

# **The Big Four: Secrets to a Thriving Church Family**

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Study and Implementation Guide

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All quotes and page references are from The Big Four 4

**Chapter 1**    What Does the Bible Say About Church Growth?

1. Describe the thriving early church. Acts 2:42-47 (p.19)

2. Identify three types of church growth.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (p 20 )

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (p 21 )

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (p 21 )

3. What are the seven signs of a healthy church today?  
(p 22)

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

(6) \_\_\_\_\_

(7) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Evangelism is both \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel so that a  
person \_\_\_\_\_ it and persuading that individual  
to respond to it. (p. 23)

**Personal Implementation:**

The key concept for me in this chapter is:

## **Congregational Implementation**

What are the most important characteristics for our congregation to address now?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **QUOTE**

If you want your church to become an expanding one, go back to the basics:

learn how to pray and worship,

learn to read the Bible and live by the ideal of Jesus,

then learn to love one another and the lost.

Build a culture that says that lost people matter to God.

When you do that, you and your fellow members will have evangelistic visions that see opportunity to share Jesus everywhere you go and under all circumstances and situations. (p. 26).

## **Chapter 2**    The Most Important Ingredient in Church Growth: Faith-based Optimism

1. The most important ingredient in church growth is to have a winning

\_\_\_\_\_ based on \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_ in God. (p. 31)

2. What attitudes may hinder our congregation from growing?

### **Personal Implementation:**

The key concept for me in this chapter is:

### **Congregational Implementation**

What can our congregation do to develop a “faith based optimism?”

### **QUOTE:**

We cannot alter our past or the fact that people will act in a certain way. Nor can we change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is choose our attitude. (p. 35).

**Chapter 3** Redefining the Biblical Role of the Spiritual Leader: Looking to Jesus

1. What do you see as the role of your pastor?
  
2. What does your congregation see as the role of your pastor?
  
3. Identify the five significant things of Jesus Ministry

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 41)
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 43)
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 46)
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 48)
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 51)

**Personal Implementation:**

The key concept for me in this chapter is:

**Congregational Implementation**

Significant things our congregation can do:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**QUOTE:**

Authentic leadership in the church is about servant leadership. Jesus came to serve, not to be served – to offer His life as a sacrifice. He is calling us to do the same. (p. 53)

**Chapter 4** Be a Leader Maker: Equipping and Motivating the Laity to Do Great Things for God

1. Church growth is not about what the \_\_\_\_\_ it's about what the \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 54)

2. When it comes to equipping and training, no one who does ministry should ever \_\_\_\_\_ . (p. 56)

3. Every church grows in proportion to the \_\_\_\_\_ they have.

The more it has, the more likely it is to \_\_\_\_\_. But all ministries depend on a leader that God has inspired. Every minister and leader in the church should pray and seek to \_\_\_\_\_ .

The \_\_\_\_\_ will never grow unless the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ increases. (p. 59)

(Elmer L. Towns and Warren Bird, *Into the Future: Turning Today's Church Trends Into Tomorrow's Opportunities*, Grand Rapids: F. H. Revell, 2000, p. 173).

4. There are leaders who develop \_\_\_\_\_ and leaders who develop \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 59).

John Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson 1998), p. 210

5. How can we motivate people to become involved (p. 62).

6. What is the best way to train anyone to do anything? (64).

**Personal Implementation:**

The key concept for me in this chapter is:

**Congregational Implementation**

What are the core ministries needed for our congregation this year?

What can our congregation do to involve more people in ministry?

**Quote**

God must birth in the heart of a leader a particular kind of ministry or leadership to perform. When God puts it in the heart, He also gives the passion, desire, and skill to do it, and He provides the resources along the way. (p. 60)

**Chapter 5** The Jesus Centered Life

1. What would a dream church look like to you?

2. Identify the Early church characteristic listed in Acts 2, then rate our church by circling a number from 1 to 4 (weak to the strong)

• \_\_\_\_\_ church (p.76)

○ Our congregation 1      2      3      4

• \_\_\_\_\_ church (p.76)

○ Our congregation 1      2      3      4

• \_\_\_\_\_ church (p.77)

○ Our congregation 1      2      3      4

• \_\_\_\_\_ church (p.77)

○ Our congregation 1      2      3      4

• \_\_\_\_\_ church (p.78)

○ Our congregation 1      2      3      4

**Personal Implementation:**

The key concept for me in this chapter is:

## **Congregational Implementation**

What can our congregation do to involve more people in ministry?

Reflect on the strongest characteristics of the early church that are reflected in our church?

Reflect on the weakest characteristics of the early church that are reflected in our church?

How can we utilize our strongest characteristics to build our church?

What do we need to do to address the weakest characteristics in our church?

## **Quote**

Spirituality is about the whole of life and the entire person. The picture of the church that we have in the book of Acts speaks to a holistic spirituality addressing the totality of the experience of the believer. (p. 81).

## Chapter 6 Passion For God's presence

1. 'Not by \_\_\_\_\_ nor by \_\_\_\_\_  
but by my \_\_\_\_\_, says the Lord Almighty (Zech. 4:6).  
The word "might" means every conceivable human ingenuity. (p. 83).
2. We don't need more \_\_\_\_\_  
we need more\_\_\_\_\_.  
We don't need more \_\_\_\_\_  
we need more \_\_\_\_\_.  
And we don't need more \_\_\_\_\_  
we need more \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 83).

### Personal Implementation:

What could God do with you, in you, through you if you transformed your life into one of prayer?  
(p. 91).

### Congregational Implementation

What can our congregation do to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our church?

### Quote

God is calling us to be with Him. Only then can He send us out to preach, teach, love, and change the world. (p. 90)

## **Chapter 7** Building a House of Prayer

Steps to building a house prayer. How would we implement each step in our congregation?

1. Establish a praying leadership. (p. 96).
2. Instill the vision. (p. 97).
3. Teach the people how to pray. (p. 98).
4. Keep it going. (p. 98).
5. Provide many opportunities for prayer. (p. 99).
6. Emphasize intercessory prayer for the unsaved. (p. 102).
7. Emphasize victory through prayer. (p. 102).

### **Personal Implementation:**

What do I need do to become a person of prayer.

### **Quote**

Here is a simple formula that may help with some of our struggles about seemingly unanswered prayer.

When the request is wrong, God says, "**No.**"

When the timing is wrong, God says, "**Slow.**"

When you are wrong, God says, "**Grow.**"

When everything's right, God says, "**Let's go!**" (p. 98).

## Chapter 8 The Missing Ingredient in Most Churches

1. In our interviews of members of thriving churches we noticed that healthy, growing congregations have a special ingredient that plateauing and declining congregations do not.

That ingredient is \_\_\_\_\_

and most churches don't have enough of it. In this chapter I am using the words "enthusiasm" and "excitement" as synonymous. Enthusiasm is simply faith in action. (p. 105).

2. Seven Factors of an Enthusiastic Church Culture. How does your congregation rate in each area

- The experience of the gospel. (p. 106).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4
- Buying into a cause. (p. 106).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4
- Love and acceptance. (p. 106).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4
- A warm and joyous climate. (p. 106).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4
- God-exalting worship. (p. 107).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4
- Meaningful and relevant ministries. (p. 107).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4
- A sense of excellence. (p. 107).
  - Our congregation 1      2      3      4

### Personal Implementation:

The key concept for me in this chapter is:

## Congregational Implementation

What can we do to create an enthusiastic church culture?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Quote

In studying the differences between growing churches and declining ones, we concluded that the members of the latter tend to be neutral or even ashamed of their church. In contrast, the members of the thriving congregations are proud of where they worship and fellowship, approve of their pastor, and are eager for Sabbath school and worship services. Ultimately, they are proud of God, the one who is doing something extraordinary right in their midst. (p. 112).

**Chapter 9** The Most Effective Evangelist in the World.

1. In the research what were the composite scores for those who identified factors that influenced them to join the church. Write in the percentages. (p. 115).

\_\_\_\_\_ Brought up in an Adventist home

\_\_\_\_\_ A friend or relative

\_\_\_\_\_ Read books, journals, other material

\_\_\_\_\_ Public evangelism meetings

\_\_\_\_\_ Bible studies in the home

\_\_\_\_\_ Visits by a pastor

\_\_\_\_\_ Television or radio programs

\_\_\_\_\_ Bible correspondence course

\_\_\_\_\_ Material on the Internet

\_\_\_\_\_ Others (Christian Education and  
Teachers)

2. It is obvious from both the formal research and the informal data collected in such groups that the most effective evangelist in the world is the one who takes

\_\_\_\_\_ in us and shares Jesus a

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ way. (p. 116-117).

3. Here is an easy and practical 10-step strategy to help you win others to Christ

(p. 117).

a. Intentionally build relationships with \_\_\_\_\_ people every year (p. 117).

b. \_\_\_\_\_ for them every day (p. 117)

c. \_\_\_\_\_ to their needs . (p. 117)

d. Share your \_\_\_\_\_ with them (p. 117).

e. At the right time, offer your \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (p. 118).

f. \_\_\_\_\_ them to Jesus (p. 118).

g. At the appropriate time, \_\_\_\_\_ them to church, a concert,  
a special program such as Easter or Christmas, an evangelistic meeting, a small group  
(p. 119).

h. \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible with them (p. 119).

i. \_\_\_\_\_ the new believer (p. 119).

j. Teach them to \_\_\_\_\_  
(p. 120).

### **Personal Implementation:**

What do I need to do now to share my faith with a friend?

### **Congregational Implementation**

How can we create a friendly culture in our congregation to meet guests when they visit any of our church activities?

### **Quote**

The absolutely most effective way of reaching people for the gospel is through personal influence.  
(p. 117).

**Chapter 10** Chain Reaction: Oikos Evangelism

**Definition:** The New Testament uses the Greek word oikos to illustrate this point. Oikos is literally translated as “household,” and the Bible uses it to mean the influence of this natural set of relationships.\* (p. 122).

1. What Biblical examples do we have of those who brought their friends to Jesus? (p. 124)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Oikos—sharing faith through relationships—has such an impact because it is

\_\_\_\_\_ (p. 125).

3. Oikos operates from two premises. First, when we experience Jesus and His joy,

we will be \_\_\_\_\_ to share Him. Second, when our loved

ones see the change in us, they will \_\_\_\_\_ about it and be much more

inclined to want it themselves. (p. 125).

**Personal Implementation:**

Identify three friends that you can begin connecting with?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

What common ground do you have with each person?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

How can you begin a spiritual conversation with each?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Congregational Implementation**

How can we create an environment that encourages our members to connect with their friends?

### **QUOTE**

Oikos is the most efficient evangelistic approach, low in cost and high in return, often winning entire families and constantly enlarging our source of new gospel contacts. The entire process takes place in an unhurried manner and in an environment of love and acceptance, building on relationships that we already have. Your family and friends already like you and trust you, qualifications that a “professional” evangelist doesn’t have. God has given you a mission field among the people that you already know. (p. 125).

**Chapter 11** Dying for Change: The Challenges We Face Today

1. Reflecting on the challenges in the church. How does your congregation rate in each area. Circle the appropriate number.

a. Lack of consistent spiritual life. (p. 127)

Our congregation      1      2      3      4

b. Evangelism is not a core value for most of our members. (p. 129)

Our congregation      1      2      3      4

c. We are not doing well in attracting young people to the church. (p. 129)

Our congregation      1      2      3      4

d. We are not attracting or keeping new converts. (p. 130)

Our congregation      1      2      3      4

2. The Need for Change

a. We either \_\_\_\_\_ doing what we're doing and become \_\_\_\_\_, or with the courage of the Lord we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ into a venture that will \_\_\_\_\_ us and the world we live in. (p. 130)

b. We need to move from programs to \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 130)

c. Move \_\_\_\_\_ doing church to spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 131)

d. We need to move from programs to \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 132)

e. We need to move from an event orientation to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (p. 133)

f. Move from stagnation to \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 134)

g. Move from paralysis to \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 135).

**Personal Implementation:**

What change do I need to make that will transform my life and those I influence?

**Congregational Implementation**

Which of the needs listed above should our congregation begin to change now?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**QUOTE**

The study shows that healthy and effective churches combine at least nine pathways<sup>1</sup> and entryways<sup>2</sup> a year to reach the community . . . It is not only the events used for evangelism that count—it is how they are conducted. (p. 134)

**Chapter 12** The Worship Experience Your Heart Longs For (p. 139)

1. What makes a worship service a good one? (p. 139)
  
2. What do people expect from the worship service? (p. 139)
  
3. What kind of experience should people have when they leave our worship service? (p. 139)
  
4. What are The Essential Qualities of a God-exalting Worship Service?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 140)
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 141)
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 142)
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 143)
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 144)
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 145)
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 146)

**Personal Implementation:**

What you do look for in a meaningful worship service?

## **Congregational Implementation**

How can we develop a worship service that will meet the needs of the worshipper?

(p. 146, 157)

## **QUOTE**

We discovered that all of the expanding Adventist churches emphasized the worship experience and invested time, creativity, and variety into it. No one style of worship stood out above all the rest—rather it was the quality of the worship experience that mattered. (p. 139)

Every worship experience, whether personal and corporate, should inspire us to experience God in a fresh and meaningful way. It should lead us to the throne of grace, at which we receive hope and new life and will be inspired to do ministry and service. (p. 140)

**Chapter 13** The First 10 Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a lot. (p. 150)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Spirituality. (p. 150)
3. Embrace \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (p. 151)
4. Cast the vision of the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (p. 151)
5. Build up \_\_\_\_\_ with  
\_\_\_\_\_ (p. 152)
6. Be a leader \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 152)
7. Start \_\_\_\_\_ things. (p. 152)
8. Improve your \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 152)
9. Simplify the \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 153)
10. Utilize \_\_\_\_\_ thinking. (p. 153)

**Personal Implementation:**

What can I do to improve the health of our congregation?

**Congregational Implementation**

What should be the first steps for our congregation?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## QUOTE

The greatest need of the church today is

**not** a new program, but a new passion;

**not** to live in the past,

but to engage in the present and visioning for the future;

to **rely not** on human effort, but on divine power.

The missional calling of the church today will be fulfilled not by the use of worldly methods and ideas, but only through a connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, who said that without Him we can do nothing, but with Him we can do all things (John 15:1-5). So as we journey into the future, let us go with Him. The best days of the church are still ahead of us. (pp. 154-155)