GOD'S PLAN FOR CHURCH GROWTH
Ephesians 4:7-16

Introduction: 1) Church growth is not numbers, numbers are by products of Church growth. What is Church growth? Church growth is dependent upon the God's goal for the Church. Notice in our text that the goal is for us to grow into the likeness of Christ, this is what we were predestined for and what Jesus died for, so we can see his glory in the future 2) This morning I want to show God's plan for accomplishing this, his plan for Church growth

I. First, God has planned for leadership - Ephesians 4:11
A. Early Church had all of these gifts
B. We now have Evangelists and Pastor-teachers
C. The purpose of these gifts to the Church
1. Provide what is lacking in the disciples for the work of helping people become more like Jesus - 4:12,13 (help them to learn how to do it)
2. To ensure the disciple know right doctrine called, The Faith - 4:13,14

II. Second, God has planned for the body to build itself up - 4:15,16
A. By speaking the truth in love and includes loving criticism of where others are lacking in their likeness to Christ
1. This refers to our motive when we speak to each other. Be careful that you do not use condemning words thus stripping hope away in your relationship with that person - Ephesians 4:29,30
2. One realization we must face is that Church people sometimes say things that hurt our feelings, we must not let those hurt feelings detract from our goal - Ephesians 4:31
3. Let our character instead reflect the likeness of Jesus - Ephesians 4:32; 5:1,2 (let's seek to be kind, sensitive to the feelings of others, desirous to forgive others when they say hurtful things to us because Jesus was that way, he loved us before we loved him)
B. Speaking the truth in love is something that must be earned through a growing relationship with that person. Words can be

ignored or found offensive if you haven't earned the right to say certain things to people. This is why we seek out certain people during difficult times. - Ephesians 4:16 (seek to have as many relationships as you can have with people, this is what the definition of fellowship really is, it causes a mutual growing of relationships with Jesus through your personal relationship, ask yourself in your relationships, does this person encourage me and help me in my relationship with Jesus or do they discourage me)

Conclusion: 1) This is the one time I will agree with a certain political person, it does take a village in a Church to get the job done. This is a Church that is growing and it will reflected over the years in various ways, strong leadership, strong biblical truth taught, strong relationships designed to help people become more like Jesus. The numbers sort of take care of themselves. 2) When you consider a staff Pastor, youth pastor, you need to take these things into consideration. Is he able and does he teach God's Word well and second, is he relational, will he get into the lives of our young people so he can help them become more like Jesus.