




Growing healthy churches worldwide

- **Deep roots, fruitful branches**
 - Growth to maturity – Colossians 2:6,7
- **Growth that pleases God**
 - Growth in holiness – 1Thessalonians
- **Growth in unity**
 - Ephesians 4:1-6

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Deep roots, fruitful branches



Colossians 1:28-2:7
Jonathan Lamb

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The call to continue in Christ

- 1:23 *'If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.'*
- 1:28 *'He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.'*
- 2:6 *'Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him.'*

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Paul's pastoral strategy

- 2:2 *'My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding.'*
- 2:3 *'in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'*

Our context

- Global growth, specially in the majority world
- Growth without depth
- Around the world – unmistakable shallowness

Church growth

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• *'If the apostolic model is to be followed by missionaries in the contemporary scene, then the initial proclamation of the gospel and the winning of converts does not conclude the missionary task. Forming believers into mature Christian congregations, providing theological and pastoral counsel against the dangers arising from inside and outside churches ...*

Church growth

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• *'strengthening believers both individually and corporately as they face suffering and persecution, so that they will stand fast in the Lord, all fall within the scope of what is involved in continuing the mission of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ.'*

*Kostenberger & O'Brien,
Salvation to the ends of the earth*

1. Christ-likeness

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• 2:6 *'As you received Christ Jesus as Lord, so live in Him.'*

- Received Christ
- Received Christ Jesus as Lord
- Received Christ Jesus as Lord, so live in Him

1. Christ-likeness

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• Galatians 4:19: *'until Christ is formed in you'*

- He is not satisfied that Christ *dwells* in them; he longs to see Christ *formed* in them, to see them transformed into the image of Christ, *'until you take the shape of Christ (NEB).'*

Stott, BST, Galatians

2. Spiritual growth

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• 2:7 *'You must put down healthy roots in him, being built up brick by brick in him ...'*

- As you were rooted ...
- Be built up brick by brick

2. Spiritual growth

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• Acts 14:22 *'Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.'*

2. Spiritual growth

- Acts 14:22 *'Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.'*
- Eph 4:12,13 *'To equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.'*

3. Christian understanding

- 2:7 *'As you were taught, be established in the truth.'*

3. Christian understanding

- 'The general dumbing down of doctrinal instruction in today's western churches, the widespread suspicion and scepticism about the trustworthiness of the Bible and the Christian heritage, and the bland assumption of so many that learning Biblical theology is in any case not needed for Christian well-being are both tell-tale symptoms and continuing causes of the weakness, wooliness and waywardness that outsiders nowadays too often discern in us.'
Grounded in the Gospel, Packer and Parrett

3. Christian understanding

- Acts 19:8-10 Paul in Ephesus
 - The equivalent to 50 years of three 40-minute sermons a week – all packed into a two year period.

Postscript

- It needs leaders with energetic commitment
 - 'To this end I strenuously contend, with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.' 1:29
 - 'I want you to know how hard I am contending for you.'
2:1

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- 1:28 *'He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.'*
- 2:6,7 *'Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.'*

