sincerity flowing from the heart. It's a time where people walk out with one main idea and challenge, rather than being involved in a small group or having fellowship with one another.

Larson and a worship specialist plan the Sunday morning worship service at the Chapel for celebration. They want people to walk out filled with God, reverent because of the awe and majesty of God, and determined in their hearts to serve Him. Celebration provides a place to laugh, cry, and have hearts gripped by the Word of God.

2) Cell - Peter Wagner says that a cell is the small group of 7-12 people who share intimacy and discipleship. The Chapel has cells to help involve people in the church.

"Cells provide a place of accountability," said Knute Larson. In a small cell everyone feels accountable to others, as well as intimate with others. In a small cell people "can ask questions . . . hear others . . . and feel an atmosphere of love." There is also an element of transparency in the cell group. In a small cell people know you, your failures and strengths, and love you anyway. At The Chapel, they have many small groups that are more than Bible study. These are breakfast groups, discipleship groups, support groups for alcoholics, drug addicts, blended families, plus groups for single parents, college age kids and others with special needs.

Adult Bible Fellowships are different from the small cell meetings. Larson uses the phrase the law of competition, which states that people won't go to two meetings designed for the same purposes twice in one week. Because of this, people won't go to a small cell Bible study where they are learning the Word of God and come back on Sunday morning to the traditional Sunday School where they learn the Word of God. If in both meetings they are studying the Bible in the same way, people will not attend. The cells miss the broader spectrum of meeting needs, while the ABF misses the more narrow focus on the Word of God for study, accountability and learning.

Even though there are hundreds of churches using the ABF's, Knute indicated that not all churches can use them if they are willing to allow some of the pastoring to go on in these "congregations." Larson has been the speaker each year at the Moody Pastors' Conference where he teaches the concept of the ABF, helping pastors to work to reorganize their Sunday Schools into a more functioning purpose.

3) Congregation - C. Peter Wagner says that a congregation is a group in the church of approximately 30-100 who are organized for fellowship, study, growth and outreach.

Larson states, "I disagree with church growth people who teach that the church is made up of only the large celebration and the small cells."

Also, Larson disagrees with Carl George who pushes the meta-church. George teaches that this church "revolves around two events: the meeting of small groups or cells, and corporate worship or celebration"[5] (Christianity Today, June 24, 1991, p. 46).

In describing his congregation as ABF's, Knute Larson says, "We are not talking curriculum, we are not talking a way of study; an Adult Bible Fellowship is about pastoring, caring, sharing and fellowship." He says, "I want this (ABF) to be more than an old-time Sunday School class." An ABF could be called a caring system and a sharing system.

The ABF does not follow traditional curriculum. Knute says, "The beauty of Adult Bible Fellowships is that they deal with the real issues about which parents, singles and other adults feel so strongly - the need for fellowship and study." Thus they are organized by affinity, usually by age. Rather than following the next lesson in the quarterly, the focus of Bible study comes out of the needs of the group, as perceived and directed by the team of leaders which includes the pastoral advisor, teacher, class leader, and care leader.

METHODOLOGY

The ABF's at the Chapel are grouped by infinity, which is the same as described by the Southern Baptists, i.e. age-graded and, on occasion, gender-graded. Larson noted, "I believe that people fellowship best with affinity groups - people nearly their same age and with similar interests."

The Adult Education Pastor and the pastoral advisors give direction to the teachers and leaders of ABF's in helping them to choose curriculum. Curriculum is not chosen by the staff, nor is it automatically an outgrowth of a publishing house. Larson says, "Our curriculum reflects the way we pastor."

The team of leaders in each ABF chooses curriculum with their pastoral advisor. The ABF's are a pastoral-focused ministry. In this sense, they are different than the traditional church's Sunday School that falls under a Sunday School director and/or the board/committee of Christian education. Rather than having a lay committee to determine the educational policies of the church, Knute Larson noted, "In 1971 we broke the whole church into Adult Bible Fellowships. 'Didn't vote on it. 'Didn't tell anybody. I began teaching a young adult class and tried to form what was, in my mind, the first Adult Bible Fellowship in the world."

Larson went on to say, "I remember the first year I carefully said, 'We're not going to vote on a president this year. We're going to have a class leader and I will appoint him.'"

So ABF's have class leaders who are responsible to administer the class, rather than the traditional class president. Next, they have a person in charge of the caring system, sometimes called the care captain. The third person is the teacher, also appointed by pastoral staff.

At the beginning, the appointments were under the senior pastor, but with time they have evolved to be under the direction of the pastoral staff. Each pastor on the staff has two or more Adult Bible Fellowships under him. "He is to own those fellowships," said Larson. That pastor is to appoint class leaders, care captains and teachers; with the view of making the ABF work.

When he did this, "at first no one thought it was anything different, but gradually the class began growing. Later we split up and then we used those two ABF's as models for the rest in the church."

At the present time there are four morning church services and most of the ABF's are located in the second and third worship hours. The high school Youth Bible Fellowships (YBF) are scheduled for the second and third hour, as well as the singles. Because these groups like larger crowds, they are naturally grouped in larger fellowships.

The church has four Sunday Schools, one at each of the four hours of church. Obviously, the first hour is the least attended, yet they are reaching people on early Sunday morning whom they might not otherwise reach at all. The children's church is only held during the second and third hour.

The leaders for ABF's are selected by the pastoral team; they are not voted upon, nor or they chosen by laymen. Because they reflect the pastoral ministry of the church, they are chosen by the pastoral team.

Larson says that leaders for the ABF's are selected by their spiritual gifts, commitment to Christ and their "passion" (a word that means much to him in locating spiritual gifts). Leaders are never chosen simply because they are good in public. They must have deep passion to lead an ABF.

There are several people who make each ABF function properly. First is the Bible teacher who is responsible for communicating the lesson and helping to set the mood for Bible study. He usually leads the Bible discussion.

Second, the class leader is the one who has a knack for organization to get people working together. He is good with people, so he is comfortable in front of a crowd of fifty or more. Another person is the social chairman, who reports to the class leader. This person plans the activities and creates a social environment in the class. Underneath the social chairman are hosts. Each host will greet the visitors and members on Sunday morning, as well as helping with the refreshments.

The third main director is a care leader or couple. The responsibility of the care leader is to ensure that every individual in the ABF has someone who is giving pastoral care to him. Those who minister under the care leaders are unit leaders who accept the pastoral responsibility and care for those in their unit.

Another person is the outreach or evangelism leader. This individual gives direction to the outreach of the class in finding new members and giving direction to the evangelistic outreach.

All of these leaders are under a pastor, who Larson calls "the leader of the leaders." All of the main leaders report directly to the senior pastor or to a member of the pastoral staff. As a result, the class leaders have a pastor to whom they can turn for answers to problems or decisions.

CONCLUSION

The Chapel had adopted its program to meet the needs of its people. Because this is a large church, the ABF's give care and personal identity to each. Because the church is a downtown church, not a neighborhood church, the ABF's give the feeling of oneness and ownership by each. Because the church is growing, the ABF's are a major factor in supplying a path for growth.

ENDNOTES

1. Knute Larson, Growing Adults on Sunday Morning, (Wheaton, Illinois, Victor Books, 1991) p. 14.
2. Ibid, pp. 10, 11.
3. Ibid, p. 10.
4. C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, (Nashville, Tennessee, Abingdon Press, 1983) p. 23.
5. Carl George, "Christianity Today" (June 24, 1991), p. 46.

CHAPTER TEN

VISION DAY

LA COSTA HILLS CHURCH, CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA

Church planter Larry Lamb moved to Southern California in 1989 to begin a church in the La Costa Hills area of Carlsbad, California, near the famous PGA West Golf Course. Pastor Lamb targeted the baby boomer, the upwardly mobile young family moving into the area, where husband and wife both worked. The young adults in Southern California have little or no echoes of Christianity. Lamb grew up in Amarillo, Texas, in an independent fundamentalist Baptist church that featured southern Gospel music, evangelistic preaching and was known for its negative preaching against identified worldly sins. But Southern California was a different world! The young couples in the area were not turned on by Country Western music, and would not attend a church with Southern Gospel music. Lamb also knew that they would not respond to a church that emphasizes negative preaching, nor would they come to a church that basically was evangelistic gospel preaching. It would take a new approach and he was willing to find it.

Lamb, born in 1957, married Heather Betker, a Canadian girl he had met at college. For over a year, while meeting young couples and holding home Bible studies, Lamb laid the foundation for this church. During this time he attended Skyline Wesleyan Church in Lemon Grove, California, where John Maxwell is Pastor. Maxwell's contemporary ministry to the Southern California family changed Lamb's orientation. Not only did Maxwell give Lamb a cross-cultural approach to ministry, Maxwell influenced his spiritual orientation, leadership, attitudes and faith expectations.

The La Costa church began in October, 1990, in rented facilities with a few families who joined with Lamb, so attendance grew slowly. On the first anniversary in March, 1991, the church had a Friend Day reaching 134 in attendance, a substantial victory in the minds of Larry Lamb and those in the church.

In the summer of 1991, Larry Lamb began planning a "Vision Day" that was conducted on Sunday, September 29, 1992. Lamb had attended a pastor's conference where he was encouraged to have a special emphasis to lead the congregation into taking an honest look at the church from its past, present, and future prospectives. He decided to call it "Vision Day."

Lamb felt Vision Day would allow everyone to be on the same starting line as they began a new church. He said, "With so many people from different church backgrounds or no church background at all, I wanted everyone to know the kind of church we are."

In announcing "Vision Day," Lamb asked everyone to place a high priority on attending the event. "This is more than a special church day - this is a turning point in the life of our church." Because he felt it was so significant, the church paid for lunch, babysitting, and valet parking at the La Costa Hotel and Spa. The church chose the finest resort location in the area. Lamb said, "I want my people to expect our church to be first class. Often Christianity is second or third rate."

Jerry Falwell has often said, "If it is Christian, it ought to be a little bit better!"

The Sunday morning sermon emphasized "the power of a great purpose." Pastor Lamb pointed out that a church gets power from it's purpose. It gets great power from a great purpose.

The people ate lunch at noon, then sat around tables for the seminar format of Vision Day. They held Vision Day in a resort hotel, reflecting the embryonic seed principle, i.e., a new church will grow according to the initial forces that brought it into existence. The resort reflected their neighborhood and the kind of people who would be attracted to the church.

At 1:00 p.m. Lamb gave an orientation pointing out that La Costa Hills Church is about relationships. He began by saying, "A relationship WITH Jesus Christ is a relationship of maturity in Jesus Christ." His basis for discussion was Colossians 2:6,7: "So, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord (that is the beginning relationship) continue to live in Him, (that is in the maturing relationship) rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Each person had a syllabus on which they wrote out their thoughts and filled in answers. These interaction workbooks became a basis for group discussions and dyad discussion.

"We must share the same dream," Lamb told the church. He was following the first law of leadership. "When followers buy into your leader, then they buy into your vision. If the people don't like to leader, the vision will not be owned by the people."

"If we don't know what we are trying to do," Lamb said, "then we can chase ideas, programs and projects that will not produce fruit."

"What is the product of the church?" Lamb asked. "The answer, "relationships!" When all agreed on the goal, they were ready to see a video by John Maxwell on *Six Keys to Church Growth*. This 58-minute video focused the attitude of the people toward a growing church. In this presentation Maxwell emphasized six principle found in healthy churches, "prayer, leadership, attitudes, evangelism-discipleship, and common goals."

After the video it was time for the first break with coffee, cokes, and fellowship.

"What kind of church are we?" the young pastor asked as he began the second session. Lamb began by telling the people, "each church is different." Lamb presented a bar graph showing the church's year and a half attendance and giving records.

"Lets take a history lesson," he explained. "We can not properly plan for the future if we don't know our past."

This session was crucial. Lamb explained that as the church grows, two things change. First the role of the pastor will change, and that their role (i.e. the congregation) will change. He said, "the pastor's hands on ministry *decreases* and the congregations hand on ministry *increases*." By a chart (see appendix) he communicated that he would do less and less ministry as the church grew larger, and that they would be more and more involved in ministry.

Next Lamb explained, "the pastor's gifts must become more clearly defined, as well as the congregations gifts become more clearly defined."

Out of the session grew what is called Their Model Church. Just as auto makers first construct a model automobile by which all others are assembled, The Model Church would guide their ministry.

THE MODEL CHURCH

1. A church with inspiring vision
2. A church with exciting goals
3. A church with practical proven strategies
4. A church with a pastor who leads
5. A church with a congregation who ministers
6. A church with a plan that will work.

This session came to a close as Lamb began talking about the things in ministry that he did not do well. Rather than taking the average role of the pastor who tries to convince the people how strong he is in all areas, Lamb shared his weaknesses.

Because of the pastor's transparency, there were more positive comments from the people about this session than all of the other sessions. They were now willing to follow him, because they not only knew what he could do, he was honest with them about his weaknesses. Contemporary young adults demand credibility in leadership.

In sharing his personal strengths Lamb said, "Some leaders keep their congregation at a distance while other leaders bring the congregation in close." The young pastor said, "I love to be with people and I can motivate people to be all they can be for God." When it comes to weaknesses Lamb said, "I have a difficult time with organization and too many detail cause me great confusion."

At 3:30 p.m. came a second break for coffee, cokes, and fellowship with one another.

The 3:45 p.m. session was called, "Owning the Vision." This was one of the most important sessions because the people had to buy into the vision of the church. They couldn't just see the vision, they had to take ownership of the vision.

"This was crucial for present ministry and future existence," according to Lamb.

See A Vision

Buy a Vision

Own a Vision

"The purpose of La Costa Hills Church never changes," Lamb told the people. "However, the focus of our strategy will change." He asked the question,

"What will never change?" "Relationships."

"Relationship to Jesus Christ and relationships to one another."

Lamb also explained the strategy would change. What changes is method and vision.

"How will we make our vision happen?"

"We need three things to happen to cause us to grow," the young minister explained. "Evangelism, assimilation, and care ministry." These three are essentials for the church.

Three Essentials:

1. Evangelism/Discipleship = reach out to people.
2. Assimilation = reassure people of their worth.
3. Ministry Care = respond to people in need.

"We needed to express their vision in such a way that it is not only clear but easy to remember. Let's put our vision to one word." He came up with the word REAL.

R = Reaching the unchurched (evangelism)
E = Equipping the membership (lay ministry)
A = Assimilation new members (assimilation)
L = Leading in church growth (leadership)

"Let's tell people we are building a REAL church," Lamb said.

The people were learning not only about their church, they were learning how to set a personal vision, and the uniqueness of this new congregation called La Costa Hills Church.

"How can we keep this vision going?" Lamb asked. It is easy to lose one's vision and it is easy for a church to lose its vision. He introduced the word HOPE, the acrostics were listed in the worktext, along with places for each to fill out the meaning. The people interacted with the acrostic and filled out the following:

H = Having a passion to reach the unchurched (evangelism).

O = Open care for hurting people (ministry).

P = Planned ways to make meaningful relationships (assimilation).

E = Expressing joyful celebration in worship (worship).

"Are we a church that offers HOPE?" the young pastor asked. The people needed to see themselves as a church that not only turned inward for fellowship with one another, but was turned outward offering hope to others.

Then the pastor announced, "At your tables, work on these four areas by thinking of a goal and a strategy to fulfill that goal." The people turned to their tables and began to discuss ways to carry out these four goals. As an example, they came up with questions such as:

"How can we reach more people?"

"How can we make people feel at home at La Costa Hills Church?"

"How can we take care of people?" and How can we express the joy of Christ through music?"

Without realizing it the people were discussing the points that they had heard in HOPE and REAL.

Toward the end of the afternoon came the last coffee break and coke time. These times were not just to break the momentum of sitting at a table, but rather to give people an opportunity to talk to one another and to build relationships. After all relationships was what this church was all about.

The final session was called, "Building A Winning Team." The pastor announced we will discuss, "Building A Winning Team Through A Winning Attitude."

"How can we keep our vision before the people?"

First, it was decided that they would hold membership classes where new members would learn the vision of the church, not just discuss doctrine. Also in this class new members would learn their gifts, temperaments, talents and passion so they could know how to serve in this church.

The membership class was to be more than talking about church requirements, it would be a place where people were prepared to fit into ministry, not just to be voted into the church. A functional new members class is a way they could build a winning team of all new people who came into the church.

Lamb announced that the people of the church are the greatest assets to the church. And if they were to own this vision there would be no room for the attitude, "It's not my responsibility to take care of people." Therefore, "We will all take care of one another. Every member will have a ministry."

There are traditional ways that people come into the church. People say, "Here am I. What can you do for me?" The winning attitude is, "There you are. What can I do for you?"

Returning to the theme, "Building A Winning Team" Lamb asked them to remember the first time they came to the church. Did they not make up their mind if they would return within the first ten minutes?

"Yes!"

"Therefore, let's don't have visitors come in and sit down. Rather they need to stand and talk to other people when they first arrive. Why? Because the product of this church is relationship."

Next Lamb reminded them that when parents picked up there children one of the first questions they ask is, "Did you have fun?" And the second question parents ask is, "What did you learn?" We want to make sure our children enjoy our Sunday school, and that they learn something that will influence their lives.

"We have less to fear from outside competition than from inside inefficiency" said Lamb.

"People will not care how much we know until they know how much we care."

Lamb pointed out they had to be a winning team with a winning attitude, and the only way to have it was to be "others" focused. "Vision Day not only communicates *what* we are going to do, but *how* we are going to do it."

"We do not know the story of people who walk through the doors of our church. The most important thing is that *you are there* and with that relationship great things can happen." The day was ended when Lamb told a story of two boys attending a tent revival meeting but finding the tent full the boys decided to leave. An usher stopped and said, "wait boys I can find two seats for you in the choir area." The usher sat with them. That was the night Grady Wilson and Billy Graham accepted Christ as their Savior."

"The world was changed through Billy Graham who came to Christ through a relationship."

"La Costa Hills Church is relationships."

CONCLUSIONS

What is the greatest tool to help a sick Sunday School? The answer is "leadership." And what is the greatest tool to help a leader turn around a Sunday School? The answer is vision. The greatest thing a leader gives his/her followers in vision on direction. The first law of vision states, "When people buy into a leaders vision, they buy into his/her leadership."

But not just any vision will turn around a Sunday School. It must be a biblical vision (vision statement) that results in a biblical ministry (ministry statement). Where there is no vision, the Sunday School fails.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NINETY PRACTICAL THINGS TO

TURN AROUND YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

The American Sunday School movement is in trouble. It is not dying because of attacks from without, but rather from inner rust and decay. In many places it has lost its direction, and like a sailing ship without wind; it is dead in the water. There are no easy secrets to turn around the Sunday School; rather the task is a tedious one. Workers must perceive their tasks in a different manner and they must expect different results. It will take serious work to bring it back to the place of God's full anointing. It needs to turn around and go back to its foundation. This does not refer to better education or better ministry. Significant changes must be made in order to take it back to bedrock. These changes will be so significant that those on the outside will feel renewal and want to attend. The changes will be so observable that those on the inside will expect greater things from it.

CHANGES THAT EFFECT PERCEPTION & EXPECTATION

NINETY THINGS TO DO

1. *Change the name to* ***Adult Bible Fellowship***. Instead of calling it Sunday School, which suggests to the outsiders a place for children, or a place for catechism training, or at best a place for preparing people for church membership; call it Adult Bible Fellowship. As suggested earlier, *adults* are coming looking for *fellowship* that is based on the *Bible*. Obviously, those who are already in the Sunday School do not need a change of name. The title Sunday School is not a barrier to them; they have accepted it and they continue to attend. However, to the outsider, the old title could be a barrier and a new title could open the door.

2. *Change the name of the Sunday School teacher to* ***leader***. Rather than giving the teacher an academic name, use a name that has more of a Biblical connotation. People do not prefer another school experience that reminds them of an unpleasant past. Most remember unpleasant experiences in K-12. The title *teacher* implies school. It also implies that his/her work begins when the class begins and terminates when the class ends. However, the title *leader* suggests being an example, giving care and protecting followers.

JOB DESCRIPTION
Bible Study leader
Prayer leader
Outreach leader
Spiritual life leader

On many other occasions I have used the title *shepherd* to describe a Sunday School teacher. The Biblical term *shepherd* implies 1) pastoral care, 2) leadership, and 3) feeding and instructing the Word of God. Whether they are called *class leaders* or *shepherds*, new titles for teachers give new expectations to class members.

3. *Change the name of the secretary to receptionist*. The name secretary implies a relationship to records and roll books. However, the primary job of the Sunday School secretary is meeting and greeting people. Therefore, the new name of *receptionist* would more accurately describe receiving people and, in the process, registering them.

4. *Make a new focus on Bible study with fellowship*. Instead of an academic focus on what the leader does, put the focus on what the people do (i.e., study the Word of God). In studying the Bible, people ask questions, listen to their friends, talk to one another and socialize with one another. As people study the Word of God, they apply it to their lives. They listen and gain insight as questions are addressed.

5. *Adapt Biblical terminology*. School terminology such as classrooms, chalkboards, lesson plans, lecterns, textbooks, and other terms carry negative connotations. Use Biblical terms such as disciplining, feeding, fellowshipping, caring, tending and learning.

6. *Adopt shared leadership*. Rather than the superintendent and/or a few people making all the decisions in the Sunday School, apply a new method of shared-leadership. People who attend Sunday School have their own opinions that they want to be heard. They must feel like a part of the Sunday School. Therefore, when there are problems to solve, seek the opinion of the people in the class. When there are decisions to be made, seek solutions from the people in the class and when there is ministry to be given, share it with the people in the class.

SHARED LEADERSHIP
Shared Decision-Making
Shared Problem-Solving
Shared Ministry

7. *Give choices of time*. The Sunday School has basically demanded that everyone come at the same time and fit into the same curriculum. However, many people cannot come at the same time each week, and others have different preferences of time slots. Therefore, offer Sunday School at more than one time a week. The Ward Presbyterian Church in Livonia, Michigan, has Sunday School at 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 a.m., and 12:30 p.m. every Sunday. People may choose when they attend Sunday School.

The church of the future must be a cafeteria, not a plate lunch. A plate lunch symbolizes that time, topic, and systems of ministry have been predetermined and controlled. Just as the dietitian controls what food is offered, when it is offered, and how much food should be consumed; so the church of the past has controlled its curriculum, time and methods of ministry. In the future, the church must be a cafeteria by offering choices and variety to its people, not because variety and choices are the best way to run a Sunday School, but because the peoples' schedules demand more choices and variety in order to meet their varied needs.

CHOICE:
TIME
TOPIC
SYSTEMS OF DELIVERY

8. Shorten the length of lesson topics. Most Sunday Schools offer a thirteen-week-long curriculum during which one topic is discussed and developed. Traditionally, this has been called a *quarter*, i.e. a fourth of a year. The manual was called a *quarterly*. However, with the advent of television, the attention span of Americans has shortened. Because Americans are somewhat dysfunctional in this area, they have difficulty giving attention to a topic for more than 4-6 weeks. Therefore, topics should be taught in series approximately one month long.

9. Recognize the distant learner. In the past, Sunday Schools ministered to those who were present and marked "absent" those who were not in attendance. However, because of the time constraints, the church must be more sensitive to the distant learner. According to surveys, the average faithful attender is in Sunday School forty-two times a year. That means he/she misses ten times a year. Two or three decades ago, the faithful attender would have been there perhaps fifty times a year and would only have missed two or three times each year. Because people are gone more often, Sunday School must make learning available to those who cannot be there every Sunday. People take four or five vacations each year, rather than one. They usually take multiple vacations over extended weekends. In addition, they are gone for business trips, conventions, to visit relatives, or for educational events. As a result, even the most faithful attender will probably miss ten times a year. Therefore, the Sunday School must provide videocassettes, audiocassettes, and a number of other media to communicate to the distant learner when he/she is not present.

10. *Offer more practical topics.* The Sunday School has been driven by content because Christianity is a revelation of content about God. As a result people were taught the content of that revelation. However, even when Sunday School has been content-bound, it has given attention to practical application, i.e. to make the lessons work in the lives of the pupils. Now, instead of starting with content and moving to practical, more Sunday Schools are going to have to reverse the order. Begin where people are. Begin with practical topics and move to Biblical answers. Teach "how to" lessons.

11. *Offer more family help.* The whole church is becoming aware that we can no longer assume the strength of the family or take for granted the family's existence. We must begin active programs of teaching the value, purpose, and strengths of the family. The three major topics that must be taught in Sunday School are: 1) husband and wife relationships, 2) parenting children, and 3) managing family finances.

12. *Recognize the supernatural.* We have taught the existence of the supernatural, but that knowledge has not become a part of everyday life. As the American society becomes less of a Christian nation with moral laws, moral legislatures, and society that is grounded on moral values; the church will face an increasing threat from the supernatural forces of demonism and darkness. The Sunday School must equip its members to wrestle against principalities and powers, healing, deliverance from darkness, and victories over pervasive habits.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ARLINGTON, TEXAS

(CHAPTER ONE)[1]

13. *Use Sunday School classes away from the main campus to teach the Word of God*.

14. *Use lay people as pastoral leaders of mission Sunday Schools.*

15. *Use both men and women as lay leaders of Bible studies*.

16. *Use available space where the people are*. It may be an empty apartment, recreation room, or a patio without chairs. People are more important than surroundings when it comes to teaching the Word of God.

17. *Use available property to teach the Word of God.* Do not restrict your Bible teaching to traditional church buildings, but rather make the location serve the function of Bible teaching.

18. *Make creative use of the best available time which is Sunday morning to teach the Word of God.*

19. *Do not use offensive titles or barriers titles for your Bible study.*

20. Begin your ministry where your people are physically, spiritually, financially, and emotionally. By meeting their needs, their hearts are open to the Word of God.

21. *Recognize that clothing can be a barrier for some people to attend the average American.* Bible study leaders should be examples in appearance, yet dress to meet the needs of people.

22. *Use the challenge and vision of a great opportunity to inspire workers to sacrifice.*

HYLANDS COMMUNITY CHURCH, RETON, WASHINGTON

(CHAPTER TWO)

23. *Learning centers in Sunday School produce better motivation, more involvement, a larger variety of experiences, and more learning in the Sunday School.*

24. *A team of teachers can better instruct a groups of children than the isolated teacher at a table in a self-contained classroom.*

25. *New teachers who are recruited with purpose and focus will make a deep commitment and a continuing contribution to the Sunday School.*

26. *A strong commitment to children ministry can build a total family church.*
27. *Men have a strong contribution to the teaching of children in Sunday School.*

28. *Teenagers are effective as teachers in the children's department.*

29. *The Sunday School that believes in children will grow them through learning experiences based upon the Word of God.*

30. *Write a ministry statement (i.e., how the church will minister to its members and then employ its members in ministry)*

SAMPLE MINISTRY STATEMENT: We will present the gospel to every person in our geographical "Jerusalem," attempting to lead them to know Christ and become a member of this church. Our services are designed to help you touch God and make it possible for God to touch you. We will help you lift up the Lord through worship so He will meet your needs. We will build you up through expositional preaching of the Word of God and apply it practically so you can know His will, live every day for God, and grow to be a mature believer according to the Scriptures. We will assist you in ministering to others according to your spiritual gifts, so you can grow as a leader of others and help mature the body of Christ.

31. *Write a vision statement of what the church expects to accomplish.*

SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT: Our church is an island in a hostile world—an island where you as an individual, and your family, can come for growth in values, skills and knowledge for your various roles and duties in life. Our ministry statement reveals how we will minister to you and use you in ministry. This vision statement reveals how you will worship, study, fellowship, play, relax and celebrate the seasons of your life with other Christians so you will be strengthened, equipped and motivated to live for Christ in a hostile world. Our vision is to make you a well-rounded person as you pursue life, liberty and happiness according to God's will for your life.

SADDLEBACK COMMUNITY CHURCH, MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA

(CHAPTER THREE)

32. *Sunday School teaching should aim at life's skills and equipping believers for ministry, rather than just Bible knowledge or doctrinal belief; it should teach skills and prepare the learner to perform a function in his Christian life.*

33. *Sunday School teaching tends to meander from one quarter's worktext to the next without giving the pupils a sense of completeness of arrival at a destination.* Therefore, Sunday Schools should give a sense of completion or arrival to students when they have finished a course of study, just as a high school diploma or college degree is a "statement" that the student has completed the course.

34. *Pupils in Sunday School should see and work toward various levels of commitment that they will be required to attain.* Most people think that attending Sunday School is simply occupying a seat or being present to listen to a lecture. Sunday School should demand commitment from a person at various levels of attainment so they will be challenged to continued growth.

35. *Sunday Schools should be willing to teach people on other days of the week and times during the day than just on Sunday morning.* Because of the expectation people bring to church and

their time expectations; the teachings of Sunday School should be made available at other times than Sunday morning.

36. *The pastoral staff should understand the various levels of commitment that followers have to Christ and His church.* Then the staff should attempt to recognize where each member is located in terms of commitment and develop a strategy to move each person to a deeper commitment to Christ.

37. *People will not make a deeper commitment to Christ unless leadership calls for dedication.* Give an opportunity for each to make a deeper commitment and provides a program that will teach and allow deeper commitment.

38. *A church by innovation and sacrifice can reach, teach and equip its people to become one of the largest congregations in America with permanent worship and education facilities.*

39. *A pastor's primary focus is recruiting, training, leading and motivating the pastoral staff to ministry.* This pastoral leadership function is more important than the acquiring of facilities or implementing programs.

FLORENCE BAPTIST TEMPLE, FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

(CHAPTER FOUR)

40. *Sunday Schools should reemphasize enrollment because it tells the pupils that they "belong" to the class and to other people, hence bonding them to the local church.*

41. *Sunday Schools that just expect people to attend for the sake of Bible study are probably weak in follow-up of absentees, weak in outreach to others who need to be in the class, and weak in demanding commitment from members to Christ and His church.* Therefore, the Sunday School should be organized through enrollment so that they people feel an obligation to the class, to other believers in the class, and a responsibility to reach out to those who should and could be in the class.

42. *Sunday Schools should return to an emphasis on enrollment because it gives a natural "stairstepping" process to bring people into the influence of the church where the Word of God can perform the work of God in their lives.* Those who have been enrolled in Sunday School are in a place where they can be "stairstepped" to Christ.

43. *Sunday Schools that actively seek to enroll people in Bible study are actually securing the permission of the non-churched person to minister to them, bringing them into a place of conversion, growth in Christ, and usefulness in the church.*

44. *Sunday Schools should organize an approach to enrollment so that barriers that keep people out of Bible study are removed and doors are opened for people to enter class fellowship where they can study the Word of God.*

45. *Small adult classes make it easier for members to discuss the lesson, answer questions for one another and apply the lesson to daily life.*

46. *The more adult classes that are formed will make it easier for more adults to find a place of group leadership, hence equipping them for actual service.*

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

(CHAPTER FIVE)

47. *Sunday School classes should be encouraged to grow to a large size because many adults want to attend a larger class that has more activities and functions.*

48. *Sunday Schools should seek teachers who have the strongest gift of communication of the Word of God and place them in the function of teaching.* Just because a person is an effective teacher does not mean that he will be an effective class leader. Therefore, do not allow those with the spiritual gift of teaching to act as class leaders, unless they have the spiritual gifts to do so.

49. *Those with the spiritual gift of leadership should be put in the role of leading the classes. This is not necessarily the same role as the class teacher, nor the class shepherd.* This class leader should have managing skills so that he can get involved in the class, making the class a functioning group to every member.

50. *People do not automatically volunteer for service nor find a place of service; rather people must be identified, sought, trained and involved in Christian service.* Therefore, organize Sunday School classes with a view of involving every person in Christian service.

51. *Modern young couples are not "frozen" into the traditional stereotype roles of men and women. Therefore, allow men and women to minister in the Sunday School according to the New Testament principles for ministry.* Because the Sunday School teacher is the extension of the pastoral ministry into the life of the class, the pastor and staff reflect the direction and responsibility of the New Testament content that is taught. Therefore, both men and women can be shepherds/leaders of adult Sunday School classes to carry out the purpose of the pastoral staff and the church.

52. *Recognize that modern young adults want team leadership in areas of management. They want a team of leaders in their Sunday School classes, so there is shared goal setting, shared decision-making, and shared problem-solving.* This gives the Sunday School the strength of many differently gifted persons, yet the direction of the Word of God.

53. *Sunday School teachers and leaders should be appointed by the senior pastor and/or the pastoral staff, because the Sunday School teacher is the extension of pastoral ministry into the life of the class.* Because the Sunday School teacher is the shepherd who carries out this delegated role, the pastor must become involved in this process.

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD, PHOENIX, ARIZONA
(CHAPTER SIX)

54. *Sunday School busing still works when people will work at it*
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55. *The success of Sunday School bussing depends on the vision of the leader who has great passion to make it work.*

56. *The success of Sunday School bussing begins with commitment and passion, not techniques or the method of how it is done.*

57. *The vision of reaching a great number of people will cause workers to sacrifice and make a commitment to reach that goal.*

58. *Facilities (buildings) and tools (buses) are only means to the vision, they are not mandatory for the vision.*

59. *A Sunday School still can have fantastic growth of unrealistic proportions when it is driven by a gigantic vision.*

60. *The continuing force that drives Sunday School bus ministry is soul winning and evangelism.* The reward of people won to Christ is a dynamic that keeps Sunday School bus ministry alive.

61. *Spiritual power for conversion and supply of money grows out of vision; it does not come before vision.*

62. *The synergistic principle of many forces producing multiple growth still takes place in a church when bussing is combined with a variety of other dynamic principles to attract people, present the Gospel to them, and call for a commitment to Jesus Christ*

63. *A compassion to alleviate the misery of people (HIV victims, rape victims, homeless, etc.) is still a strong dynamic to attract people to the teaching of the Word of God.*

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, GROVE CITY, OHIO
(CHAPTER SEVEN)

64. *A Sunday evening Sunday School is an excellent alternative when the traditional evening service is not well-attended and the members do not respond to a second sermon or second worship service on Sunday evening.*

65. *A Sunday evening Sunday School allows for more time for Bible study and fellowship because members don't have to rush off to the morning service.*

66. *A Sunday evening Sunday School allows the pastoral staff to focus more time and attention (not to mention adding additional space for worship services) on Sunday morning, without trying to sandwich in a morning Sunday School.*

67. *A Sunday evening Sunday School allows the worshipper (especially the family with young children) time to attend church on Sunday morning without pressure to get up and get dressed as early traditional churches.* The member is able to prepare and focus his/her heart for worship even before they arrive at church.

68. *A Sunday evening Sunday School allows the dedicated Christian who serves in both Sunday School and worship (i.e., teach and sing in choir) less pressure at both morning and evening times and to be better focused in both.*

SKYLINE WESLEYAN CHURCH, LEMON GROVE, CALIFORNIA

(CHAPTER EIGHT)

69. *The commitment to evangelism and outreach will cause a church to grow, not the provision of extra classroom space by adding additional services.*

70. *Because traditional Christians are usually resistant to change, the leader must give the "big picture" of the church's vision and mission if the people will make work the addition of extra Sunday School times.*

71. *The total church must recognize the benefits of an additional Sunday School before it will work.*

72. *In an age of prohibitive building costs, a church should not automatically rule out an additional Sunday School; but should carefully study the advantages and practical techniques that an additional Sunday School will give.*

73. *When beginning an additional Sunday School, the staff should think "long range" and prepare the people for the stress that will come during the "change valley."*

74. *The staff that supervises Sunday School should be careful of "double dipping," i.e. using volunteer workers twice because they are easier to enlist than it would be to recruit and train new workers for the additional Sunday School.*

75. *Those who initiate an additional Sunday School should be prepared for criticism because it will be tougher to establish than most expect and it will take longer to initiate than expected.*

76. *The key to successfully beginning an additional Sunday School is support from the pulpit.*

THE CHAPEL, AKRON, OHIO

(CHAPTER NINE)

77. *The adult Sunday School will not be revitalized by emphases on curriculum and new, inspired ways of teaching, but rather by emphasizing relationships among class members and focusing Bible study on the needs of class members.*

78. *Because the teacher is the extension of pastoral care to the adult class, then the pastor should appoint those leaders who will carry out pastoral care and organize Adult Bible Fellowship to extend his ministry.*

79. *The modern Adult Bible Fellowship will be led not just by one teacher, but be a team of leaders who will each focus on one function such as leading Bible study, leading outreach, leading in pastoral care, leading in fellowship and one to lead the entire class.*

80. *Adult Bible Fellowship will fulfill the congregational needs of the church, where cells fulfill the intimacy needs and church worship fulfills the need for celebration.*

81. *Adult Bible Fellowships make it possible for the pastor to delegate his "watchcare" ministry to members and places where that responsibility is carried out adequately.*

82. *Because people will not return to receive the same ministry a second time each week, the cell is for deep Bible study and the congregation (Adult Bible Fellowship) is for discussion of relevant topics from a Biblical prospective.*

83. *Because believers are nurtured by both individuals and warm, receptive groups, the Adult Bible Fellowship can be a nurturing community for all.*

84. *Because people fellowship best with affinity groups (people nearly the same age and similar interests), the Adult Bible Fellowships should be organized around these catalysts.*

LA COSTA CHURCH, CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA

(CHAPTER TEN)

85. *Plan a Vision Day.* This will get all workers beginning at the same place, going in the same direction. Vision gives strength to workers and to the total church.

86. *Vision helps a new church get all people and workers on the same footing.*

87. *Vision gets cooperation out of people and produces commitment to the church.*

88. *Vision is more important for a new work than is the method used to establish the new church.*

89. *Vision involves who a church is, where it is going, how it will get there, and what tools (methods) it will use to get at its destination.*

90. *A Vision Statement (where the church is going) is just as important as a Ministry Statement (how it will do ministry) and a Doctrinal Statement (what it believes).*

91. *The one who supplies the vision to a church is the actual leader of the church.*

92. *When people do not accept the vision of the leader, they have rejected his leadership.* Even if he is called a leader and functions as a leader, he is not the leader.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PRACTICAL RESOURCES TO TURN AROUND YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

The items listed with each church are suggestions for further study on the topic, or they are programs that will help in successfully implementing the ideas.

Chapter One

Lewis, Larry, *The Church Planter's Handbook*, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1992. This book, written by the President of the Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, is directed at new church planting, but touches on mission planting that is done by First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas.

Chapter Two

Gospel Light Sunday School Curriculum, 2300 Knoll Dr., Ventura, California 93003, 1-800-235-3415. This is a company that is dedicated and oriented to excellent in children's curriculum, for samples and information.

Towns, Elmer, *Towns Sunday School Encyclopedia*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 1993. See article on children's class, how to teach children.

Chapter Three

Church Growth Institute, P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502. Church Growth Institute offers four curriculum resource packets specifically designed for a church's New Member's Class in the areas of Finances, Lay Involvement, Doctrine and Lay Leadership. Each packet contains audio lessons, textbook, worksheets, etc.

Gospel Light Publications, 2300 Knoll Drive, Ventura, California, 93003. This Sunday School curriculum is age-guided, Bible-based and Christ-centered. It is relevant to modern problems and uses up-to-date art and printing displays. Because of its excellence, every church should examine this literature. For samples, phone 1-800-235-3415.

Towns, Elmer, *Towns Sunday School Encyclopedia*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1993. See articles on curriculum, teaching materials, etc.

Warren, Rick, 23456 Madero, Suite 100, Mission Viejo, California 92691, 1-714-581-5683 - The curriculum used at Saddleback Valley Community Church may be ordered, as well as tapes describing the church's strategy.

Chapter Four

Towns, Elmer, *Sunday School Enrollment*, Church Growth Institute, P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502. This is a resource packet to teach adult Sunday School classes the value, strategy and practical steps to implement an enrollment program in a church. This resource packet contains audiocassette, textbook, worksheets, publicity, etc. There is also an optional video for classroom teaching. This packet takes strategy used by Southern Baptist and applies it for non-Southern Baptist Churches.

Towns, Elmer, *Towns Sunday School Encyclopedia*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1993. See the article on Sunday School enrollment.

Chapter Five

Towns, Elmer, *Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches*, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1990. See chapter on Second Baptist Church.

Towns, Elmer, *Towns Sunday School Encyclopedia*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1993. See chapter on young adult, singles, and adult classes.

Chapter Six

Barnett, Tommy, *The Successful Bus Director's Book*, Phoenix First Assembly, 13613 North Cave Creek, Phoenix, Arizona 85022-5137, 1-602-867-7117 - This book provides step-by-step guidelines on the responsibilities of being a bus director.

Beebe Publications, P.O. Box 659, Stockbridge, Georgia 30281, 1-800-828-4595. This organization has books on the principles and practical methods of making a bus ministry work. It also has a full range of resources to support a bus ministry.

Chapter Seven

Towns, Elmer, *How to Go To Two Services*, Church Growth Institute, P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502. This resource packet has a video that can be shown to the board and other organizations in the church with a view of getting their approval and support to add an additional worship service or additional Sunday School hour. While not aimed at beginning an evening Sunday School, this resource will help the pastor make plans to add any additional services or altar any existing service.

Chapter Eight

Maxwell, John, "Injoy Club", *Be All You Can Be*, 1530 Jamacha Road, Suite D, El Cajon, California 92019-3757. John Maxwell offers a monthly leadership cassette tape of his teaching his church staff the principles of leadership. It contains a worksheet for the listener to evaluate and improve his/her leadership skills.

Maxwell, John, *Winning Attitude*, Injoy Publishing Co., El Cajon, CA

Towns, Elmer, *Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches*, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1990. Chapter one features the principles Dr. Maxwell follows in making innovative changes in his church. This is an excellent role model to examine when studying how to change things at a church.

Chapter Nine

Dean, Rodney and McIntosh, Gary, *How to Start or Evaluate a Children's Ministry*, Church Growth Institute, P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502. This interactive manual is designed to help the pastor of any size church set up a small group ministry or evaluate the one already in existence.

Larson, Knute, *Growing Adults on Sunday Morning*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1991. The pastor of The Chapel on University Hill describes the Adult Bible Fellowships that are used in this church.

Wagner, C. Peter, *Your Church Can Be Healthy*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee 1983 Illinois, 1993. See article on children's class, how to teach children.

Chapter Ten

Barna, George, *The Power of Vision*, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1992. This is the best book ever written on the power leaders get from their vision.

Maxwell, John, *Six Keys to Church Growth*, Charles E. Fuller Evangelistic Assoc., P.O. Box 91990, Pasadena, California, 1990. In this resource packet, Maxwell teaches the essentials of prayer, leadership, evangelism, discipleship, lay ministry and goals in building a church.

Towns, Elmer, *Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches*, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1990. This is a study of leadership in ten churches.

Towns, Elmer, *America's Fastest Growing Churches*, Impact Books, Nashville, Tennessee, 1972. A study of ten fast-growing churches in the early 70's, each primarily using bus ministry for growth. However, chapter twelve is a study of charismatic leadership (not related to signs and wonders, but to the power of personality in leadership). This chapter examines over 20 doctrinal dissertations in determining the make-up of powerful effective leadership.

Towns, Elmer, *The Eight Laws of Leadership*, Church Growth Institute, P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502, 1993. This is a textbook on leadership for the resource packet Team Leadership. This resource packet for pastors is to teach leadership to lay people. It contains video lessons, textbook, worksheets, etc.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

COMPARISON OF STATISTICS

The statistics in the following 12 charts were supplied by the ten Sunday Schools reviewed in this book and were compiled for study and analysis. They are presented for the serious student who wishes to do research in these churches to discover some of the causes and results of innovative trends and programs.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	5746	6401	7092	7528
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	54	85
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA		615	1808	3245
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	2111	2689	3157	3367
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX	5128	9138	16,649	19,274
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	439	554	721	857
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	1462	1829	2485	N/A
The Chapel Akron, OH	6000	6400	6700	7000
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	313	476	568	599

AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	1168	1150	1267	1368
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	40	64
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA	146	219	3823	5025
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	850	902	1060	1280
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX	1583	4425	8476	9444
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	370	440	674	897
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	1133	2044	3128	N/A
The Chapel Akron, OH		3300	3802	4501
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	543	595	669	774

AVERAGE SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	1550	1820	2819	3919
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	18	27
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA		585	4260	4919
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	1406	1315	1126	1180
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX	1066	2882	5583	9412
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	360	376	514	569
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	1355	1618	2597	N/A
The Chapel Akron, OH			2988	3234
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	517	611	735	801

AVERAGE CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	242	209	208	234
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	18	27
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA		250	1901	2866
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC			276	300
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX	224	537	1020	1817
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	95	87	171	236
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	498	540	861	
The Chapel Akron, OH			1250	1390
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	212	259	428	493

AVERAGE YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	180	209	167	156
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	0	5
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA		90	201	350
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC			259	280
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX	837	2076	3658	7225
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	60	65	56	91
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	267	214	261	
The Chapel Akron, OH			462	419
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	68	79	91	100

AVERAGE ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	820	876	1001	1009
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	0	0
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA		245	2152	1703
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	375	400	443	450
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX	100	272	449	738
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	205	224	287	242
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	587	862	1396	
The Chapel Akron, OH	400	500	1276	1425
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	237	237	216	208

TOTAL INCOME

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	$1,546,293	$2,638,551	$3,728,308	$4,310,530
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	$39,940	$87,791
Saddleback Valley Mission Viejo, CA		$ 47,000	$ 555,000	$ 2,932,000
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	$ 654,721	$ 961,847	$ 1,219,574	$ 1,429,214
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX		$14,000,000	$17,500,000	$21,600,000
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	$ 206,817	$ 377,778	$ 776,566	$ 1,002,068
Skyline Wesleyan Lemon Grove, CA	$ 762,315	$ 1,644,177	$ 3,871,456	$ 4,026,344
The Chapel Akron, OH				
Highlands Community Renton, WA	$ 753,501	$ 811,793	$ 1,285,322	$ 1,285,945

NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	128	89	180	136
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	2	10
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA				
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	341	172	120	114
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX		501	1024	974
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	114	190	210	222
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	519	358	760	
The Chapel Akron, OH				
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA			376	118

NUMBER OF BAPTISMS

CHURCH	1980	1985	1990	1992
First Baptist Church Arlington, TX	128	89	180	136
La Costa Church Carlsbad, CA	0	0	0	12
Saddleback Valley Community Church Mission Viejo, CA		127	295	508
Florence Baptist Temple Florence, SC	161	91	115	84
Second Baptist Church Houston, TX		439	1008	887
First Assembly of God Phoenix, AZ				
Church of the Nazarene Grove City, OH	10	12	13	21
Skyline Wesleyan Church Lemon Grove, CA	183	105	112	119
The Chapel Akron, OH				
Highlands Community Church Renton, WA	38	39	36	30