



Biblical Secrets of Church Growth



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The Garden Model For Growth

Why Parables?

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- Familiar scenes/objects easily remembered.

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- "They expected the Messiah to prove His claims by mighty deeds of conquest, to establish His empire on the ruins of earthly kingdoms. This expectation Christ answered in the parable of the sower...

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□ A "tender plant & sprouting root."
ISA. 53:2

A spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a blue title box. The title box is a solid blue rectangle with a white border, containing the text "Our Teachers" in white. The notebook is bound with a silver spiral on the left side. The background is a dark blue gradient.

Our Teachers

Our Teachers

- "His works, as seen in the natural world, are not one half comprehended or appreciated. These silent preachers will teach human beings their lessons, if they will only be attentive hearers." Lift Him Up, p. 66.

Complimentary Laws

Complimentary Laws

- "For as the earth (natural) bringeth forth her bud, and the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; SO the Lord will cause righteousness and praise (spiritual) to spring forth before all nations." Isaiah 61:11

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The Sower and the Church

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- "Listen! Behold, a sower (Christ, Mt. 13:37) went out to sow. 4. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Mark 4:3,4.

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- The communal gardens.
- The church hardened in a traditional rut.

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□ The cold and indifferent church.

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□ The ancient, primitive plow.

□ The careless, world loving church.

□ 8. But other seed fell on **good ground** and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred. 9. And He said unto them, '**He who has ears to hear, let him hear!**'
Mark 4:3-9, NKJV.

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□ **The faithful church** (Rev. 14:12).

God's Garden

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□ "The Lord will guide you (Israel) continually... You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail."
Isaiah 58:11

□ "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion... Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden..." Jer. 31:12.

□ "The church is His garden,
adorned with a variety of trees,
plants, and flowers...In His
spiritual garden there are
many varieties of flowers."

EVAN. P. 98, 99.

□ The garden accommodates
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□ The different varieties fulfill different functions.

□ A Church's garden has plants at different stages of growth and maturity.

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- God plants each seedling in His garden. (1 Cor. 12:18).

Our Tidy Housekeepers

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□ "From the endless variety of plants and flowers, we may learn an important lesson. All blossoms are not the same in form or color. Some possess healing virtues. Some are always fragrant...

- There are professing Christians who think it their duty to make every other Christian like themselves. This is man's plan, not the plan of God. In the church of God there is room for characters as varied as are the flowers in a garden..." Evangelism, p. 99.

A spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a blue title box. The title box contains the text "CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT" in white, bold, uppercase letters. The notebook is bound with a silver spiral binding on the left side. The title box is framed by a white border with black corner tabs.

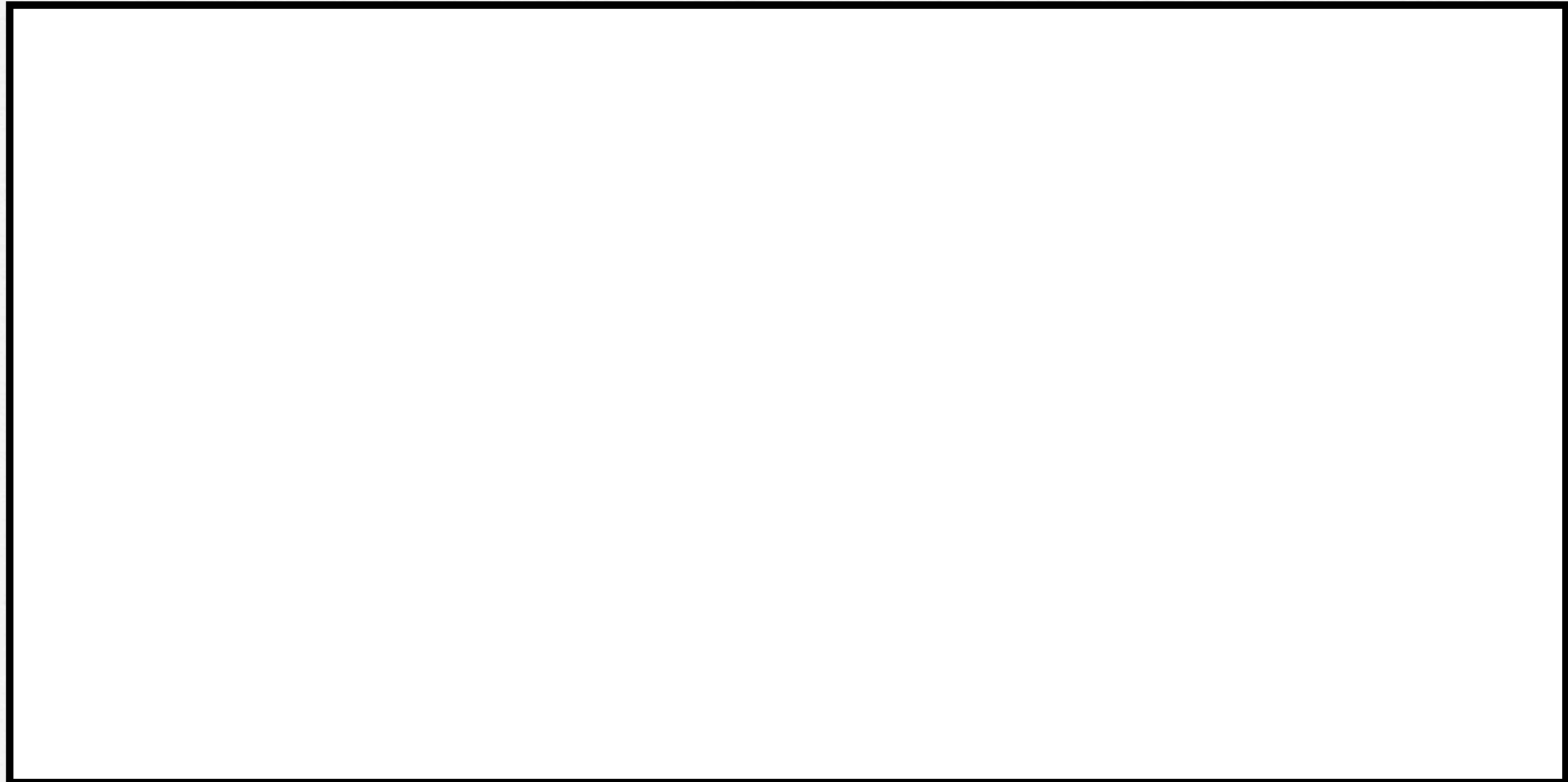
CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT

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- "The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such...The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous Satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor..." COL, p. 56.

Good Soil

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- Soil conditions determine outcomes.

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- Of the four soil conditions only one produced a crop.

A spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a blue title box. The title box contains the text "ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS" in white, bold, uppercase letters. The notebook is open to a blank page.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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- Strong biblical teaching ministry.

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- An understanding of mission.

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- Strong biblical teaching ministry.
- An understanding of mission.
- Bridging ministries & public evangelism.

☐ Soul-winning Sabbath School.

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☐ A welcoming, nurturing,
embracing membership.

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☐ Men's & woman's ministries.

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☐ Men's & woman's ministries.

☐ Hospitality ministries.

Degrees of Receptivity

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- THE WAYSIDE: Represents the unbelieving world. 1. They are spiritually paralyzed. 2. They see no need of God. 3. They sense no danger.

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- Our Evaluation: 1. They are not tillable. 2. They are a waste of time. 3. Any seed they receive is by accident.

- Stony Ground Hearer: 1. Fascinated with the theory of the gospel, but unconverted. 2. His selfish/self-centered nature is like rock laying under the soil. 3. Superficial/shallow.

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- Our Evaluation: Promising, but spasmodic, exasperating. After initial

- Thorny Ground Hearer: 1. An openly worldly Christian. 2. Thorns cut, but not uprooted. 3. A materialistic pleasure-lover.

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- Our Evaluation: 1. They create too many problems. 2. We don't have the time or energy to invest, so we avoid them.

□ Good Ground Hearers: 1. Honest and sincere. 2. Welcomes truth. 3. He surrenders himself to God's will.

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□ Our Evaluation: 1. He is our kind of person. 2. We relate easily. 3. Minimal investment is required.

The Parable of the Full Ear

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- "And He said, The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow he himself does not know how.

□ For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." Mark 4:26-29.

THE SEED

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COL, P. 38.

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- Seed is unpretentious, but powerful.
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- Germination is unobserved by us.
- The "tender plant" and "sprouting root" illustrate the miraculous nature of the coming Messiah and the growth of His kingdom ISAIAH 53:2.

MYSTERIOUS GROWTH

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- "God's ways of bringing His kingdom are more mysterious than we can know. Our duty is not to fathom these ways, but to be obedient to what the Lord tells us to do. In the context of Mark's parable, obedience would lead us to plant good seed, and then be a peace." Shuster, Ministry, March 2011.

WHY SO LITTLE RESULTS?

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- "This is our problem of methodology today, well intentioned ceremonies, programs, organizations, commissions and crusades of human ingenuity are trying valiently to do a job that can only be done by men in the power of the Holy Spirit. Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, P. 112.

□ "There is great necessity for us to realize our dependence on God. Too much confidence is placed in man, too much reliance on human inventions. There is too little confidence in the power which God stands ready to give." COL, p. 82.

The Agricultural Cycle

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□ Soil Preparation.

The Agricultural Cycle

- Soil Preparation.
- Maturation.

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- Soil Preparation.
- Maturation.
- Harvest & Preservation.

The Agricultural Cycle

- Soil Preparation.
- Maturation.
- Harvest & Preservation.
- It's like a three-legged stool.

Soil Preparation

Soil Preparation

- We putter around with the soil.

Soil Preparation

- We putter around with the soil.
- "The sowers of the seed have a work to do in preparing hearts to receive the gospel...In Christlike sympathy we should come close to men individually, and seek to awaken their interest in the great things of eternal life.

□ Their hearts may be as hard as the beaten highway, and apparently it may be a useless effort to present the saviour to them; but while logic may fail to move, and argument be powerless to convince, the love of Christ, revealed in personal ministry, may soften the stony heart, so that the seed of truth can take root." COL, p. 57.

The Maturation Period

The Maturation Period

□ "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth...

□ waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." James 5:7,8.

IMPATIENCE=FAILURE

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- "The husbandman worketh. if he does not plough and clean and smooth his soil, and cast in the living seeds in their season, he will have no waiting-work to do, and nothing to wait for. It is not sufficiently impressed upon us in moral and spiritual spheres that only workers can be waiters...

□ If a man has not worked, what has he to wait for, what has he to wait about? In all true waiting there is expectancy; but expectancy must be based upon something. The husbandman bases it upon his work. Waiting that has no work behind it, and no work in it, is dreamy sentiment, and is no good to anybody...

- The husbandman has to wait, and work while he waits, for the fruitage of his sowing. The fields must be guarded, tended, nourished, while the crops are growing. Robert Tuck, The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary, vol. 30, p. 611.

THE HARVEST

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- Picking only ripened fruit.
- Garden vs. Commercial model.

□ "I began to gather the fruit near by, but very carefully, for fear of picking the green berries, which were so mingled with the ripe fruit that I could pick only one or two berries from a cluster. GW, p. 136.

A spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a blue title box. The title box is a horizontal rectangle with a white border and a blue fill, containing the word "PRESERVATION" in white, bold, uppercase letters. The notebook is bound with a silver spiral on the left side. The background is a dark blue gradient.

PRESERVATION

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□ we dehydrate, can, freeze, pickle etc.

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- "Then I said, 'will you take care of these berries, and then go with me to look for more fruit on the high bushes?'

□ But they had made not preparation to care for the fruit... I became tired of waiting, and finally asked, 'Did you not come to gather fruit? Then why are you not prepared to take care of it.?' QW, p. 138

A spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a blue banner in the center. The banner contains the text "PROMISED SUCCESS" in white, bold, uppercase letters. The notebook is bound with a silver spiral on the left side. The banner is framed by a white border with black corner tabs.

PROMISED SUCCESS

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- "And He said, 'To what shall we liken the kingdom of God?...It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.'" Mark 4:30-32