



## OREGON CHURCH PLANTING NEWSLETTER

September 2008 Issue

**“When a New Church comes to town... Lives Change.”**

### **Two Things that Keep Churches From Growing**

The core of an attractive Sunday worship service will include quality worship where people sense God's presence; good preaching; a safe, enjoyable children's ministry; and prayer. In addition to these things, church coaches frequently mention two things that keep a church from growing.

**The Seating Barrier. It is consistently observed that attendance will plateau when 70% of the seats are full.** Nelson Searcy, senior pastor to “The Journey” church in Manhattan says "As church leaders, we love full rooms, so we say, 'Pack 'em in, there's still a few seats!' But the truth is that when a room reaches 70 percent of its seating capacity, it's full. Period."

How can one keep expanding the seating capacity so that this barrier never occurs? Various remedies are (1) keep adding seats, (2) do double services, (3) expand the building, (4) move to another location or (5) make more space by sending out 25 to 50 people to launch a new church.

If your average attendance has been on a plateau the last 3 years was it because you were bumping up against the 70% seating barrier?

**The Hospitality Barrier. It is consistently observed that first-time guests do not return if they are not warmly welcomed or if they are embarrassed in some way.**

How can one develop a church culture of welcoming guests? Guests want to be

welcomed, but not pressured. Many visitors will make their mind up about the church during the pre-service, before the worship or preaching occurs.

### **Hospitality Ideas**

Everyone needs a warm welcome. Greet both newcomers and regulars.

So that you are free to greet people, avoid using pre or post service times to do church business you could do over the phone during the week.

Be glad about this time to gather and worship. When people meet you for the first time, how do you think they perceive your personality, disposition or attitude?

In the pre-service time, greet everyone that comes within 8 feet of you.

How do you welcome the visitor who sits behind you, or in front of you?

Most churches have an unofficial dress code that visitors don't know. When a visitor appears to break the dress code, how does your church react?

A clean and well-cared for facility extends a warm welcome.

Quality coffee/beverages and fresh snacks in the reception area before or after the service.

If the person mentions a situation or problem in his life, offer to pray right then him.

Recruit and train a Greeting Team. It's more than a handshake. It involves smiling, fresh breath, eye contact, offering a bulletin, and asking a question.

Greet people you do not recognize with “Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_\_, I don’t think I’ve met you yet.” Avoid “Is this your first time?”

If they are new, offer to show them where the restrooms are and offer information about childcare if necessary.

Help newcomers connect. Introduce them to another regular attender.

Include a general welcome to visitors from the pulpit, but do not have them stand or embarrass them.

If there is very little visiting prior to the service, encourage the church to say hello at the appropriate moment. Instruct them to “Get up, turn and greet someone that you’ve not met yet. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, and take a few moments to welcome them.”

Include in the opening prayer, that God would meet with and bless each newcomer.

Have an information booth and/or information pamphlet rack.

Give out a welcome packet that includes a gift for each first-time guest. Some churches give a nice pen, a Vineyard music CD, a Starbucks gift card, a Blockbuster gift card, or a book.

Use visitor cards to collect their contact information so that you can follow up. Some churches give a coupon that can be exchanged for a free gift when their visitor card information is turned in.

Say a warm goodbye after the service. Ask them if they have any questions. Offer to introduce them to the pastor.

#### The Above Information Gathered From

[www.evangelismcoach.org](http://www.evangelismcoach.org)  
[www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com)  
[www.ministrymarketingcoach.com](http://www.ministrymarketingcoach.com)  
[www.churchmarketingsucks.com](http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com)  
[www.churchleadershipinsights.com](http://www.churchleadershipinsights.com)

### Helpful Books in Assimilation of Guests



Fusion: Turning First-Time Guests into Fully-Engaged Members of Your Church by Nelson Searcy

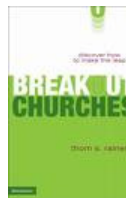


Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church by Gary McIntosh



Sticky Church (Leadership Network Innovation Series) by Larry Osborne

### Helpful Books for Plateaued Churches



Breakout Churches: Discover how to make the leap by Thom Rainer



Comeback Churches: How 300 churches turned around and yours can too. by Ed Stetzer



Leading Turnaround Churches by Gene Wood

### CORRECTION OF LAST MONTH'S DATA

Last's month's Newsletter stated that half the Vineyard churches in the USA are 99 people or less. — The correct figure is 38% of Vineyards are 99 people or less, and 50% of USA Vineyards are 142 or less. This median size has been about the same for 16 years.

Articles @ <http://www.providencevcf.org>

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