



Rev. Dr. Tommy Goode
Church Growth and Health Consultant
www.mid-america-disciples.org/available-consultants
tommywgoode@gmail.com
417.860.3471 (voice/text)

I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused it to grow. So neither the one who plants counts for anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters work as one, but each will receive his reward according to his work. We are coworkers belonging to God. You are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NET)

We are the body of Christ.

You have joined us in one body, O God, to live for our Lord in the world. Give us your Spirit that, working together without envy or pride, we may serve our Lord and Head. Forgive our slack faith and separate ways. Help us to be the body of Christ. O God, we are your church, called, adopted, built up, blessed and joined to Jesus Christ. Help us to know who we are, and in all we do to be your useful servants.

The Chalice Worship Book

It is the role and responsibility of leaders to focus on church growth and health through visionary leadership and strategic action. It is no longer an option in the current culture to do church as usual if indeed there is to be a viable and sustainable future for many struggling congregations. Of primary importance is following the scripture lesson from the Apostle Paul (missionary church planter and forming pastor) by which we are to be informed that biblical leadership is shared stewardship with accountability for each one and reliance on God for the outcomes.

Given the season of the year (Springtime) I am further reminded that gardening can provide lessons for doing church growth. Similarly, to community gardening being by the community, for the community, and to the benefit of the community, so it is for the local church. Church growth and health can be measured in the gardening tasks of planting, growing, and harvesting. Similarly, a local congregation is like a garden, and the produce is the formation of the rule of Christ in us and through us.

These gardening tasks can be used as planning and implementation guides for church growth and health. Planting is the preparation and formation stages for church growth. Growing is the development and sustainability stages for church growth. Harvesting is what healthy growing churches do. Perhaps a table talk among congregational leaders discussing these concepts could lead to incentivized strategic actionable outcomes.

Too often it seems too many have become religious consumers rather than spiritual gardeners when it comes to church growth and health. Some having developed a shopper's mentality and apparently forgetting that fresh produce is the end product of the gardening process. Church growth and health are the result of leadership, labor, and harvesting that is practiced within the church and extended to the community.