



The Law of the Harvest

Practical Principles of Effective Missionary Work

Section III. Chapter 25: Principles of Leadership

Many administrative factors can enhance or inhibit church growth. Some of the key factors include strategic planning, church planting, use of mass media, and missionary allocation. Jim Montgomery, founder of Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN), a group that has helped double and triple evangelical growth rates in many countries, observed that churches which adopt appropriate strategic planning measures on average see their growth rates double.[240] Most of these factors cannot be readily influenced by individual members or missionaries and are discussed in detail in the principles of leadership section.

Leaders who diligently seek to enhance their outreach effectiveness often find few sources from which to gain information and insight. The Preach My Gospel manual, while excellent, is brief. Leadership materials often focus on policies and procedures but offer few principles and even less information. Other faiths have produced a rich missiologic literature addressing considerations such as how to conduct effective media outreach efforts or when it is appropriate to build local chapels, while scarcely any mention of these topics can be found in LDS sources. Missionaries of other faiths can access extensive data and analyses regarding the needs and opportunities of the areas where they serve, while many LDS missionaries serve their entire missions without even a firm grasp of local member activity or convert retention rates. Resources evaluating cultural aspects and local conditions that impact the sharing of the gospel rarely delve deeper than three- to four-page Brigham Young University "culturgrams" written for business travelers. The few books that have attempted to provide insight into effective missionary work rather than merely retelling inspirational stories focus almost exclusively on the role of individual missionaries.

//

In conjunction with the official Preach My Gospel manual, this book covers the basics that are necessary to effectively find, teach, baptize, and retain converts, inspire member-missionaries, and build strong church units. This leadership section provides additional information and principles of church growth that cannot be practically implemented by individual members or missionaries but reflect important considerations for leaders. The material in this section comes primarily from analysis of existing data and from observations of both effective and ineffective leaders.

I do not claim to have all of the answers. I am not a leader and have no aspirations and can provide candid observations without political or administrative constraints. My purpose is not to "inform the Brethren," nor do I deign to "steady the Ark." The following material is offered solely as my personal observations, research, and conclusions. I know that many individuals in leadership positions are aware of opportunities and challenges related to the topics covered here. I recognize that leaders at times have reasons for policies that transcend intellectual understanding and that in some cases there may be critical evidence not available to me. I do however hope that individuals will study and ponder the data so that whatever conclusions they come to will be informed and carefully considered ones. I do not expect that the reader will necessarily agree with every point, but I am confident that a greater awareness of these topics can enhance effectiveness.

[240] Montgomery, James, "13 Steps to a Successful Growth Program," Dawn Ministries, Undated article, www.dawnministries.org/documents/files/books/13%20Steps.PDF.