



## ***The People Spot Missile: Church Is Hard Work***

**Mt. Hebron Church has been declining for some years.** Further decline will hinder their capacity to have a full-time pastor. They recognize their need to take action to interrupt the slide. But, neither pastor or people are willing to do what needs to be done to bring growth. They are not willing to spend the money or the energy to make it happen.

Elder Jones was a part of a growing church. He didn't like his pastor. He said to me, "Don't some churches just grow like weeds?" He didn't want to give credit to his pastor. My answer was quick and simple. The answer is "no." Growing a church is too complicated to happen accidentally. The church has to use the right strategies. Significant energy on the part of pastor and people has to be expended.

I've been at this a long time. Most Christians want their local church to do well. I've only been to a few places where the people of a church told me they wanted their church to decline.

**Spiritual renewal is always the first and most important step required in renewing a church.** Time has to be spent seeking to know God's will. Time has to be spent reading and studying God's word. Time has to be spent in prayer. Without this true renewal can't occur. Beyond this there is effort and elbow grease that must be expended.

However, many people in churches are always looking for shortcuts. They are looking for maximum results with minimum effort. It just doesn't work that way. I was working with a pastor. I shared things what I thought he should be doing. He came back a month later and said, "Jim, that is hard work. I'm not willing to do it." Our coaching relationship ended. I can help a church to identify issues they need to address. I can help them think through some things they need to do. But the church has to make the effort.

**There are two issues. First, a church needs to identify what God wants for that church. Then the church needs to identify the right strategies to bring to pass what God wants.** Churches that honestly seek God's will shall be rewarded. Not always in expected ways. Then obedience is key.

Especially in old and traditional churches, Christians are working very hard but not at the right stuff.

The second issue is to not only have a strategy but to do it. Pastor and people need to put the identified strategy to use. Alexander the Great was one of the truly great battlefield generals in history. He not only designed strategies to win, he had the capacity to carry them out.

**Prayer and hard work are required if you long for your church to grow and impact the community where you live.**

I was making a presentation. Harry, a farmer, was standing at the back of the room. I looked at Harry and said, “Harry, when July comes, I’m not going to harvest any wheat.” I hadn’t primed Harry. I asked, “Harry, why do you think I won’t have any wheat to harvest in July?” He responded, “You didn’t plant any in October.” He was right. We are called to be seed sowers. God brings the increase. Then we gather the harvest. Sometimes others gather the harvest from the seeds we’ve sown. That’s okay too. However, if no seeds are sown, there will be no harvest.

*This Missile has been written by Ray Braun.*