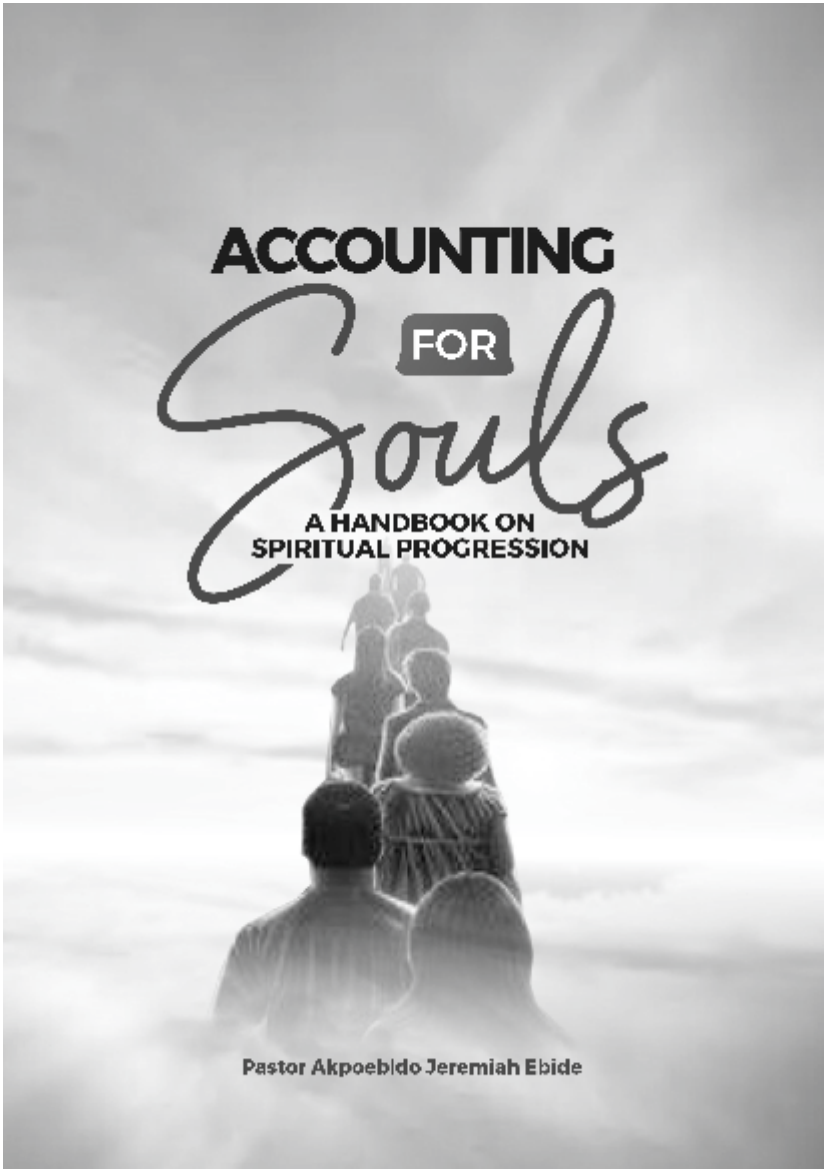


ACCOUNTING FOR *Souls*

A HANDBOOK ON
SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION



Pastor Akpobido Jeremiah Ebide



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FOR
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ACCOUNTING FOR SOULS: A HAND BOOK FOR SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION

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PASTOR AKPOEBIDO JEREMIAH EBIDE

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FOREWORD

In an age where church growth is often reduced to numerical statistics and physical expansion, it is refreshing—and urgent—to return to God's original intent: the faithful **accounting for souls**. The divine mandate is not simply to gather multitudes but to make disciples—souls who are spiritually transformed, firmly rooted, and equipped to reproduce other faithful followers (Matthew 28:19–20; 2 Timothy 2:2).

This book, *ACCOUNTING FOR SOULS*: A handbook on Spiritual Progression is a compelling response to that mandate. It calls the Church to embrace a **systematic, Spirit-led process** of growth—from the first-time visitor to the matured believer—through intentional follow-up, discipleship, baptism, membership integration, and spiritual mentorship.

The principles outlined in this book are not mere theories; they are drawn from years of deep spiritual burden, pastoral experience, and apostolic insight. It offers both **biblical foundations** and **practical frameworks**—including spiritual registers, appraisal systems, and ministry roles—for churches seeking to grow God's way. It speaks to pastors, church workers, and spiritual leaders who yearn not just for crowds, but for enduring fruit that glorifies God.

This work is born out of the investment of faithful men and women who poured into the author's life. I humbly honor

my late father, Chief **Jeremiah Derebido Egbide**, my first teacher and friend, who inculcated in me the virtues of truth and love, **Late Apostle Geoffrey Dabibi Numbere**, Founding International Director of Greater Evangelism World Crusade, through whom God saved me from perishing and the International Director, Pastor Isaac Valentine Olori, **Evangelist Monday Geregere**, who baptized me and marked a turning point in my spiritual journey, my pastor, **Samson Ayoro**, of blessed memory, who followed me up relentlessly, or as we say in Nigeria, “*bumper to bumper.*”, my beloved wife, **Elder Mrs. Pamela Egbide**, for her prayers and support. Eddie, Pst. Ebitimi Torugbene, Otiks, Ben and Pastor Nelson Casmir, for their proof reading.

Their combined influence has helped shape the convictions that gave birth to this book.

It is my prayer that *Accounting for Souls* will serve as a roadmap for churches, ministries, and leaders who desire sustainable, heaven-focused growth. May it rekindle a hunger in the Church to track not only attendance but **transformation**—to labour, not for numbers alone, but for **eternal impact**.

To God alone be the glory.

INTRODUCTION

1. What It Means to “Account for Souls”

To account for souls means to recognize the sacred responsibility of shepherding, nurturing, and guiding the spiritual lives entrusted to the church. It reflects the biblical truth that every soul is precious to God and that spiritual leaders will one day give an account for how they cared for these souls. Hebrews 13:17 says, *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account..."* This mandate is not optional—it is a divine trust. The local church is not merely an organization; it is a living organism tasked with spiritual oversight, accountability, and discipleship.

In Ezekiel 3:17-18, God declares the weight of responsibility upon the watchman to warn the wicked. Likewise, church leaders today must take their role seriously, understanding that the eternal destinies of men and women are often influenced by the faithfulness of those who lead them. Accounting for souls demands spiritual discernment, consistent prayer, sound teaching, and a heart committed to see lives transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

2. The Divine Pattern for Church Growth:

Spiritual → Physical → Numerical

God's model for church growth begins with the spiritual. Any attempt to grow the church through human methods alone will be short-lived and superficial. In Acts 2:42-47,

we see the early church first devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer—this was the spiritual foundation. As they grew spiritually, there was a physical expression of unity, generosity, and shared purpose. Only then did numerical growth follow, as *“the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”* (Acts 2:47).

This divine order is crucial. Many churches today seek numbers without nurturing the soul. Programs, events, and marketing may gather crowds, but only the Spirit brings true conversions. Spiritual transformation must precede physical organization, and both must precede numerical increase. Jesus' ministry model emphasized making disciples, not merely gathering followers (Matthew 28:19-20).

3. The Need for Intentionality, Structure, and Biblical Fidelity

Church growth is not automatic. It requires intentionality—deliberate action rooted in God's Word. Paul charged Timothy to *“preach the word... in season and out of season”* and to *“do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry”* (2 Timothy 4:2,5). This is the call to be intentional about soul-winning, disciple-making, and leadership development.

Structure is also vital. The early church appointed deacons to meet needs and elders to oversee spiritual health (Acts 6:1-7; Titus 1:5). A structured church is not an unspiritual

church; rather, it reflects divine order and stewardship. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), and He blesses order and accountability.

Finally, biblical fidelity—the uncompromising adherence to Scripture—is non-negotiable. The Word of God must remain central. Churches that drift from the Bible inevitably drift from God's purpose. Jesus prayed, “*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*” (John 17:17). The Scriptures are sufficient to equip the man of God for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

A Call to Wake Up

The modern church must awaken to the Lord's model for growth—not merely in size, but in depth. We must return to spiritual roots, rebuild godly structures, and recommit to biblical truth. True church growth is not about popularity or programs; it is about the faithful accounting for souls and aligning with God's blueprint for transformation. As Jesus warned the church in Sardis,

“Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die...” (Revelation 3:2, NIV).

Now is the time to rise and follow the Lord's pattern.

Fellow Laborer-In-The Vineyard of the Lord, please reflect on the admonition of the Holy Spirit:

RETURN TO THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL: Luke
24:45–47

Beloved in Christ,

I bring you a solemn admonition. The time we live in calls for urgent reflection and repentance. The Church must return to the foundation of its calling—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not a gospel of convenience, spectacle, or worldly gain, but the unchanging truth of God's redemptive plan for mankind. This is a call to every Bishop, Apostle, Overseer, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher, and believer. Let us listen attentively to what the Spirit is saying to the Church in these last days.

1. THE GOSPEL IS ABOUT SALVATION, NOT SPECTACLE

Luke 10:19–20; Revelation 20:12

Jesus said,

“I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions...”

But then He added something more important:

“Do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

That is the heart of the Gospel: salvation—the registration of redeemed souls in the Book of Life. That is why this book is called ACCOUNTING FOR SOULS.

Today, we witness a dangerous shift in focus. Many church leaders rejoice more in miracles and signs than in genuine conversions. Congregations gather, craving entertainment, sensation, and spectacle. But miracles are signs, not the destination. Too many of us are stuck in the valley of signs and wonders. Let us advance to the higher ground where there is true joy. The joy of the Gospel is the salvation of souls.

Let us realign. Let us rejoice in what heaven rejoices over—the repentance of sinners (Luke 15:10).

2. THE GOSPEL FREES FROM SIN. IT IS NOT ABOUT ENTERTAINING THE FLESH John 8:32–34; Titus 2:11–12; Romans 6:1–2

The Gospel is truth that liberates from the dominion of sin. Jesus declared, "Whoever commits sin is a slave to sin." Grace has appeared, not just to forgive, but to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

But what do we see today? Churches turned into platforms of entertainment and self-help psychology. Sermons that avoid rebuke, and pastors who fear offense. This is not the Gospel.

The Church is not a circus. It is not a motivational center. It is a house of transformation. The Cross is not a stage—it is an altar of death to the flesh. Let us return to truth.

3. THE CHURCH IS A LAUNDRY, NOT A LOUNGE

Ephesians 5:25–27

Christ gave Himself for the Church to sanctify and cleanse her by the washing of the Word. The Church is meant to be a spiritual laundry—cleansing souls for heaven.

Today, many churches have become lounges. Music has replaced meditation. Motivational talks have replaced repentance. Prosperity teachings have replaced purity preaching. But Jesus is not coming for an entertained bride—He is coming for a spotless one. Let us cleanse the house. Let the Church return to her sanctifying work.

4. REPENTANCE IS THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

Luke 24:45–47; Acts 26:16–18; Hebrews 10:26–29

When Jesus opened the understanding of His disciples, He emphasized this: *“That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.”* Paul was commissioned to *“open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.”*

Yet, repentance is absent in many pulpits today. Sin is excused. Grace is abused. But let us not forget the warning of Hebrews:

“If we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin.”

Repentance is not optional. It is the epicenter of the Gospel.

5. A BATTLE MUST BE FOUGHT: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

Galatians 5:16–24; Ephesians 4:11–16

The Christian life is a battleground. It is a war between flesh and spirit. Every believer who desires to be clothed in white raiment must first crucify the flesh.

That is why the Church must function as a fuller's workshop—cleansing, refining, purging. The fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11–16) exists not to excite but to perfect the saints. Our goal is the maturity of every believer into the image of Christ.

Dear Bishops, Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers—this is your holy duty. Let your calling be defined by truth, not trend. Labor to bring the Church to unity, maturity, and purity.

6. THE MINISTRY MANDATE: EQUIP, MATURE, PRESERVE

Ephesians 4:11–16

We are not called to build platforms but to build people. Not to impress the world but to prepare the Bride. The Church is not a show. It is a school of righteousness, a field of service, and a battleground for souls. Let us equip the saints. Let us raise the standard. Let us build according to the pattern of Christ—not culture. Let our churches become altars again. Let pulpits become places of consecration.

a. Let these truths govern your life, your ministry, and your message.

b. To the believers: Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

c. To the leaders: Be faithful stewards. Lead with eternity in view.

To all: We shall give account (Hebrews 9:27). Let us return to the old paths. Let us embrace the Gospel that saves, sanctifies, and prepares.

I beseech you by the mercies of God, please return to your first love. Repent and be restored.

To the leaders: Teach truth, not trends. Preach Christ, not comfort.

To the lost: Turn to

Jesus. Repent and believe. Grace is still available, but the door is closing SOON!

He that has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Church.

Amen.

Chapter One:

UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION



Theme: FOUNDATIONS FOR CHURCH GROWTH

1. The Foundation of the Church's Mission: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15

The Great Commission is not just a command—it is the heartbeat of the Church and the foundation of its existence. In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus said:

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (KJV)

In Mark 16:15, Jesus adds:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

These words constitute a divine and final instruction from our risen Lord. It is not a request, but a royal command given by the One who possesses all authority in heaven and on earth. It is universal, not limited by geography, language, race, or culture.

However, many in today's church have misunderstood or reduced this command to a mere call to event-based evangelism or emotional altar calls. The depth and discipleship focus of the Great Commission is often neglected. Churches sometimes measure success by attendance or programs, rather than by the spiritual transformation and multiplication of disciples.

2. Not Just Converts, But Disciples and Disciple-Makers

Jesus did not say,

“Go and make converts.” He said, ***“Go and make disciples.”***

A disciple is made. It implies that there must be a process and a procedure. A convert acknowledges faith, but a disciple learns, follows, grows, and reproduces. The command includes baptizing and ***“teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”***

The modern church often stops at conversion. Souls are counted at the altar, but not accounted for in spiritual development. Many new believers are left unequipped, unmentored, and uninvolved in the mission of Christ. This leads to spiritual immaturity, stagnation, and vulnerability to deception.

Paul gives a vital strategy in 2 Timothy 2:2:

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

This four-generational vision—Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others—shows the power of reproducing discipleship. It is not only about depth but about multiplication. Jesus spent most of His earthly ministry investing in twelve men who would multiply His message throughout the world.

The early Church followed this pattern. They were committed not only to the message of salvation but to the method of discipleship. Church growth, then, is not just about gathering crowds, but growing individuals into Christ-likeness who then reproduce that life in others. It is like a factory line that receives raw materials and processes them into finished goods.

3. Evangelism + Discipleship = Biblical Church Growth

Church growth is not merely a numerical concept—it is a biblical mandate rooted in both evangelism and

discipleship. Evangelism without discipleship leads to shallow faith. Discipleship without evangelism leads to a church turned inward. The two must operate together.

Acts 2:41-42, 47 illustrates this:

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

The growth of the early Church was both deep and wide. It was rooted in devotion to the Word, prayer, fellowship, and sacrificial living. This model shows that healthy spiritual growth naturally leads to healthy numerical growth.

Paul reinforced this pattern in Acts 20:20:

“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.”

The modern Church errs when it replaces this biblical balance with marketing techniques, entertainment-driven services, or seeker-sensitive strategies that minimize repentance and spiritual commitment. We must return to God's blueprint, where discipleship is central.

4. Where the Modern Church Has Missed the Mark

The modern church, in many places, has substituted programs for power, crowds for conversions, and entertainment for edification. While innovation and excellence have their place, they must never replace the priority of disciple-making. Many churches celebrate decisions, but fail to walk with people through the lifelong journey of becoming like Christ.

There is also a growing trend toward building personalities instead of people. Ministries of our era revolve around individuals rather than Christ and His mission. In contrast, Jesus taught self-denial, servant-hood, and cross-bearing (Luke 9:23).

Additionally, some churches have embraced a “fast food” gospel—quick, convenient, and consumer-centered. But the way of Christ is the narrow path (Matthew 7:13-14), requiring sacrifice, transformation, and a renewed mind (Romans 12:1-2).

5. Returning To The Pattern of Christ

Understanding the Great Commission is the foundation for any meaningful church growth. The Church must wake up to the reality that souls are not merely to be counted but carefully accounted for. We can see this when Jesus was praying for souls in John 17. He gave account.

In John 17:11-12, Jesus said,

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled”.

Earlier in verse 6-8, He gave account of the quality of disciples He produced. He said,

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

Jesus Christ was giving account of spiritually transformed followers. Spiritual transformation—not just numerical expansion—must be the goal.

Jesus said in John 15:8:

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Let us return to Christ's model: evangelizing the lost, discipling the saved, and equipping every believer to become a disciple-maker. This is the divine pattern for lasting and multiplying growth. The Church must recover its mission, realign its methods, and reignite its passion for souls—according to God's blueprint.

Chapter Two

GOD'S PATTERN FOR CHURCH GROWTH



1. God Gives the Increase—1 Corinthians 3:6–9

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”

—1 Corinthians 3:6–7 (NKJV)

The Apostle Paul delivers a powerful truth in this passage. While human effort—planting and watering—is essential, the increase, the real growth, comes solely from God. This insight shapes the foundational understanding of church growth: **God is the source, not strategy alone.**

Many pastors and church leaders fall into the trap of attributing growth to human efforts such as marketing, programs, or personalities. While these may aid outreach, they cannot substitute for the spiritual reality that **God alone animates and multiplies the church's life**. Pastoral ministry, therefore, must be grounded in humility, dependence on God, and faithful labor—not performance.

Begin every church growth plan with prayer and fasting, acknowledging your dependence on God. Pray the Lord of the harvest. Celebrate the unseen labor of sowing and watering, trusting that visible fruit may come later. Resist the temptation to compare your ministry's growth with others; focus on faithfulness over numbers. The numbers will come when you put faithfulness first.

2. Growth That Is Not Just Numerical but Transformational

Growth is an imperative in Ministry. It is a function of the Lord. Psalm 127:1 says, *“Except the Lord builds”*. Growing the Kingdom of the Lord happens only through an abiding relationship with Him (John 15:1-8). Anything outside this is indeed an ordinary human effort. The Lord's pattern of building the Church begins with transformation of souls. It is inappropriate to pursue growth metrics that emphasize quantity over quality, counting attendees but not assessing spiritual maturity. The growth God desires for His church is not simply expansive but intensive,

transformation into Christlikeness.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11–13 that Christ gave gifts to the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers)

“For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ... till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man.”

Growth in God's economy means becoming more like Jesus.

Numerical growth without discipleship is shallow and dangerous. True church growth is measured in repentance, fruitfulness, unity, and maturity. A church that grows this way may not fill stadiums, but it will populate eternity.

First, grow the Church spiritually. Grow that small number of souls spiritually using God's method. Start by putting discipleship structures in place. Faithfully work within these structures—small groups, mentorship, Bible study—that foster personal transformation. Teach and preach messages that challenge believers to grow in holiness, not just “feel good” sermons. Celebrate stories of life change, not just attendance spikes.

3. The Parable of the Sower as a Model for Church Growth – Mark 4:1–20

In this parable Jesus uses three main components of growth to teach us the fundamentals of Church growth. These are the SOWER, SEED and SOIL. He mentioned four types of soil. These are pathway, rocky soil, thorny ground, and good soil. No matter how good a seed is, it requires a good soil to yield much fruit.

In trying to grow the Church, attention should be paid to the integrity and the quality of the seed and the soil.

First, The Seed is the Word (Mark 4:14):

Growth begins with the faithful teaching and preaching of God's Word. The quality and faithfulness of the seed are non-negotiable. The DNA of the seed is righteousness and holiness wrapped in repentance. The seed that produces spiritual transformation comprises righteousness and holiness.

Second, The Soil is the Heart:

Jesus identifies different heart conditions that respond to the Word. Church growth is not just about spreading the seed, but cultivating the soil—preparing hearts. Only One in four produces fruit. The sobering reality is that not everyone will respond with lasting transformation. But fruitfulness is still guaranteed where the soil is prepared.

Success in transforming souls requires competence in enlightening the cognitive domain of the soul. The cognitive domain is the mind. The heart is the doorway to the mind. In John 10: 3, there is an understanding for Pastors who want to succeed in shepherding the heart. Scripture says, “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out”. You cannot reach the mind until the heart is opened.

A pastor cannot on his own open the heart of a soul. It **MUST** be understood that the heart of a man is opened by the Creator of the heart. How people reason, how people understand and how they respond to God's depends on His opening of their hearts for the Pastor.

Practical Interpretations for Church Growth:

The ability or the competence to deal with the situation of the hearts in the congregation requires taking an inventory of hearts one case at a time. A pastor should know the different kinds of hearts under his watch.

The Pathway Soil are people who hear but immediately lose the Word to distractions or spiritual warfare. The church must engage in prayer and spiritual warfare to break hardened hearts. The Rocky Soil are those who respond emotionally but fall away under pressure. The church must provide depth through discipleship. The Thorny Soil are believers choked by life's worries, wealth, and desires. The church must call people to surrender and simplicity. The

Good Soil are receptive hearts. It is this kind of heart that can be nurtured to maturity. The church must recognize, disciple, and release these people into ministry.

“But those that fell on good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”— Luke 8:15

Action Points for Pastors:

Use prayer, loving counsel, and gentle teaching to soften the hearts and make them receptive to spiritual truths. When hearts are aligned with God, minds begin to grasp divine purpose. (Romans 12:2). Lead the souls toward surrender and obedience.

Have a good understanding of the emotional and moral state of the hearts. Understand that as souls come into the Church, they arrive with blind hearts.

Ephesians 4:18-19,

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

Therefore, regularly assess the “soil conditions” in your congregation through spiritual check-ins, pastoral care, and teaching. Address the inner wounds of bitterness, unforgiveness and other hidden works of darkness so that the light of the word can enter. Cultivate in them the love for truth. Encourage spiritual disciplines that stir hunger for God such as prayer, fasting, worship, quiet time and deep study of the word of God.

Also, the Church should do all that it takes to equip leaders to be “*soil-tenders*”—mentors, encouragers, and disciplers. Be patient: Good soil produces fruit **with endurance** (Luke 8:15). Growth may be slow, but it will be sure.

God's pattern for church growth is clear: **sow faithfully, water consistently, and trust God for the increase.** Growth must not be measured merely in numbers but in lives transformed, disciples made, and Christ glorified. Resist worldly models of success. Instead, cultivate deep roots, healthy soil, and abundant fruitfulness that lasts.

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

— John 15:16

Chapter Three

WHAT IS THE WORTH OF A SOUL?



In an age driven by statistics, success metrics, and outward appearances, the Church must return to the heart of its mission—the individual soul. What is a soul? Why does it matter so deeply to God? Why must we account for it? These questions are not merely theological—they strike at the very core of the gospel mission.

1. The Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son - Luke 15:1–10

Jesus tells three parables in Luke 15 to emphasize the worth of a single soul. In the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (Luke 15:1–32), we see God's passionate pursuit of the one who is lost. Each story ends with rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. This shows that every individual soul is of inestimable value to God. He does not see crowds; He sees individuals—lost, loved, redeemable.

2. The Value of One Soul - Luke 9:25

Jesus asked,

“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Luke 9:25).

This powerful statement highlights the supreme value of one soul. All the riches, influence, and power of the world cannot equal the worth of a single soul. A soul is eternal, while worldly possessions are temporal. This is why heaven rejoices over one repenting sinner.

3. Understanding the Spirit, Soul and Body - 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrew 4:12

Many people misunderstand what the soul is. According to Scripture, man is a triune being—spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12). The spirit is the innermost part that connects with God. The body is the external shell that interacts with the physical world. The soul is the seat of the mind, will, and emotions—it represents our personality, choices, reasoning, and consciousness.

The soul is what makes a person unique. It is the battleground of transformation, the arena of decision. It can be renewed or corrupted, saved or lost. God desires that our souls be redeemed, restored, and transformed (Psalm 23:3; Romans 12:1–2).

4. Accounting for Souls – Hebrew 13:17; Ezekiel 3:17-21

Hebrews 13:17 reminds leaders that they will give an account for the souls under their care: ***“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...”*** This weighty responsibility is not about maintaining church attendance—it's about the eternal destiny of people.

In Ezekiel 3:17–21, God warns the prophet that if he fails to warn the wicked, their blood will be required at his hand. This speaks to the divine seriousness of soul-care. Leaders are not just preachers or organizers—they are watchmen for the souls of people. Accountability is tied to the worth of a soul. If God values it, so must we.

The soul is precious because it is eternal. It can be redeemed or lost forever. God places infinite worth on each soul, and He calls His Church to do the same. The mission of the Church is not merely to build crowds or events—it is to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). True church growth begins with valuing what God values. Every soul matters. We must account for it with passion, care, and with eternity in mind.

Chapter Four

SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION OF SOULS: STAGE ONE – THE FIRST TIMER OR VISITOR STAGE



The spiritual progression of a soul begins with their very first encounter with the local church. This initial visit is crucial, not only as a social or ceremonial introduction but as the beginning of a spiritual journey that can ultimately lead to salvation, discipleship, and fruitfulness. Every church must prioritize the first timer experience as a core part of its evangelistic and growth strategy. In order to understand the nature of the Visitors' stage it is vital to understand the reasons why people come to Church. Souls visit a church for various reasons. Some of these reasons which could be broadly classified a spiritual, social, or purely circumstantial are:

1. Invitation from a Friend or Family Member

Personal invitations are the number one reason people attend church for the first time. The likelihood of an invited

visitor's progression from visitor to new comer depends on the invitee, the welcome ministry and older members of the church.

2. Spiritual Curiosity or Hunger

A visitor may come to Church out of personal volition, desiring to know God or to seek answers to life's big questions or out of curiousness to fill a spiritual emptiness; wanting to reconnect with something greater. These types are the ones who say, "Nobody invited me". It is very likely for such visitors to return as new comers, depending on the first impression they form about the Church.

3. Life's Transitions or Crises

Life's transitions such as loss of a loved one, divorce, illness, job loss, or depression could bring a person to a local church for the very first time. There are also other types of new life phases like moving to a new city, getting married, or having a child or looking for hope, comfort, and stability during uncertain times that make people to come to church as visitors or first timers.

4. Special Events or Programs

Visitors also come to church for the very first time due to events and programs such as Christmas holidays, community outreaches, healing services, training programs and family thanksgiving.

5. Positive Online Presence

People also come to church due to strong presence in social media. If contents of your church's programmes receive positive reviews, it will attract visitors or first timers.

6. Personal Invitation by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:47 says

“...And the Lord added; to the church daily such as should be saved.”

People also come to church by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Churches that faithfully carry out the mandate of the Lord will have this experience.

7. Need for Community and Belonging

Some other conditions of life that bring visitors to church include:

- a. Loneliness or desire for meaningful relationships.
- b. Desire for a supportive family.
- c. Seeking guidance, mentorship, or discipleship.

Understanding the various reasons why visitors enter the church through the door is vital for the development of strategies to transit them from Visitors to New Comers.

1. The First Timers' Welcome Ministry

The First Timers' Team—also known as the Welcome or Hospitality Ministry—is tasked with receiving guests in a

way that reflects the heart of God. This ministry should be trained and be spiritually sensitive, seeing each visitor as a soul divinely sent. Their role is to extend genuine warmth, hospitality, and care, while ensuring that every visitor is seen, heard, and attended to. To a large extent, the Welcome Ministry influences the decision of a soul to accept your church as a preferred destination.

It is vital to ensure that the old members of the Church are raised as an integral part of the Welcome Ministry. They should be raised to know how to be orderly and disciplined. Disorderly congregants inadvertently give a negative first impression about the church to visitors. For example, it is disorderly for people to be loitering or conversing during prayers. There are many other similar things which members of the church may do that will discourage a visitor or first time to come back the next fellowship day.

2. Key Actions: Greeting, Recording Details, Prayer of Contact

The first three actions that mark this stage are:

- a. Greeting – A friendly and sincere welcome that creates an atmosphere for love and openness (Romans 15:7).
- b. Recording Details – Gathering names, contact information, and relevant notes shows intentionality and stewardship (Proverbs 27:23).
- c. Prayer of Contact – A short prayer of blessing or connection opens spiritual doors and invites God into their journey.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WELCOME MINISTRY

1. VISION AND PURPOSE

The Welcome Ministry exists to reflect the heart of Christ by creating a warm, loving, and hospitable atmosphere for everyone who walks into the church. Our goal is to make first-time guests feel valued and at home, and to ensure returning members continue to experience the love of Christ through every interaction.

2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF WELCOME

- a. Romans 16:16 – 'Greet one another with a holy kiss.'
- b. Hebrews 13:2 – 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers...'
- c. Mark 9:37 – 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.'
- d. James 2:1–4 – 'Do not show favoritism...'
- e. Matthew 25:35 – 'I was a stranger and you invited me in.'
- f. Romans 12:5 – 'So in Christ we, though many, form one body...'

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Greeters

- a. Arrive 45 minutes before the service.
- b. Welcome people with a smile and greeting.

- c. Offer help, directions, and answer basic questions.
- d. Escort first-time guests if needed.

Ushers

- a. Arrive 40 minutes before the service.
- b. Help arrange chairs, manage seating, and assist latecomers.
- c. Assist with offering and altar calls.
- d. Provide security and order in movement.

Connection Desk Team

- a. Set up materials (connect cards, brochures, welcome packs).
- b. Register visitors and answer questions.
- c. Collect and process visitor data for follow-up.

Follow-Up Team

- a. Pray over visitor names.
- b. Send thank-you texts/emails within 48 hours.
- c. Invite guests to return and connect them to next steps.

4. WEEKLY WORK SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

Assign rotating teams A, B, C, D for each Sunday. Use this format:

Team A – 1st Sunday

Team B	–	2nd Sunday
Team C	–	3rd Sunday
Team D	–	4th Sunday

Sample Schedule:

Greeters: 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM

Ushers: 8:20 AM – 10:30 AM

Connection Desk: 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Follow-Up Team: Online follow-up during the week

5. HOW TO WELCOME BIBLICALLY

- a. Smile and greet with genuine warmth – Romans 16:16
- b. Treat every person as valuable – James 2:1–4
- c. Serve quietly and attentively – Mark 9:37
- d. Include those who seem shy or alone – Matthew 25:35
- e. Follow up and invite again – Hebrews 13:2

Every Welcome Team member must commit to prayer, punctuality, humility, and service. Our ministry is not just about greeting—it is about revealing the heart of Jesus to everyone we encounter. We represent the love of God with every handshake, every smile, and every follow up.

6. Luke 19:5-10 – The First Time Meeting of Jesus with Zacchaeus

This passage presents Jesus as the ultimate example of how to receive and engage a first timer. Zacchaeus, though curious and distant, was noticed by Jesus. Christ not only spoke to him but also invited Himself into Zacchaeus' home. The result was a transformed life and the restoration of many others. Verse 10 underscores the goal: 'For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'

7. Follow-Up Timeline/Strategy- (24 Hours, 72 Hours, 7 Days)

Consistency in follow-up shows commitment and care. A suggested model is:

- a. Within 24 Hours – Send a thank-you SMS, WhatsApp message, or brief call.
- b. Within 72 Hours – Share a devotional, prayer, or encouraging word; ask for prayer points.
- c. Within 7 Days – Personal call or home visit (if possible), and extend an invitation to upcoming services or events.

5. Tools for First Timers' / Welcome Ministry and Sample Register

Key tools to aid effectiveness include:

- a. Visitor Cards or Digital Forms.
- b. A Follow-Up Register (Manual or Digital). The digital follow up register is a computer bases register.
- c. Assigned Follow-Up Team Members.
- d. Personalized Gospel Tracts or Church Welcome Kits. These are to be issued or given to the first timer. It is a social tradition to entertain visitors. This tradition ought to be practiced more in the kingdom of God. (Heb.13:2).

Sample Register Fields: Full Name, Date of Visit, Phone Number, Email, Invited By, Prayer Needs, Action Taken, Assigned Follow-Up Member.

The first timer stage is not a casual phase; it is the gateway to destiny. The church must be intentional about it. We must invest time, training, and resources into this early stage to ensure no soul is lost through negligence. As seen in Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus, spiritual transformation begins when we honor and pursue the individual soul. This is the stage in which the real business of accounting for souls begins.

See APPENDIX for FIRST-TIMERS GUEST FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

Chapter Five

STAGE TWO: THE NEWCOMER STAGE - (REGISTERED ATTENDEES)



The Newcomer Stage refers to individuals who have attended the church more than once and have shown interest in being a part of the church community. This is a critical stage in the spiritual progression process as it involves deeper engagement and fostering genuine relationships with newcomers. When the Newcomer was a Visitor, he was welcomed, greeted and entertained. But as he shows up over and over again in church services, the church must begin the process of establishing a genuine relationship with this soul.

1. Ministry: Follow-up and Hospitality Teams

The responsibility of welcoming and integrating newcomers rests heavily on the Follow-up and Hospitality teams. These ministries work hand in hand to create a sense of belonging and care. Their role is to help new attendees

feel seen, valued, and connected. The capacity of a Church to retain visitors and first timers depends on the effectiveness of the Welcome, Follow up and Hospitality or Welfare Ministries. Older members must be groomed to have genuine interest in people.

In Acts 2:41, we see how the early Church responded to new comers. The scripture says:

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41, KJV).

The action to integrate these souls into the Church community was not deferred to another day. A new person coming into a system will feel a greater sense of acceptance and inclusion when immediate actions are taken to create this impression in his or her mind. The early church did not treat these additions casually—they welcomed, recorded, and followed up with them the same day.

Acts 2: 44 states that,

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common;”

New Comers are very sensitive. Nothing should be done to make them uncomfortable.

2. Initiating Relationship and Spiritual Curiosity

At this stage, relationships are crucial. Members of the follow-up team should initiate intentional conversations, express genuine interest in the newcomer's spiritual background, and address any questions they may have. Pastors should ensure that this is done. Creating a non-threatening atmosphere where spiritual curiosity can flourish is key. In this regard, congregants who are already members have to be properly groomed to be sociable and friendly in order for them to play a supportive role to the church's vision for Visitors and New Comers. In order to be useful, older members of a church that initiate relationship should not jump out of the church immediately service comes to an end. They must stay back to embrace and show genuine desire to know and to care for the New comer.

For example, in Acts 18:24-26, Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and explained the way of God more accurately. This reflects how mature believers can gently and wisely nurture spiritual growth in newcomers. A church that does not raise Aquilas and Priscillas does not stand a chance to integrate New Comers.

3. Tools for the Newcomers' Ministry

a. A well-structured newcomer database or register:
SEE APPENDIX for sample NEW COMERS' REGISTER

Record keeping is the bane of accounting for souls. However, the value of a record depends on how you make

use of it. A soul must not be reduced to a piece of information in a register. The data base must be utilized as a tool for pastoral stewardship. For instance, a new comer's telephone number should not end in the register. It should be used to activate frequent contacts. The telephone number and residential address of a new comer should be given to other congregants. Church leadership should always encourage brethren to be active in the Ministry of "one another". The telephone is a very potent tool to facilitate relationship between members.

Pastors should find out how often members call and visit one another. The healthiness of a church depends on the strength of the ministry of "one another". It is the ministry of one another that fosters genuine relationship. The database must be used to build care and unity. It should be used in evaluating how much brethren love, serve, encourage, bear and pray for one another.

b. Personalized welcome packs with devotionals and information about the church:

There should be a New Comers' desk. This desk should always be equipped with materials such as devotionals, Sunday school booklets for all age-grade fellowships, and other vital information about the church such as the weekly activities of the church, and "help-telephone-lines" in case of emergencies. Bible says things have to be done decently and in order. The church must be intentional about this. This is a ground in which the Body of Christ has an opportunity to

practicalize the admonition of the Lord that says, “***Give, and it shall be given unto to you, in measures, pressed down, shaken together, running over.***” The church **MUST NOT** sell Ministry merchandize to New Comers. Instead provide them with such things free of charge.

4. Pastoral Action Points

- a. Form a dedicated newcomers' follow-up and hospitality team.
- b. Train volunteers to initiate and maintain spiritual conversations.
- c. Design and distribute welcome materials that express love and invite engagement.
- d. Create a follow-up timeline for every new attendee (e.g., Day 1, Day 3, Day 7, Day 14).
- e. Schedule a monthly 'Newcomer Fellowship' to help newcomers integrate into the church community.

5. Review Questions

- i. What are the key responsibilities of the hospitality and follow-up teams?
- ii. Why is Acts 2:41 and 44 significant to the newcomers' stage?

- iii. How can we nurture spiritual curiosity in newcomers?
- iv. What tools can be used to help organize and track newcomer engagement?
- v. How can the church ensure no newcomer is overlooked or forgotten?

Chapter Six

STAGE THREE - THE NEW CONVERT (SALVATION AND ASSURANCE) STAGE



The third stage in the spiritual progression process is the New Convert Stage. It is a very critical period in the journey of faith. The individual soul is expected to respond to the invitation of Jesus Christ to eternal life. It is the stage at which the New Comer is transitioning from a church attendee to a child of God. It is a delicate and vital stage requiring intentional guidance, follow-up, and doctrinal grounding to establish new believers in Christ. At this stage, the New Comer has made the choice to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is simply a **NEW BORN BABE IN CHRIST**.

1. The Ministry of New Converts: Altar Call, Counseling and New Converts' Desk

This ministry facilitates the initial reception and guidance of individuals who respond to the gospel message. Counselors must be trained to handle this role with spiritual maturity, empathy, and sound biblical knowledge. The New Comers' Desk ensures personal data is captured, and appropriate spiritual resources are made available to new believers immediately they receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

2. Key Scriptures

John 3:3–7 – Jesus emphasizes the necessity of being born again. We must understand that accounting for souls entails taking all the steps necessary for souls to enter into the Kingdom of God. ***“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*** This necessity is the template for accounting for souls. It involves seeking them out in their spiritual condition as lost souls. The church must locate them no matter where they are. We can stand on top of the mountain. We can launch out to the deep. We can go into the wilderness. We must go to the most remote of places. We must take the gospel message to the uttermost part of the earth, seeking for the lost soul.

Inside the church, we must utilize the altar for the singular purpose of getting people into the kingdom of God. The Ministry in charge of getting people into the kingdom of

God is called THE NEW CONVERTS MINISTRY. It comprises the altar call ministry and the counseling ministry. The church must have an effective altar and counseling ministry.

The productivity or fruitfulness of the altar ministry is measured by the number of souls that are convicted of sin.

Conviction of souls happens only when the integrity of the gospel is not compromised. Preach forgiveness of sins. Preach to transform souls.

The altar ministry must preach nothing other than the gospel. There is no other prescription for salvation. Paul said the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. No soul can enter through the narrow immigration gates of the Kingdom of God unless they are born again out of the womb of the gospel.

Once a man is spiritually born again, someone must take charge. New born babies depend on nurses. Someone must be made to take care. When souls receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they must not be left on their own. They are to be counseled. They must be taught the rudiments of the Kingdom. They must be debriefed about the kingdom of the world until they inculcate the tenets of the Kingdom of God. This is what accounting for souls is all about. The solemn

action of being born again ought to be treated with tenderness and loving kindness by the Pastor of the church together with all other counselors.

In Romans 10:9–10, apostle Paul explains the process of salvation. He said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.". Accounting for souls requires leading them into this process.

The soul that passes through this process should not be left to stand alone. As a matter of fact, the church ought to appreciate the Lord with great joy. The bible says, heaven rejoices when one sinner repents (Luke 15:7). So the church should not be passive spectators of this process. The joy that greets this experience should translate into a set of deliberate actions aimed at sustaining the experience in the life of the soul that passed through this process.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – A reminder of the new identity in Christ: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." The church must superintend over the manner in which old things pass away. A new creature needs attending to. Every creature passes through stages of growth. Somebody must be responsible at every stage of the spiritual development of the New Creature –in- Christ. The church must set up the system through which this work of

mid-wifing is done. This is the context in which we account for souls.

3. Tools: New Converts Register, Weekly Conversion Report

New Converts Register – Records the names, contact details, and spiritual milestones of all new converts.

Weekly Conversion Report – Compiled by altar call and counseling team leaders to document progress, number of conversions, and follow-up actions. SEE APPENDIX.

Pastoral Action Points

- a. Counselors must be available and visible after every sermon/service for one-on-one ministry.
- b. Every new convert must be recorded and prayed with individually at the New Comers' Desk.
- c. Assign a personal follow-up counselor within 24 hours of conversion.
- d. Issue starter materials – such as salvation booklets, devotionals, or New Testament Bibles.
- e. Create a conversion progress chart for each new believer.
- f. Schedule weekly calls or messages to encourage and answer questions.
- g. Ensure every new convert is linked to a discipleship class within two weeks.

Disciple souls at all stages of their spiritual progress.

- a. Visitors' Discipling Class
- b. New Comers' Discipling Class
- c. New Converts Discipling Class
- d. Baptismal Teaching
- e. Matured Believers' Discipling Class

Officers Responsible: Altar Call Ministers, Head of Counseling Unit, Data Entry Team, Follow-Up Leaders.

Review Questions

1. What are the biblical foundations of salvation and assurance?
2. Why is it important to record and follow up with new converts?
3. What tools and procedures should be in place for effective new convert assimilation?
4. Who are the officers responsible for managing the New Convert Stage?
5. How soon should discipleship begin after conversion and why.

Chapter Seven

STAGE FOUR - BAPTISM AND FOUNDATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP



1. Ministry: Baptismal Class Teachers, Discipleship Leaders

At this stage, the Church must intentionally invest in equipping and assigning mature believers to function as Baptismal Class Teachers and Foundational Discipleship Leaders. These individuals are tasked with grounding new converts in the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and preparing them for water baptism. Jesus said in Matthew 28:19,

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
(KJV)*

a. What is Baptism?

Baptism is a public act of obedience in which a believer is immersed in water as a sign of dying to sin and rising again with Christ.

Romans 6:3–4 tells us:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too might walk in newness of life.”

Baptism is not just a religious ritual—it is a powerful testimony that the old life is gone, and a new life in Christ has begun.

b. The Types of Baptism in the Bible

c. John's Baptism (Repentance)

Matthew 3:1–6 – John prepared the way for Jesus through a baptism of repentance.

It pointed people to their need for forgiveness but was not yet the baptism of salvation through Jesus.

d. Christian Water Baptism

After Jesus' death and resurrection, baptism took on a new meaning.

Acts 2:38–41 – Peter called people to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name.

This is the baptism for believers today: a sign of faith, salvation, and new life.

e. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:5, Acts 2:1–4 – The Holy Spirit came upon the early church, empowering them for ministry.

While separate from water baptism, it is promised to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:13).

f. Baptism of Suffering

Mark 10:38–39 – Jesus referred to His suffering as a kind of baptism.

It speaks of being overwhelmed or immersed in trial for God's purposes.

g. Why is Baptism Important?

i. It's Commanded by Jesus

Matthew 28:19–20 – *“Go therefore and make disciples... baptizing them...”*

Baptism is part of fulfilling the Great Commission. It is not optional—it is commanded.

ii. It's a Public Declaration of Faith

Baptism makes our faith visible. It is like wearing a wedding ring: not what makes you married, but a sign of

commitment.

iii. It Identifies Us with Christ

We symbolically die, are buried, and rise with Christ through baptism.

iv. It Marks Entry into the Church Community

1 Corinthians 12:13 – We are baptized into one body and become part of the global Church.

h. When Should Baptism Take Place?

Biblically, baptism always follows belief.

Acts 8:36–38 – The Ethiopian eunuch asked,

“What prevents me from being baptized?”

Philip replied, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

However, it is recommended that new converts are passed through special baptismal classes before they baptize.

Teach them the meaning, significance and implication of baptism

i. Who Can Baptize? Can an Unconverted Person Baptize?

There is no command stating baptism must be performed by a pastor. However, it should be administered by a believer in good standing, someone who understands its spiritual significance.

2 Timothy 2:2 – Faithful believers are entrusted to teach and lead. Baptism performed by someone who does not know Christ undermines the witness of the act. A baptizer should be a disciple himself, modeling what he is celebrating.

j. What Should Be Taught in a Baptismal Class?

What is taught prior to baptism is very important because after baptism, life as a follower of Christ is supposed to begin. In the records of the Church, this is when we record a soul as a member in the Membership Register.

Before baptism, a believer should be taught the Gospel and Salvation. Candidates for baptism should be taught what it means to be saved. They should understand why it is necessary to be saved and what they must do to be saved. (Romans 3:23 and 6:23, John 3:16.) The learning objectives should be to impart understanding of sin and its consequences, repentance, faith, and salvation.

They should be taught the meaning of Baptism – what it symbolizes and why it matters. (Romans 6:1–4, Acts 2:38)

They should be taught the cost of Discipleship (Living as Disciple). They should be taught the implications of the words of the Lord in Luke 9:23-24. Colossians 3:1–17 could be used to explain the Christian life style. The objective of the teaching should be to impart them with the understanding that following Jesus involves a cost and that cost is called surrender.

They should be taught the role of the Church. Baptism joins us into a spiritual family. (Hebrew 10:25). Teach them the importance of corporate fellowship.

Also, teach them Christian Growth including growing in grace. Many Christians know SAVING GRACE (Ephesians 2:8-9). But they do not know that there is another Grace that minister's daily ENTRANCE into the presence of God (2 Peter 1:2-12). When Peter was saying in 2 Peter 3:18, “***But grow in grace..***”, it was the grace that ministers entrance he was talking about. This grace is the human grace. It simply means spiritual character. Teach them the Christian Character and what it takes to grow in character and in virtue.

Teach them spiritual disciplines such as daily devotion, prayer, Bible reading, service.

The curriculum should include Assurance of Salvation. Baptism does not save, but affirms what Christ has already done.

Let them understand that baptism is not the end—it is a beginning. It is the launch point for a life lived in obedience, community, and mission. If you have believed in Jesus but have not yet been baptized, now is the time to follow Him in this beautiful step of faith.

CHALLENGES OF THE BAPTISM STAGE:

Challenges often faced in this stage of spiritual progression include inconsistency in attendance, lack of trained teachers, and inadequate follow-up. However, with the right systems, such challenges can be overcome.

2. The Role of Doctrine, Fellowship, and Breaking of Bread-(LIFE AFTER BAPTISM)-Acts 2:38-42

These verses highlight the early church's commitment to foundational discipleship. After baptism, the new believers were incorporated into a structured community where doctrine, fellowship, communal meals, and prayer sustained their spiritual growth. Accounting for souls requires sound functional structures.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

(Acts 2:38, 42)

WHY LACK OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION AFTER BAPTISM IS VERY COMMON

Many churches cannot account for the spiritual progression of souls after baptism. Many believers also end their spiritual progression at baptism for several interconnected reasons; spiritual, emotional, cultural, and even doctrinal. Some of these are:

1. Misunderstanding Baptism as the “Finish Line”

Many are taught—explicitly or implicitly—that baptism is the climax of their faith journey, rather than the beginning of a new life. Baptism is a *starting point* (Romans 6:4); it's symbolic of death to the old self and rising to a new life.

2. Lack of Discipleship and Follow-Up

After baptism, many churches fail to intentionally nurture new believers in spiritual growth through structured discipleship. Jesus didn't just baptize—He *discipled* (Matthew 28:19–20).

3. Shallow Conversion Experience

Some people are baptized due to emotion, peer pressure, or tradition, not genuine conviction. This often leads to a lack of spiritual hunger post-baptism. Souls with shallow conversion experience are like the “seeds that fall on rocky soil”. (Matthew 13:20–21), they sprout quickly but lack deep roots.

4. No Clear Next Steps

New believers often don't know what to do after baptism. Without guidance on prayer, Bible study, fellowship, or service, they drift. The church is to be blamed largely for this. Believers are also to be blamed. Spiritual growth requires intentionality: “*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk...*” (1 Peter 2:2).

5. Worldly Distractions

Post-baptism, some believers return to old habits or worldly environments that choke their spiritual progress. Baptized

believers can also be likened to seed sown among thorns (Matthew 13:22). They suffer the influence of the cares of the world. They experience the spiritual condition called “entering and choking” (Mark 4:19).

6. Lack of Community or Mentorship

Without spiritual mentors or a supportive faith community, believers can feel isolated, discouraged, or spiritually cold. They can stagnate. Paul's pattern of mentoring is the solution. He said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2,

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

The present day church must set up doctrinal impartation systems and structures that will make congregants to continue steadfastly. The early church *“continued steadfastly in fellowship...”* (Acts 2:42). Church programs and processes must have well thought out Biblical platforms that fit into the daily life routines of the congregants. Programs must have irresistible selling points that appeal to members of the church, so much so that steadfast continuing or participation will not be burdensome. Pastors must be able to raise congregants whose daily life revolves around their Christian faith.

7. Spiritual Warfare

New believers often come under spiritual attack without realizing it. Without training, they may give up. Ephesians 6:12–18: Warns of this battle and urges believers to put on the full armor of God.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT STAGNATION AFTER BAPTISM

1. Establish a Post-Baptism Discipleship Pathway such as, Weekly classes (e.g., “Foundations of Faith”) and One-on-one mentoring for the first 6 months.
2. Teach the Full Gospel: Conversion + Transformation. Preach that salvation involves sanctification—not just justification.
3. Integrate New Believers into Small Groups. Community keeps the fire burning.
4. Encourage Service and Ministry Involvement. Let them discover purpose and responsibility early.
5. Assign Spiritual Mentors. A personal relationship provides accountability and encouragement.
6. Equip for Spiritual Warfare. Teach about temptations, prayer, fasting, and the Holy Spirit.
7. Celebrate Spiritual Milestones Beyond Baptism. For example, completing a discipleship course, leading prayer, or sharing testimony.

4. Tools: Baptism Register, Basic Doctrine Curriculum

Churches should maintain a detailed Baptism Register to keep track of all baptized individuals, including names, dates, and officiating ministers. A well-structured Basic Doctrine Curriculum should cover foundational topics such as salvation, faith, prayer, Holy Spirit, Christian living, and church membership.

Pastoral Action and Tips To Strengthen The Baptism Ministry.

- a. Assign trained teachers to run consistent Baptism and Discipleship classes.
- b. Set up a timeline for baptism after conversion (e.g., within 4-6 weeks).
- c. Use attendance records to track consistency.
- d. Evaluate learning using brief tests or feedback forms.
- e. Schedule baptism ceremonies monthly or quarterly.
- f. Provide regular training and spiritual development for Baptismal and Discipleship leaders.
- g. Incorporate testimonies from previously baptized members.
- h. Encourage mentorship by pairing new converts with mature believers.
- i. Use multimedia tools (videos, charts, and study guides) to enhance learning.

j. Ensure leadership oversight and periodic review of curriculum effectiveness.

Review Questions

1. What is the significance of baptism according to Matthew 28:19?
2. Why is foundational discipleship necessary after baptism?
3. What are the main components of the early church's discipleship model in Acts 2:42?
4. List two tools essential for effective baptismal and discipleship ministry.
5. What practical steps can your church take to strengthen this ministry?

Chapter Eight

STAGE FIVE – MEMBERSHIP AND INTEGRATION



Every local church is not only a worship center but also a spiritual family. Membership and integration is the process through which new believers find belonging, discover purpose, and assume spiritual responsibility in the body of Christ. This stage is essential in moving believers from passive attendance to active participation.

1. The Membership Integration Ministry

The Membership Unit or Integration Ministry is tasked with welcoming, orienting, and fully integrating believers into the life of the church. This involves ensuring people are not lost in the crowd, but feel connected, needed, and known. Workers in the Membership Integration Ministry **MUST** be sociable. They must have genuine godly interest in people.

COMMON CHALLENGES OF MEMBERSHIP INTEGRATION:

Effective integration of both new and existing members into the church community is crucial for spiritual growth, retention, and meaningful fellowship. However, various challenges can hinder this process. These include:

i. Overcoming Cliques and Closed Social Circles

Many churches unintentionally develop tight-knit groups or cliques that can make newcomers feel excluded or unwelcome. These social barriers hinder new members from forming meaningful connections and fully integrating into the church family.

Solutions:

- a. Train hospitality teams to engage new members more intentionally.
- b. Encourage participation in home fellowships or small groups.
- c. Organize cross-departmental events to foster inclusiveness.

ii. Tracking Consistent Attendance and Assimilation

Churches often struggle to monitor whether new converts or members are consistently attending services and engaging in discipleship, especially if they don't voluntarily report their absence or disengagement.

Solutions:

- a. Use manual/digital tools or simple tracking systems to monitor attendance.
- b. Assign spiritual mentors or integration officers to follow up regularly.
- c. Create discipleship classes or cell groups with attendance accountability.

iii. Maintaining Up-to-Date Membership Records

Many churches have outdated or incomplete databases, making it difficult to follow up with members, understand church demographics, or assign appropriate pastoral care.

Solutions:

- a. Implement a secure manual/ digital membership system.
- b. Conduct annual membership re-registration exercises.
- c. Use SMS, email, or WhatsApp to keep communication lines open and updated.

Summary Table

Challenge

- a. Cliques and social isolation
- b. Tracking attendance and engagement

c. Outdated or incomplete member records

Solutions.

Small groups, intentional hospitality, and mixed church activities

Digital tools, mentor assignments, and regular discipleship check-ins

Use of database software, regular updates, and improved communication methods

2. Biblical Structure of this Ministry

Ephesians 2:19 reminds us:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

In the early church, believers were immediately embraced into fellowship, given roles, and discipled in doctrine and community life (Acts 2:42-47). Church membership is biblical and follows God's design for accountability, community, and ministry service.

Attention must be paid to this meaning of Church Membership. Accountability means that believers willingly place themselves under the care, guidance and correction of a local Church body and its leadership. It includes sharing together a common faith and mutual responsibility to

uphold this faith and defend it. It also includes the duties and responsibilities they share together and how they encourage one another to carry out these responsibilities. As a community, all members are to live as vessels of service, always 'meet' for the Master's use.

3. Tools for This Ministry

- a. Membership Register (Digital or Manual)
- b. Integration Curriculum (e.g., Orientation Class)
- c. Placement Forms for identifying the ministry each member is suitable for. No church member should be excluded from service. All members are to be integrated into one Ministry of service or another in the Local Church.

4. Ministry Placement and Strategies

Believers should be encouraged to serve in areas of gifting and passion. Some effective strategies include:

- a. Spiritual gifts assessment
- b. Trial placement with mentorship
- c. Integration workshops and testimonies from active members
- d. “Faithful Men” in the “Ministry of Others”. This area of service is the ultimate proof of discipleship and obedience to the Great Commission. Producing Faithful-men is not complete until they work in the ministry of

others. The order of progression is: Paul-Timothy-Faithful men-others.

5. Discovering of Gifts: Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12

Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 12 emphasize the diversity of gifts within the church body. Every believer has been gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve. The responsibility of the church is to help believers discover, develop, and deploy these gifts. The church is a production factory of spiritual human resources. The identification of spiritual gifts and their development for service is an aspect ACCOUNTING FOR SOULS. Pastor must build the structures that facilitate this.

Action Points for Pastors and Church Leaders

- a. Create a culture of family and belonging.
- b. Implement a well-structured membership class.
- c. Ensure regular follow-up of all registered members.
- d. Track spiritual growth and involvement of members.
- e. Encourage testimonies and feedback from newly integrated members.

Review Questions

1. What is the biblical basis for formal church membership?
2. What tools can help in effectively integrating new members?

3. Why is discovering spiritual gifts vital for membership integration?
4. How can pastors and leaders help members transition into ministry roles?

Chapter Nine

STAGE SIX: DISCIPLESHIP TO MATURITY



WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY?

Ephesians 4:11–16

Spiritual maturity can be measured and accounted for just as accountants measure assets, liabilities, and growth to evaluate the health of a business. The measure of spiritual maturity is not by appearance, knowledge, or activity—but by Christlikeness, obedience, and disciple-making. Spiritually matured believers partake in the process of making disciples.

As our Chief Auditor, God calls us to account for souls: our own souls as pastors, evangelists, apostles, prophets or bishops, and those we are called to disciple.

“So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.” – Romans 14:12

In the kingdom of God, the bottom line is Christlikeness. And just as profits are not the only measure of a company's health, spiritual activity is not the only measure of spiritual maturity. You are not matured in Spirit if you are not a disciple maker.

So the question today is: Are we growing? Are we becoming more like Christ? Are we accounting for souls faithfully?

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY?

Spiritual maturity is not perfection. It's not about how long you've been in church or how much theology you know. It's about growing into the image of Christ—consistently, humbly, and fruitfully.

*“...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” –
Ephesians 4:13*

Spiritual maturity means:

- a. Growing deeper in relationship with God.
- b. Reflecting the character of Jesus.
- c. Living in obedience to His Word.
- d. Discipling others with intentionality.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MATURE DISCIPLE

1. A Deep Relationship with God

You can't mature without intimacy. A mature disciple has

roots deep in God's presence. They pray, listen, and depend daily on Him.

“Abide in Me, and I in you.”—John 15:4

The Bible says EXAMINE YOURSELF. Accounting for your spiritual maturity requires asking yourself whether your spiritual life is built on 'routine – religion', or relationship? Routine religion is the attitude of conforming to church time-table, sacraments, ordinances and activities. While it forms part of faith, it is not a measure of maturity. Spiritual maturity involves a deep abiding relationship with the Lord.

2. Christlike Character

New born babes do not immediately resemble their parents at birth. We can only say “like-father-like-son” when the child is grown up enough to be a caricature of the father. The means by which we can have any chance to see the behavioral similarity between a father and a son is in the exhibition of behavioral fruits. The fruit of the Spirit is the clearest evidence of maturity. Sometimes some believers portray their maturity by demonstrating or seeking to demonstrate the possession of one form of gift of the Holy Spirit or the other. It is Fruits that depict and display spiritual maturity. Gifts compliment the spirit nature. In every transformational process, emphasis should be placed on bearing fruits of the Holy Spirit.

“By their fruit you will recognize them.” –
Matthew 7:16

3. Obedience to God's Word

Mature disciples are not just hearers, but doers. Their lives align with Scripture—even when it costs them something.

“If you love me, keep my commandments.”
– John 14:15

Obedience to God's Word is evaluated by the resistance to the commands of the Lord. Some of these commands are words that address relationship with one another, particularly, love, hatred and forgiveness. Ascertaining your progression toward spiritual maturity requires pinpointing areas of your life where you're resisting God's Word. It is the same metric pastors can use to determine the level of maturity of souls under their care.

4. Servant-Heartedness

Jesus washed feet. The mature don't look for power, but opportunities to serve—especially the unnoticed and undeserving.

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” – Mark 10:43

The self-examination question for a soul is are you more concerned with position, or with people?

5. Missional Living

The mature live with eternal purpose. They share the gospel, disciple others, and invest in the next generation of believers.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”
– Matthew 28:19

Pastors should be exemplary in this respect to stand a chance to ask their congregation, Who are you currently discipling?

6. Perseverance Through Trials

Mature disciples don't give up when life gets hard. They lean into God, knowing that trials produce growth.

“Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete...” – James 1:4

Critical question to ask is Do you grow bitter or better in the storm?

7. Humility and Teachability

Pride blocks growth. Maturity is marked by a constant desire to learn, change, and be corrected.

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” – James 4:6

Audit question: Are you willing to be corrected by God—and by others?

WHAT IS YOUR BALANCE SHEET LOOKING LIKE?

One day, the books will be opened.

“Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it...” – 1 Corinthians 3:13

Will our lives show profit for the Kingdom? Shall we present lives marked by Christ's character, obedience, service, and discipleship?

Today, God is inviting us to **grow up in Christ**—not just grow older in the faith.

Examine your life in light of these seven markers. Where are you growing? Where are you stagnant?

Ask God for grace to grow deeper in relationship and broader in impact.

Commit to discipling someone—even if it's just one soul. Accounting for souls starts with one.

“Lord, help me not just to grow in You—but to help others grow too.”

1. The Ministry Of Maturing Disciples is Discipleship School and Mentoring Teams.

The Discipleship-to- Maturity stage is a critical phase where believers are transformed from spiritual infants to mature Christians capable of leading others. The ministries involved here include dedicated Discipleship Schools and structured Mentoring Teams. These ministries are tasked with teaching sound doctrine, modeling Christ-like character, and cultivating a deep-rooted spiritual life in each believer.

Disciple means follower, learner or a student. It is necessary for a disciple to show those he is discipling that he is also learning and following like a student.

Challenges in this ministry include inconsistency in attendance, lack of commitment, spiritual apathy, and the shortage of seasoned mentors. Effective strategies to overcome these challenges include structured curriculum, consistent mentorship, one-on-one follow-up, and encouraging ministry involvement to stimulate growth.

2. The Emphasis on Progression: Hebrews 5:12 – 6:4

In Hebrews 5:12–14, the writer expresses concern that believers should have progressed to teaching others, but instead still need elementary instruction. This is a call for growth beyond spiritual milk to solid food – maturity. Chapter 6:1-4 challenges believers to move forward from foundational doctrines to deeper spiritual understanding,

thereby avoiding stagnation and regression. This scripture contains a good sketch of the spiritual educational curriculum.

3. The Model of Spiritual Reproduction: 2 Timothy 2:2

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

This verse outlines a model of spiritual reproduction and continuity. Paul highlights the need for intentional mentorship and leadership multiplication. The goal is not only to learn but to pass on the teachings to reliable people who will also teach others.

4. Mentorship and Spiritual Reproduction

Mentorship is key in discipleship. Jesus mentored His disciples personally. Paul mentored Timothy and Titus. Effective discipleship includes: personal relationships, accountability, instruction, correction, and encouragement. Spiritual reproduction occurs when mature believers raise up others who also become mature and reproduce themselves in others. This is the true essence of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Churches must prioritize long-term discipleship systems. This means not just class-based teachings, but also fostering life-on-life mentorship environments, peer accountability, and active ministry involvement. Mature believers should

be trained to mentor others, reproducing their faith and walk with Christ in others.

5. Action Points for Pastor:

- a. Establish a structured Discipleship School with clear entry and graduation points.
- b. Assign seasoned mentors to small groups or individuals.
- c. Conduct regular evaluations of discipleship progress.
- d. Encourage participation in ministry as a sign of growth.
- e. Promote a church culture that values depth, not just numbers.

6. Review Questions

1. What are the key ministries responsible for discipleship in your church?
2. What does Hebrews 5:12–6:4 teach us about spiritual maturity?
3. How can mentorship lead to spiritual reproduction?
4. What are some effective strategies for deepening discipleship?
5. What specific steps can your church take to strengthen the maturity stage?

Chapter Ten

THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN CHURCH GROWTH



In the divine architecture of church growth, human resources play a pivotal role. While growth is ultimately enabled by God (1 Corinthians 3:6-7), it is clear that God works through people, calling and equipping them for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13). A church that desires sustainable growth must invest in the identification, development, and deployment of human resources. This chapter examines the essential role of human capital in building the church and advancing the Kingdom of God.

1. Ephesians 4:11-13 – Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry

The foundational scripture for human resource development in the church is Ephesians 4:11-13. God gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to

equip the saints for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Every believer is a potential minister, and the goal is to bring each one into maturity and functionality. Equipping the saints for the work of ministry is paramount because the mind of the Lord is to bring all souls to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. This implies that there is no room for failure. The operational word here is “till we all”. It is not the mind of God that any one should perish. Except there are equipped people in the Church, spiritual accounting for souls will not succeed.

2. Strategic Teams in Church Growth

For effective administration and execution of ministry tasks, the church must build strategic teams. These include:

- a. Tracking Team: Responsible for monitoring growth metrics, attendance, and follow-up.
- b. Intercessory Team: Covers the church, its leadership, and members in consistent prayer.
- c. Teaching Team: Facilitates discipleship classes and biblical instruction.
- d. Counseling Team: Provides spiritual and emotional guidance to members.

3. Leadership Pipeline and Delegation (Acts 6:1-7)

As seen in Acts 6:1-7, the early church faced a growth

challenge that required leadership delegation. The apostles appointed deacons to handle practical needs so they could focus on prayer and ministry of the Word. This model emphasizes the need for identifying capable individuals, empowering them, and releasing them to serve. A healthy leadership pipeline ensures continuity, scalability, and shared responsibility.

4. Human Resources Management Policy

It is important for a Church to have a human resource management policy. Such a policy should address the following.

- a. **Recruitment:** Identifying spiritually mature and gifted individuals.
- b. **Training:** Equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills.
- c. **Evaluation:** Regular assessment of effectiveness and growth.
- d. **Retention:** Encouraging long-term commitment through motivation and care.
- e. **Leadership Development and Succession:** A growing church soon discovers that its greatest asset and its greatest vulnerability lies in its leadership pipeline. If no one steps forward to lead, the work stalls, the ministry atrophies, and vision fades.

God's word gives us clear principles for identifying, training, and endure.

For example in Exodus 18:21, we have what we call the Jethro's principle for leadership identification. It outlines four criteria. These include.

- a. Able Men: This implies fitness, capacity, competence.
- b. God-fearing: Character tested by reverence of God
- c. Truthful: Honest, above reproach
- d. Free from the love of money

Also, in 2 Timothy 2:2, we have the "four-tier" model of Paul

- a. Paul - Timothy (Mentor to protégé)
- b. Timothy - Faithful Men (trained Leaders)
- c. Faithful Men - Others (Multiplication)

The criteria for leadership are faithfulness and Reproducibility.

Faithfulness should be placed above giftedness. A Faithful man is consistent, teachable and loyal to scripture. Such men endure trials, people tend to follow them because they are worthy.

Sustaining leadership in the various ministries in the church requires the designation of an understudy. For example, in the Choir, there should be choir Master and an assistant Choir Master. In administration, there should be more than

one understudy.

5. Action Points for Church Leaders

- a. Identify and document all active and potential workers in the church.
- b. Create structured training modules for different ministry roles.
- c. Develop clear descriptions for ministry roles and expectations.
- d. Implement a system of mentorship and regular performance review.

6. Review Questions

1. According to Ephesians 4:11-13, what is the purpose of ministry gifts?
2. How does Acts 6:1-7 support the need for human resources management in the
3. What components should a church's human resource policy include?
4. Why is a leadership pipeline necessary for church growth?
5. What teams are essential in a church's strategic growth plan?

Chapter Eleven

TOOLS FOR TRACKING AND EVALUATION



1. THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR RECORD KEEPING AND THE ROLE OF DATA (Luke 10:20)

In Luke 10:20, Jesus says,

“Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

This powerful scripture reveals a foundational truth about the importance of record-keeping—not only in the natural but also in the spiritual. God is a meticulous record-keeper. The Bible mentions the Book of Life, a heavenly database where the names of the redeemed are written (Revelation 20:12, Philippians 4:3). This highlights that in God's kingdom, records matter. This scripture reveals more than this. It clearly teaches us two things. Number one: You are not a victorious Christian until your name is written in the

books of heaven. Number two: Your General Overseer or your Pastor is a blind guide if he is not ensuring that your name is written in heaven. Your spiritual father has a duty to account for your soul. Heaven has a recording system.

If heaven has a system of documentation and tracking, then the Church on earth must reflect that heavenly order. Recording and tracking the spiritual journey of individuals is a sacred responsibility. It enables intentional shepherding, informed pastoral care, and strategic discipleship. It provides the basis upon which your spiritual progress can be monitored and evaluated. Do not reject being tracked. It is your personal responsibility to subject yourself to all process by the Church to whom the authority has been given in this regard.

2. SPIRITUAL APPRAISAL METRICS

For any growing church, spiritual progress must be measurable. The way and manner in which financial obedience is measured through tithe cards should be applied in measuring spiritual faithfulness. Not all growth is numerical; some of the most important signs of growth are intangible yet trackable when approached with the right tools and spiritual discernment. The following metrics are critical:

a. Salvation Story

Every believer has a salvation story. A simple yet powerful way to track this is to maintain a **Salvation** Register, which includes the date of salvation, who led the person to Christ,

and a brief testimony. This register is useful for testimonies, follow-up, and spiritual accountability. The church must set aside a day in which members are led to share their salvation testimonies. In order to have the lawful authority to listen to the testimonies of members, Pastor should have a genuine salvation testimony to share. Genuine salvation testimonies can lead to the salvation of the hearers. How did Jesus save you? What happened on that day? How did you encounter Jesus? How were you led to Jesus? What was the sermon you heard on that day that pricked your heart? These are some critical questions Pastor should ask in trying to establish salvation story of a soul in your church. This is what Accounting for souls implies. You must know the spiritual condition of a soul in order to provide spiritual leadership.

b. Baptismal Class Attendance

Tracking attendance in baptismal classes is important in gauging interest, commitment, and readiness for the ordinance of baptism. Pastor should be able to understand the behavioral tendencies of souls that are supposed to progress spiritually. Baptismal class attendance metrics reveals so much about heart of a soul. Sometimes they attend classes to please pastor. Sometimes they attend to conform to the norm. But the ideal behavior should proceed from a heart that desires to be like Jesus.

The **Baptismal Attendance Tracker** should not keep track of attendance alone. It should help to monitor the motivation. The tracking system should contain behavioral

metrics such as frequency, zeal, class participation, demonstration of understanding etc. In addition, the topics covered should be stated.

c. **Discipleship Checkpoints**

Accounting for Souls entails setting up systems that can track milestones. Churches should develop clear **discipleship milestones**—e.g., completion of foundational doctrine, regular devotional life, participation in small groups. Each checkpoint should be documented in a **Discipleship Growth Card** or database for every believer.

d. **Ministry Participation**

As believers grow, they should serve. A **Ministry Engagement Record** helps monitor when a person begins serving, the department they serve in, and periodic evaluations by ministry leaders. This record should be created once a soul is engaged. Ministry Engagement Record encourages stewardship and maturity.

e. **Evangelistic Reproduction**

One mark of maturity is the ability to win and disciple others. A Soul-Winning Record can track personal evangelism, testimonies shared, and spiritual impact. While this must be handled with grace and not legalism, it is important to celebrate spiritual fruitfulness.

3. THE ROLE OF EVALUATION IN CHURCH GROWTH

Whatever you can measure can always be evaluated and improved upon. Without evaluation, there can be no improvement. Measurement facilitates evaluation. Evaluation provides the basis for improvement. Just as Paul instructed the Corinthians to *examine themselves* (2 Corinthians 13:5), churches must periodically reflect on their efforts.

Evaluation helps to:

- a. Identify gaps in spiritual growth.
- b. Recognize ministries that are under-resourced.
- c. Prevent backsliding or spiritual stagnation.
- d. Encourage faithful stewards.
- e. Align the church's vision with tangible progress.

Evaluation tools may include:

- a. Monthly and quarterly **Church Growth Reports**
- b. **Leader Review Forms** assessing department heads
- c. **Membership Health Surveys** (spiritual well-being, involvement, etc.)
- d. **Annual Spiritual Growth Audit**

4. ACTION POINTS

- a. **Pastors and leaders** must emphasize record-keeping as a biblical mandate, not a secular concept.

- b. Set up or strengthen a **Church Database System** (manual or digital).
- c. Train volunteers on the importance of **accurate and ethical data collection**.
- d. Introduce **spiritual growth cards** for each member to track individual journeys.
- e. Conduct **quarterly evaluations** using the spiritual appraisal metrics.
- f. Create a **feedback loop** between ministry leaders and pastoral teams based on evaluation data.

5. REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is record-keeping important in both heaven and the Church?
2. What scriptural support exists for tracking spiritual growth?
3. Name and describe three spiritual appraisal metrics discussed in this chapter.
4. How can tracking evangelistic reproduction help in building a soul-winning culture?
5. What practical steps can your church take to begin evaluating discipleship effectiveness?

Chapter Twelve

CREATING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY



Introduction

Christian life is fundamentally a life of accountability—before God, before our leaders, before one another and before the community we serve. A healthy church cultivates structures and relationships that reinforce responsibility, transparency, and mutual care. In this chapter, we examine biblical foundations, peer structures, and practical steps for embedding accountability into every level of church life.

1. Hebrews 13:17 – Spiritual Accountability to Leadership

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those

who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17, ESV)

Key Truths:

Church leaders (“those who keep watch”) are under a solemn responsibility to care for the flock. Stubbornness and lack of submission to leadership would not be of spiritual advantage to a believer. Likewise, causing those being led to withdraw their loyalty will not be of advantage to a leader. The point of convergence is mutual submission in love. Submission must not be enforced. It should only proceed from obedience to the Lord. Mutual submission prevents bitterness and fosters spiritual growth. Believers are called to respect and cooperate, so that the burden of leadership is borne joyfully.

2. Peer Accountability

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow.”

(Ecclesiastes 4:9–10, ESV)

Peer accountability means mutually checking in, encouraging, and correcting one another to stay on track.

It is relationship based practice whereby individuals of similar status hold each other responsible for their actions, goals, behaviour or growth.

Why It Matters:

- a. Leaders cannot watch every individual all the time.
- b. Trusted peers spot struggles that formal structures might miss.
- c. Intentional “accountability partners” encourage holiness, confession, and endurance.

Peer Accountability Structures to Consider:

- a. Small groups with built-in confession and prayer time.
- b. Accountability pairs meeting weekly for honest check-ins.
- c. Life-on-life discipleship with clear expectations and confidentiality agreements.

3. James 5:16 – Confessing and Praying Together

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

(James 5:16, ESV)

Elements of a Confessional Culture:

- a. Safe environment—no fear of exposure or shame.
- b. Regular rhythms—dedicated times in small groups or counseling for confession.

c. Mutual prayer—believers intercede for each other's growth and healing.

4. Christianity as a Faith of Accountability

“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12, ESV)

Biblical Pattern:

Old Testament: God's covenant people were called to bring tithes, offerings, and lawful behavior under scrutiny (Malachi 3:10).

New Testament: Believers are part of a living body (1 Corinthians 12), responsible for one another's health and growth.

Heaven's Register: Our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20); we will one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Implications:

Accountability isn't optional—it is woven into the gospel itself.

Scripture says:

“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.” I
Corinthian 3:13

A church that ignores accountability risks compromise, deception, and spiritual decline.

ACTION POINTS

a. Teach Regularly on Biblical Accountability

Incorporate Hebrews 13:17, James 5:16, and Romans 14:12 into sermons and small-group studies.

b. Establish Peer Accountability Systems

Launch “Accountability Pairs” or triads with clear confidentiality guidelines.

c. Integrate Confession & Prayer into Small Groups

Dedicate a portion of every small-group meeting to guided confession and intercession.

d. Equip Leaders to Guide Accountability

Provide training on pastoral care, confidentiality, and gracious confrontation.

v. Create Formal Structures for Follow-Up

Develop a simple form or digital platform to track major life–spirit issues (e.g., addiction, relational conflict).

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What responsibility do Hebrews 13:17 place on shepherd-leaders, and how should believers respond?
2. How does Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 illustrate the value of peer accountability?

3. Why is confession essential in James 5:16, and how can churches normalize it?
4. Explain how Romans 14:12 and Luke 10:20 underscore our ultimate accountability.
5. What practical steps can your church take in the next month to strengthen its culture of accountability?

Chapter Thirteen

PRAYER AND REVIVAL AS THE LIFELINE



Introduction

Every healthy church movement flows from sustained, Spirit-empowered prayer. Revival is simply God's people returning to earnest communion with Him, and history shows that no genuine awakening occurs apart from deep, sustained intercession. In this chapter we examine biblical models and practical steps to make prayer the lifeline of church growth.

1. Apostolic Prayer Model — Acts 2:42

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”
(Acts 2:42, ESV)

Key Insights:

- i. Prayer was as foundational to the early church as teaching and fellowship.
- ii. Devotion implies regular, disciplined gatherings (not sporadic meetings).
- iii. Corporate prayer undergirds every other ministry activity.

2. Corporate Boldness Through Prayer — Acts 4:31

“And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.”

(Acts 4:31, ESV)

Pattern:

- a. Prayer together (Acts 4: 23–29)
- b. Spirit-empowerment (vs 31)
- c. Bold witness (vs 31)

Application:

- a. When facing opposition or stagnation, gather for united prayer.
- b. Expect tangible results—a fresh outpouring of Spirit and renewed courage.

3. Prayer for Enlightenment of the Eyes of Understanding — Ephesians 1:17–19

“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened...”

(Eph. 1:17–18a, ESV)

Focus:

Ask God to illumine hearts, not just to stir emotions but to deepen insight.

This kind of prayer fuels maturity, equipping believers to grasp and apply God's truth.

4. Intercession for Souls — 1 Timothy 2:1–4

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people... who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Fourfold Prayer:

Supplications (**personal needs**)

Prayers (**general worship**)

Intercessions (**standing in the gap for others**)

Thanksgivings

Mandate:

We pray not only for our own needs but especially for the lost.

Intercession is the engine of effective evangelism.

5. Praying the Lord of the Harvest—Matthew 9:37–38

“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

Dual Focus:

- a. Awareness—recognize the harvest fields (lost souls around you).
- b. Prayer—ask God to raise and send workers.

Result:

God answers by mobilizing His people—strengthening existing workers and calling new ones.

ACTION POINTS

Schedule Weekly Corporate Prayer:

Dedicate one service per week to extended prayer—include worship, Scripture, and intercession.

Launch a 24/7 Prayer Watch:

Use a sign-up sheet so that at least two people are praying in the church building around the clock.

Prayer for Enlightenment:

Incorporate Ephesians 1:17–19 into small-group prayers, asking specifically for spiritual insight.

Evangelistic Intercession Teams:

Form teams that meet regularly to pray for specific unreached people groups or neighborhoods.

“Laborers” Prayer Emphasis:

Each quarter, focus a sermon series on Matthew 9:37–38 and the call to pray for and send out laborers.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did the early church place prayer on equal footing with teaching and fellowship?
2. How did corporate prayer in Acts 4 lead to bold evangelism?
3. What is the significance of asking God to “enlighten the eyes of your heart” (Eph. 1:18)?
4. Name and describe the four types of prayer Paul urges in 1 Timothy 2:1–4.
5. How does “praying the Lord of the harvest” shape our view of evangelism and mission?

Chapter Fourteen

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



Introduction

Growth that lasts and souls truly transformed is always the fruit of the Spirit's work. Human effort and systems set the stage—but it is the Holy Spirit who convicts, empowers, guides, and produces lasting fruit. In this chapter we examine how the Spirit moves in the believer's life and in the church as a whole.

1. Conviction and Guidance — John 16:8–13

“And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment... He will guide you into all the truth...” (John 16:8–13, ESV)

- a. **Conviction of Sin:** Conviction is deep inner persuasion or assurance brought about by the Spirit of God that leads a person to recognize truth. The Spirit awakens the sinner to their need for forgiveness.
- b. **Conviction of Righteousness & Judgment:** Believers are led into deeper obedience and awareness of God's standard.
- c. **Guidance into Truth:** The Spirit illuminates Scripture, applies it to our lives, and leads us in decisions that align with God's will.

2. Empowerment to Witness — Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8, ESV)

- a. **Pentecostal Outpouring:** The Spirit fills ordinary people with boldness to speak and live the gospel.
- b. **Geographic and Cultural Reach:** From Jerusalem to the ends of the earth—empowerment isn't limited by location. Power to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel is a function of the Holy Spirit.
- c. **Practical Implication:** Every evangelistic effort must be bathed in prayer, asking for Spirit-empowerment rather than relying on techniques alone. Merely raising funds and mobilizing men into evangelism is not the order. The order is BATH IN PRAYER. ASK FOR SPIRIT

EMPOWERMENT. ASK FOR DIRECTION.

3. Producing Fruit That Remains—Galatians 5:22–23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

(Galatians 5:22–23, ESV)

a. **Enduring Character:** These nine qualities mark true disciples.

b. **Corporate Fruitfulness:** As individuals grow, the church body collectively exhibits compassion, unity, and resilience. The corporate growth of the Church is as a result of the growth of the individuals in the Church. Pastor should understand that when a single member complains that 'there is no love in this Church', such an expression is an indication of the spiritual stature of the Church.

c. **Remains:** Unlike programs or numbers, character lasts—souls shaped by these virtues become lifelong ambassadors of Christ. The fruit that remains are the imprints of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

PASTORAL ACTION POINTS

1. Teach on the Person and Work of the Spirit

Preach a series on John 14–16 to deepen congregational understanding.

2. Implement Regular “Spirit-Dependency” Prayer

Begin each service with a brief invitation for Spirit-infilling and guidance.

3. Celebrate Testimonies of Empowerment

Allocate time monthly for people to share how the Spirit led them to bold witness or conviction.

4. Cultivate a Culture of Sensitivity

In small groups, train leaders to pause for Spirit-led correction or encouragement.

5. Assess Fruit, Not Just Activity

During leadership meetings, evaluate ministries by the fruit they produce (Galatians 5:22–23) rather than simply attendance numbers.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does John 16:8–13 describe the Spirit's role in conviction and guidance?
2. In what ways does Acts 1:8 shape our approach to evangelism?
3. Why is the fruit of the Spirit essential for lasting church growth?
4. What practical steps can you take to rely more fully on the Holy Spirit in your ministry?
5. How would you measure “fruit that remains” in your congregation?

Chapter Fifteen

PASTORAL STEWARDSHIP: GOD'S ACCOUNTING PARTNER



Introduction

As pastors, we are called not merely to preach and lead, but to partner with God in the sacred task of accounting for souls. This stewardship transcends programs and budgets—it is the eternal investment of caring for individual lives, guiding them toward Christ. To neglect this calling is to risk the souls entrusted to our care.

1. The Shepherd's Sacred Trust

Ezekiel 3:17–19

“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. . . . If you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, they will die in their sins, but you will have saved yourself.”

Duty to Warn: God appointed Ezekiel as His sentinel—charged to speak truth, warn of danger, and call for repentance. Every Pastor, Prophet, Bishop, Apostle, Evangelist, General Overseer or PAPA, who oversees a congregation, has a sacred duty to warn. We all have the mandate of Ezekiel. Our Lord and Savior did not deviate from this mandate. The Apostles did not deviate from this mandate. What we are seeing today is worrisome. We have people in specialized Ministries with mandates that fall short of the standard. Much as calling is real, it needs to be said that calling that does not warn the sinner is a deviation from divine mandate.

In Jeremiah 14:14 scripture says;

“Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.”

Personal Accountability: Failure to warn the lost would carry the guilt of their death.

Hebrews 13:17

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.”

Mutual Responsibility: The flock honors their shepherd; the shepherd honors their souls.

2. God's Heart for Every Soul

Luke 19:10

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Relentless Pursuit: Christ left heaven's throne to rescue even one wandering sheep. The disposition of a pastor according the heart of the Lord is to seek and to save. Pastoral life is not an arm-chair life. It is a life spent to seek and to save souls whether they are inside or outside the Church.

Jeremiah 31:3–4

*“I have loved you with an' everlasting love;
I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”*

Unfailing Compassion: Pastoral care reflects this constant, tender drawing of God toward His people.

3. Eternal Stakes, Eternal Rewards

Matthew 16:26

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?”

Weight of One Soul: Worldly success is meaningless compared to an eternal destiny. The focus of a Pastor's labor should be toward leading souls to eternity. When they find the way to the Kingdom, other things will fall in place. If we deviate from this eternal stake imagine what the Lord will tell us.

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due for what he has done.”

Divine Audit: Pastors will one day stand before Christ, giving account for every sermon, every visit, every soul shepherded—or neglected.

4. Cultivating a Soul-Sensitive Heart

Dependence in Prayer: A soul-sensitive heart is marked by constant intercession for souls. In John 17, we have the example of Jesus. He gave account of souls in prayer. Paul demonstrated same pattern. We read several accounts of Paul's prayer for the brethren in the Epistles. One of such prayers was the prayer of enlightenment of the eyes of understanding. (Ephesians 1:16-18). Pastor should pray 24/7 for souls.

Philippians 2:5–8: Embrace Christ's humility—daily yielding to the Father and the Spirit:

One factor that defiles the heart of a Pastor is lack of humility. Souls are like babies. They can soil you at anytime with either stool or a whitish phlegm called mucus. Babies can put parents to the test. Now, it may be a daunting task to deal with adults who behave like babies. Once you are easily irritable, you'll fail the test of humility. A soul-sensitive heart is a humane heart. Except you cultivate such a heart, you cannot make headway as a steward of the mysteries of God.

John 15:5: Abide in the Lord: Apart from Him, we can do nothing; our shepherding must flow from His life in us.

Meditate on the Word: Hebrews 4:12: The Word probes our hearts; let it shape our affections for the lost.

Psalm 1:2–3: Delight in God's law so that our souls bear fruit in season.

5. Practical Rhythms of Stewardship

Purpose-Driven Preaching:

2 Timothy 4:2; Colossians 1:28–29: Preach with clarity, urgency, and love—each message designed to mature and mobilize souls.

Relational Shepherding:

1 Peter 5:2–4: Shepherd the flock willingly, not under compulsion, serving as examples.

Acts 20:28: Guard the church of God, purchased with Christ's own blood.

Equipping Disciples

Ephesians 4:11–13: The fivefold gifts exist to equip every believer for ministry—pastors must release these gifts.

2 Timothy 2:2: Trust faithful men with the truth, that they too may teach others.

6. Overcoming Barriers to Pastoral Passion

Delegation and Self-Care

Exodus 18:13–23: Learn from Moses—delegate wisely so ministry burdens don't crush you.

Courage over Fear

2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:31: God gives a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. If God is for us, who can be against us?

7. Sustaining the Flame

Regular Retreats & Renewal (Mark 6:31): Withdraw seasonally to rest and renew vision.

Accountability Structures (James 5:16): Confess struggles to trusted peers who pray and spur you on.

Celebrating Each Salvation (Luke 15:7): Rejoice over every soul brought home—this fuels further passion.

8. Inviting the Flock into Co-Stewardship

Communal Vision (Philippians 1:27; Acts 2:44–47): The entire church bears one another's burdens and joyfully multiplies care.

Tools & Practices: Soul-care teams, vision nights, “Shepherd's Prayer” gatherings—structures that mobilize every believer.

9. The Joy of Reaping Together

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20

“What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”

Revelation 2:17

“To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone with a new name.”

Heavenly Reward: The greatest honor is to hear “*Well done, good and faithful servant,*” and to share in the joy of rescued souls.

Chapter Sixteen

CONCLUSION & FINAL ADMONITION



Do not trifle with this calling. To neglect pastoral stewardship is to gamble with eternal destinies. God's Word warns that unfaithful servants will be judged more strictly (James 3:1). A church that ignores the sacredness of souls will find its programs hollow, its leaders wearied, and its members lost.

But a church led by shepherds who partner with God in accounting for each soul will experience enduring revival, multiplied discipleship, and the joy of reaping a harvest that lasts into eternity. May every pastor here stand firm in this high calling—because every soul matters to God, and the consequences of doing otherwise are infinitely grave.

“Be faithful over a few things, and I will make you ruler over many things.”

(Matthew 25:21, ESV)

GIVING ACCOUNT ENTAILS LEADING PEOPLE INTO THE RECORD BOOKS OF GOD.

Throughout Scripture it is clear that the strength and health of God's church is linked not to numbers alone, but to genuine transformed lives. The size of the church is determined by the number of persons whose names are in the book of life. The ultimate goal of the church is to save people who heaven recognizes as saved.

In Revelations 20:12 the word of God says:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

The true spiritual strength of a church is measured by “fruits”. You can have the numbers and yet, fail to bring glory to God. **John 15:8** says “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” The numbers that attend church services is good. But it is when their characters and their daily actions conform with the image of Jesus Christ that you bring glory to God as a General Overseer.

What is the order of growth? The Holy Scriptures says in **Acts 2:42–47**,

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ... And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

We notice that devotion to spiritual formation precedes numerical growth. A spiritually transformed community naturally attracts and sustains new, genuinely changed souls. It needs therefore to be understood that the church must set up structures that support genuine life transformation. It takes transformed lives to grow the church numerically. This is what accounting for souls is all about.

Human effort (“**planting**,” “**watering**”) is important, but the real strength of a church comes from God's work of transformation in individual hearts.¹ **Corinthians 3:6–9** says, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.” More often than not the modern day church basks in the glory of the human effort of gathering crowds. Much effort is made to plant and water. But all that is nothing if God does not give the desired spiritual growth called “**transformation**”. In order for our work to bring glory to God, we must place emphasis on life transformation.

The Lord and His apostles make us to understand that the productivity of the church will be accounted for by the fruits it bears. For instance, in **Matthew 13:23** (Parable of the Sower) Jesus said, *“As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”* What was He saying? Jesus was telling us that the health of the “soil” (the church) is demonstrated by fruitfulness. The fruitfulness we are talking about is spiritual growth and maturity in its members.

The quality of your work as a Man of God is determined by the productivity of your Church-soil. The measure of your fruitfulness is *“the one who hears the word and understands; who indeed bears fruit and yields.”* If you have one hundred souls in your church and only one hears and understands, that is the measure of your fruitfulness and your ministry's fruitfulness.

The modern day church must visit its soil. As it is today, it is more of a man-pleasing church, manipulating unsuspecting souls with programs that entertain rather than transform them to look like Christ.

Apostle Paul continued with the same doctrinal thoughts with the Lord. In **Ephesians 4:15–16** he said,

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the

head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

The strength of the body depends on each member's growth (“**working properly**”) in other words, transformed lives cooperating for mutual building up.

These passages consistently teach that a church's true power lies in transformed lives—“**fruit that remains**” (John 15:16)—and that genuine spiritual formation is the surest path to healthy, sustainable growth.

By now, we should understand from scriptural standpoint of view that true life and spiritual transformation is not measured by wealth or possessions but by the condition of the heart and the fruit of godliness. Let us take a cue from the mind of our Lord and Savior Jesus who said in **Luke 12:15**,

Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

The church should not mislead souls to think material wealth is a measure of God's approval.

Jesus explicitly warns that life's value isn't tied to material abundance. But what do we see today? We are falling heads

over heel to produce a materially affluent church. When you shall be giving account of our stewardship, our productivity will not be measured by the number of people that are rich in goods but by the number of souls whose lives God used you to transform.

We are not without the right insight in this matter. What shall it profit a General Overseer to produce members that gain the whole world and lose their souls? Can't we align with Mark 8:36 that says, ***“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”*** Earthly gain—even all the world's wealth—is worthless compared to the state of our soul.

God evaluates inner transformation rather than external prosperity. That must be the understanding when we read **1 Timothy 6:6–8** that says,

“But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.”

True gain is godliness, not material wealth.

A church's vitality and transformation are demonstrated in godly character, love, and newness of life—not in the material riches of its members. What bench-marks this Church are men that are “new creation”. We must put in

place the production line of these new creations. This is what this book is about. Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:17** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

This is the context in which Men of God operating with whatever kind of calling should see their responsibility. Except you are producing transformed souls whose names enter into the Book of Life, you are not a Pastor according to God's heart.

Let it be known by all believers who may by chance read this book that the Church of Jesus Christ is like a production line. You enter the production line as a Visitor. When you begin to attend Sunday services and weekly activities regularly, you are a New Comer. Then, one faithful day, the sermon that transforms life is preached to you. Jesus invites people into the Kingdom of God through the LIFE TRANSFORMING sermon titled REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND.

Jesus Christ came down from heaven to seek and to save people that are lost in the darkness of sin. When you respond to His invitation, convinced that you are a sinner and you are convicted of the charge of sin, you become a NEW CONVERT. It is expected that you will answer this invitation publicly, not ashamed of the Lord. You will answer the altar call. As you do so, you have just genuinely committed yourself into a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ. He becomes your Lord and Savior. You become a

life-time disciple. The life of a disciple is a life of learning.

It is then and then only you become a Christian. As you become a new convert, you are supposed to be taught to know the Lord, the will of the Lord and the way of the Lord. You are supposed to be taught the lifestyle of the Kingdom. You are not only going to be taught. You will be taught to OBSERVE whatsoever the Lord has commanded. The life of the Kingdom is a life of obedience to commands. In order to be taught, you will be admitted into the NEW CONVERTS CLASS of the Church. You will be taught the FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD. You graduate and progress into another stage of training called STRONG MEAT. Nobody graduates from this class as a Christian until RAPTURE. However, it is at this stage that your name enters into the books of the Church as a MEMBER.

Having heard this, it is important to look at who you are entrusting your life to. Who is your pastor? Is your pastor feeding your soul or your flesh? True shepherds care sacrificially for souls. Those who “**devour**” God's people for gain—be it offerings, fame, or influence—are rebuked as false shepherds. Any man who feeds your soul with messages that address the rudiments of the world that is passing away is a ravening wolf. They are false prophets. False prophets exploit the flock. They take advantage of your fears and your sense of vulnerability. They make merchandize out of you.

How do you know them? Of course, you know them by their fruits. One of their fruits is prosperity gospel. Another fruit is signs and wonders. When churches elevate material prosperity as proof of God's blessing, they risk turning the gospel into a “**package**” sold for riches. The gospel leads you to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. But false prophets seek to validate their prophet-hood by causing you to seek the things that are supposed to be added unto you by reason of your seeking the kingdom.

Miraculous signs can accompany both true and false ministries. The test of the true Church of Jesus Christ is the **fruit of genuine discipleship**—holiness, self-sacrifice, and multiplied disciple-makers. You are expected to progress from one stage of your spiritual transformation to another until you also become a disciple maker. If your pastor or your PAPA as we call them in Nigeria is not spiritually developing you in this direction, please, run for your life.

Remember how many times Jesus Christ warned you about these deceivers, these ravening wolves, these gospel merchants. In **Matthew 7:15**, He said, “***Beware of false prophets,..***” Toward the end of His earthly Ministry He cautioned again in Matthew 24:4- “***...Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.***”

The kingdom is **not a commodity**. BE WARNED! Any attempt to commercialize grace, healing, or Holy-Spirit power is an affront to the gospel. Some of them sell

anointing oil. Some sell handkerchiefs. Some sell Jerusalem water. Grace is a free gift. When Jesus was commissioning His disciples, He told them in Matthew 18:8,

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

Yet, you run after these men, paying for all sorts of things. God is not for sale. Salvation is not for sale. Deliverance is not for sale. The Holy Spirit cannot be put inside a bottle of anointing oil. The power of God that saves, heals and delivers from the bondage of sin and of satan is called THE GOSPEL.

Any pastor or PAPA that cannot account for your spiritual progression will surely lead you to hell fire. Hell is real. Be warned. The Bible calls pastors to be **faithful stewards** of souls (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2–4), not hucksters of signs or merchants of prosperity. A church that chases wealth or spectacle at the expense of genuine transformation cannot properly fulfill the Great Commission. Its leaders will one day give account for every soul they led—and misled.

APPENDIX 1: FIRST-TIME GUEST FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

1. BEFORE THE SERVICE (Preparation Stage)

- a. Pray specifically for visitors to feel God's love and presence.
- b. Ensure guest welcome area is clean, friendly, and clearly marked.
- c. Prepare visitor welcome packs (church brochure, welcome letter, small gift).
- d. Assign trained greeters and ushers to be alert for first-timers.

2. DURING THE SERVICE (Engagement Stage)

- a. Greeters warmly welcome guests and offer to escort them.
- b. Have a first-time connect card ready (paper or digital QR code).
- c. Publicly acknowledge first-time visitors briefly (without pressure).
- d. Mention the welcome gift and invitation to meet the pastor after service.
- e. Share a clear next step: small group, newcomers' class, etc.

3. IMMEDIATELY AFTER SERVICE

- a. Invite first-time guests to a short meet & greet with church leaders.
- b. Offer light refreshments or a photo booth (optional).
- c. Ensure someone personally thanks them and gives the welcome pack.
- d. If they filled a connect card: confirm their preferred follow-up method (call/text/email).

4. WITHIN 48 HOURS (Follow-Up Stage)

- a. Send a thank-you text or WhatsApp message.
- b. Send a personal email with: thank-you, sermon link, newcomer event.
- c. If permitted: make a friendly call (under 3 minutes) to say thanks.

5. WITHIN THE WEEK

- a. Add them to the church database.
- b. Invite them to a relevant small group or interest group.
- c. Mail or deliver a handwritten postcard or note.
- d. Add to the intercession list for prayer.

6. 30 DAYS LATER

- a. If they haven't returned, check in and invite again.
- b. Invite to the next welcome class, special service or event.

APPENDIX 2: Weekly Conversion Report

Church Name: _____

Week: _____

Report Prepared By: _____

Department: Evangelism / Follow-up / Discipleship

Pastor in Charge: _____

i. Summary Statistics

Metric	This Week	Previous Week	Change (%)
Number of New Converts			
First-Time Attendees			
Total Souls Reached			
Number of Follow-Up Visits Made			
Converts Baptized			
Enrolled in Discipleship Class			

ii. Individual Convert Details

Name	Date of Conversion	Age Group	Gender	Phone/Contact	Invited By	Follow-Up Status	Attending Discipleship?	Notes

iii. Follow-Up Activities

Total Converts Contacted by Phone: _____

Total Home Visits Made: _____

Prayer Meetings Attended by Converts: _____

Needs Identified (e.g., counseling, welfare support, transport challenges):

iv. Discipleship Engagement

Class Level	No. of Converts Enrolled	Attendance This Week	Progress
Foundation Class			
Baptism Class			
Maturity Class			

v. Recommendations & Notes

- a. Encourage House Fellowship leaders to adopt a convert each.
- b. Improve post-service integration strategies.
- c. Need more volunteers for follow-up.
- d. Plan a welcome event for converts on [insert date].

APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE VISITORS' (FIRST-TIMERS) REGISTER

MONTH.....YEAR.....

S/NO	NAME OF BRETHREN	DATE	ADDRESS OF BRETHREN	WHO INVITED YOU	PHONE NUMBER	REMARKS

APPENDIX 4:

SAMPLE NEW COMERS' REGISTER

MONTH..... YEAR.....

S/NO	NAME (SURNAME FIRST)	PHONE NO	OCCUPATION	RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS	HOME TOWN	LGA OF ORIGIN	STATE OF ORIGIN	MARITAL STATUS	WHO INVITED THIS PERSON	FOLLO WED UP BY	REMARKS

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE NEW CONVERTS' REGISTER

MONTH..... YEAR.....

S/NO	NAME OF BRETHREN	DATE	PHONE NUMBER	OCCUPATION	RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS	HOME TOWN	STATE OF ORIGIN	MARITAL STATUS	FOLLOWED UP BY

APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE BAPTISMAL AND FOUNDATION DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

MONTH..... YEAR.....

S/NO	NAME OF BRETHREN	PHONE NUMBER	HOME TOWN	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION	DATE OF BAPTISM	WHO BAPTIZED YOU	REMARK

APPENDIX 6: SAMPLE MEMBERSHIP REGISTER:

MONTH YEAR.....YEAR.....

NAME OF FELLOWSHIP.....

S/ N	DAT E	NAME OF BRETHR EN	HO ME TOW N	ADDRE SS	SE X	BAPTIZ ED	AGE D	OCCUPATI ON	EMA IL	PHON E NUMB ER	NEX T OF KIN	REMA RK

**SAMPLE “PLAN YOUR VISIT” WEB PAGE
TEMPLATE**

CHURCH NAME – PLAN YOUR VISIT

We know visiting a new church can be overwhelming.
That's why we've made it easy for you to feel at home.

SERVICE TIMES:

Sundays – 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

Wednesdays – 6:30 PM (Midweek Service)

Kids' Church Available During All Services

LOCATION:

123 Hope Street, YourCity, Country

Free parking available onsite

Accessible by bus routes X and Y

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- a. Friendly people who are glad you came
- b. Live worship and Bible teaching
- c. Safe and fun children's programs
- d. A free gift just for you!
- e. Casual attire is welcome – come as you are!

BRINGING KIDS?

- a. Children (ages 1–12) are welcome in our Kids Zone
- b. Our team is background-checked and trained
- c. You'll be given a secure check-in and check-out tag

PLAN YOUR VISIT FORM (optional):

Want us to expect you? Fill out this short form:

Name

Phone or Email

Which service will you attend?

Do you have children coming with you?

I'd like to meet a pastor

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Message us on WhatsApp: [Phone Number]

About the Author

Pastor Akpobido Jeremiah Ebide worked for several years as an accountant and administrator in both private and public sectors. He has vast experience in designing and implementing organizational structures that support growth and accountability.

Pastor Ebide has devoted his life to local church leadership. For over three decades, he has served in various capacities such as local Church Pastor, Zonal Administrator and National Secretary of the Administrators' Fellowship; as well as Youth Pastor.

Today, he oversees multiple congregations, mentoring pastors and church administrators. He is a preacher and a teacher of the Gospel.

In **ACCOUNTING FOR SOULS**, he blends biblical insight with practical systems to strengthen both souls and structures.

