

Church Growth in Acts

A. Scott Moreau

The following is a compilation of methods which were practiced by the early church as mentioned in the book of Acts. They are categorized into eight major categories. While many of the methods fit into more than one category, to avoid repetition we have tried to place them only in the most relevant one. In this presentation, we have not sought to identify the principles behind the methods, restricting our material to the methods themselves.

RELIANCE ON GOD

1. Prayer: 1:14, 24; 2:42; 4:24-31; 5:6; 6:4; 12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 28:8
2. Being filled with the Holy Spirit: 2:2-13, 38; 4:8, 31; 7:55; 10:44-48; 11:24; 13:9, 52; 19:2-6
3. Praising God: 2:47; 3:8-9; 16:25
4. Glorifying God: 3:11-14; 4:21; 10:46; 11:18; 13:48(?); 21:20
5. Obeying God: 4:19-20; 5:29; 8:26; 9:10-17; 10:19-29; 13:2-3; 16:6-10; 12:19
6. Fearing God: 9:31
7. Going on in the comfort of the Holy Spirit: 9:31
8. Fasting: 13:2-3; 14:23
9. Ministering to the Lord (e.g., worshipping): 13:2
10. Facing persecution and persevering: 14:3, 20a; 16:4(?)
11. Commending new churches ministries/leaders to the Lord: 14:23, 26
12. Singing hymns of praise: 16:25
13. Not counting own life as important: 20:24; 21:1

BUILDING UP BELIEVERS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY ("INREACH")

1. Teaching/preaching for edification: 1:15-22; 2:42; 5:21-5, 42; 11:26; 13:1; 14:22; 15:35; 18:11; 20:20
2. Disciplining errant believers: 5:1-11
3. Laying hands on for receiving the Holy Spirit: 8:17; 9:17; 19:6
4. Laying hands on for consecration to ministry: 5:6; 13:3
5. Building up new converts: 9:27
6. Encouraging/strengthening: 11:23; 13:43; 14:22; 15:32, 41; 16:40; 18:23
7. Following up churches: 9:32; 14:21; 15:36, 41; 16:1-5; 18:23
8. Seeking theologically true and culturally relevant solutions: 15:2-30; 16:3

9. Confessing sins and disclosing practices: 19:18
10. Destroying occult objects: 19:19
11. Maintaining culturally important traditions(?): 18:18; 21:21-26
12. Giving testimony as a form of witnessing: 22:1-21; 26:2-29
13. Being a model for other believers: 20:18-35

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Selecting leaders: 1:23-26; 14:23
2. Reporting to a local church: 4:23; 11:2-18; 12:17; 14:27; 15:4; 18:22(?); 21:19
3. Delegating tasks: 6:2-6; 13:2-3; 14:23; 15:2, 22; 19:22; 20:28
4. Sending leaders to deliver important decisions made by the church: 15:22

BODY LIFE or COMMUNITY

1. Gathering together: 2:1; 11:26; 14:27; 15:30; 20:1
2. Devoting to fellowship: 2:42; 20:7
3. Breaking of bread: 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11
4. Sharing all things in common: 2:44-45; 4:32-37
5. Going to the temple/synagogue (church): 3:1; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:2, 10; 18:4, 19; 19:8
6. Dealing with questions or problems as a body of believers: 6:2; 11:2-18; 15:2-30
7. Taking up a relief collection: 11:29-30

EXPERIENCING THE SUPERNATURAL

1. Speaking in tongues: 2:6-11; 10:46; 18:6
2. Power, signs, and wonders: 2:43; 4:33; 5:1-11, 12; 6:8; 8:6-13; 10:44-46; 13:8-12; 14:3; 15:12; 16:16-18; 19:11-12; 28:3-6
3. Healing: 3:2-10; 5:15-16; 9:34, 40-42; 14:8-10; 20:7-12; 28:8-9
4. Feelings of awe, wonder, amazement: 2:43; 3:10-12; 12:16
5. Prophecy: 11:28; 13:1; 15:32; 18:6; 21:4(?), 10-11; 27:21-26
6. Guidance by visions: 10:1-48; 16:10; 18:9-11; 27:22-26

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY: OUTREACH

1. Group evangelism (or preaching to unbelievers): 2:14-41; 3:12-4:2; 4:8-12, 31, 33; 5:25, 42; 7:1-53;

8:4, 5-12, 25, 40; 9:20-22; 10:34-48; 11:19-21; 12:38-9; 13:5, 15-42, 44-49; 14:1, 15, 21; 16:10, 13; 17:2-4, 17-18, 22-32; 18:4-5, 8, 19; 19:1-7, 8-10; 20:20-21; 21:28; 21:40-22:21; 24:24-25; 25:23-26:29; 28:16-24, 30-31

2. House-to-house evangelism: 2:46-7(?); 5:42; 11:20; 16:32; 20:20
3. Baptizing converts: 2:38, 41; 8:12, 16, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5
4. Exhorting to salvation: 2:40; 14:15
5. Debating truth (using reason, in the power of the Holy Spirit): 6:10; 9:22, 29; 17:2-3, 17; 18:28; 19:8-9
6. Rebuking the "religious": 7:51-53; 8:18-24; 13:9-11, 46-47, 51; 23:1-5
7. Personal evangelism: 8:26-39
8. Spreading the word of God (or the word of God growing): 12:24; 13:49; 18:20
9. Contextualizing the message: 17:16-31
10. "Shaking the dust of the feet off" at those who refuse to hear: 13:51; 18:6; 19:9(?)

FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Confidence: 4:13; 9:28; 14:3
2. Rejoicing in suffering: 5:41
3. Forgiving enemies: 7:60
4. Refusing to accept money as payment for giving true spiritual power: 8:18-24
5. Not giving a bribe: 24:26
6. Rejecting the attempts of others to worship the believer: 10:26; 14:11-18
7. Being full of faith: 11:24
8. Being filled with joy: 2:46; 13:52
9. Living holy lives: 5:12-13; 6:15; 7:60

STRATEGIC THINKING

1. Keeping priorities straight: 6:2-6; 18:5
2. Fleeing (escaping) persecution: 8:1; 9:21-5, 30; 12:17; 14:6, 20b; 17:10; 14, 17
3. Investigating reports: 11:22-23
4. Working in teams: 10:45; 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:22, 39-40; 20:4
5. Sending out laborers: 13:3

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6. Following a specific plan: 13:46; 17:2
 7. Writing letters: 15:22-23; 21:25
 8. Claiming legal rights: 16:35-40; 22:24-29; 23:12-23; 24:10-21; 25:8-12
 9. Utilizing public facilities: 17:17, 19-22; 18:28; 19:9, 19(?)
 10. Targeting leading centers and trade or travel: 16:12
 11. Reaching opinion leaders: 8:9-24(?), 26-39; 13:12; 16:14; 17:12; 26:24-29

N.B. Passages which deal with church growth in terms of numbers (directly or indirectly) in Acts include 2:41, 47; 11:21, 24, 26; 13:45, 48; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12; 18:8; 21:20; and 28:23(?)