



There is something spontaneous about genuine church growth. Normal growth does not depend upon successful techniques or programs, although planning has its place.

Rather, growth is the normal consequence of spiritual life. What is alive grows. Normal church growth is spontaneous in the sense that the nature of the Church is to grow – spiritually, numerically and in its cultural impact.

Howard A. Snyder

How does the Kingdom of God grow?

How does the church grow?

How do we remove hindrances to growth?

“New wine must be put into fresh wineskins”

**LIKE A  
MUSTARD SEED**

Matthew 13:31-32

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

Matthew 13:31-32

### A COMICAL BEGINNING

- A man takes a single seed and plants it
- It grows into a great tree or bush; the birds come and nest in it



### MYSTERIOUS LIFE FORCES

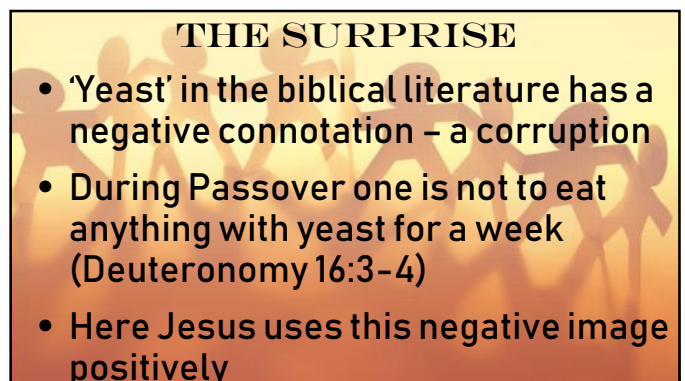
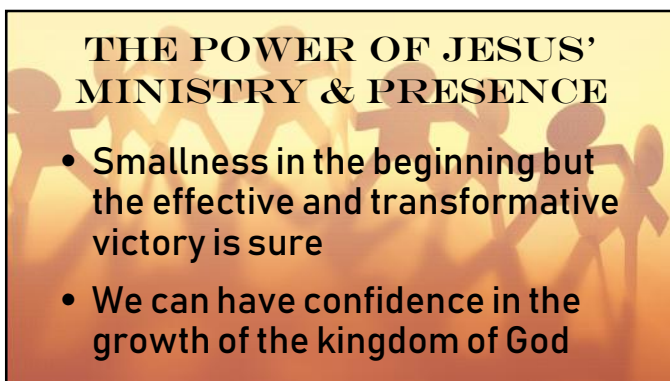
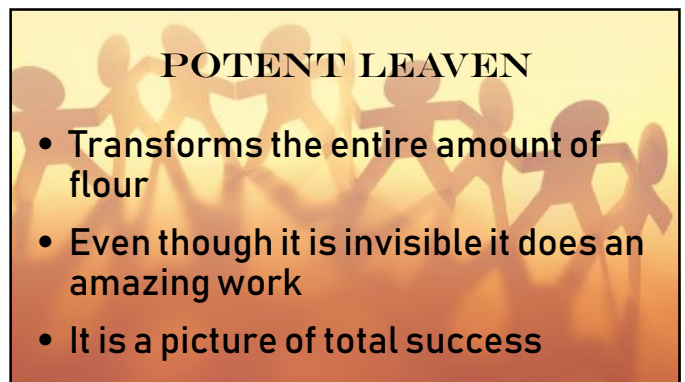
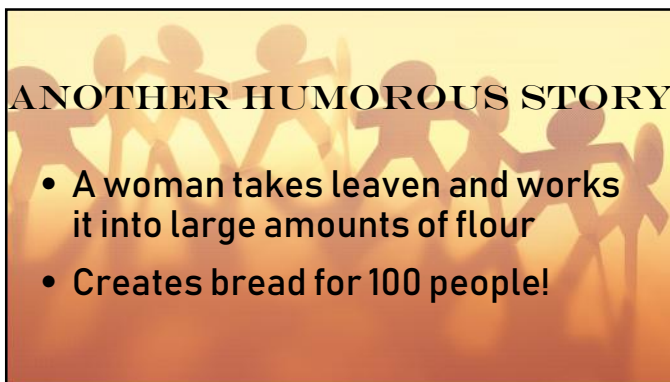
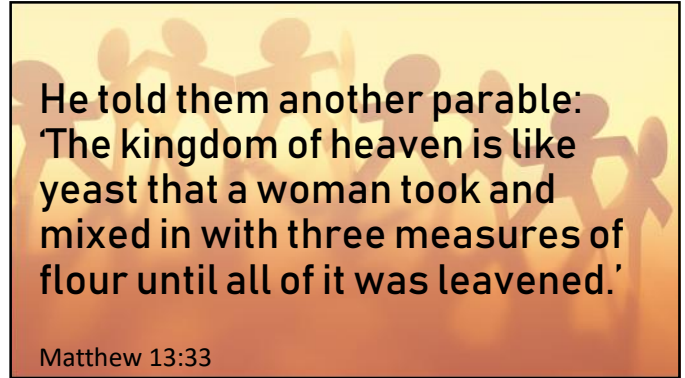
- Planting the seed sets a dynamic in motion
- Leads to a mature plant

### CHRIST'S MINISTRY & PRESENCE

- The seed of faith is planted - the seed leads to full life
- The presence of Jesus in us changes everything

### FAITH, HOPE & CONFIDENCE IN GOD

1. A victorious ending of full life is the picture
2. Not in the form we expected it: a shrub! - surprise/mystery is part of the journey
3. The parable is a picture of outward growth





### INTERIOR GROWTH

- The kingdom of God is pictured as starting small and continually expanding
- God is the source of all life and is our primary reality
- This parable highlights interior growth

### THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN & THE CHURCH OF GOD

God is at work, even though human eyes may fail to perceive what is happening.

Douglas R.A. Hare

### PLANTING: TELLING THE GOOD NEWS

- The story of Jesus is 'the seed'
- The full potential of life is in the seed
- Evangelism is simply sharing the story

### THE POWER OF 'SUN, RAIN, SOIL'

- The seed requires the right environment to grow
- We all need the proper inputs for spiritual vitality and life
- Scriptures, worship, spiritual disciplines

### THE POWER OF CHURCH COMMUNITY

- Tending the garden – 'koinonia' fellowship is essential for vibrant gardens
- The work of pruning & weeding is necessary for healthy life

## EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- The synergy of every part working together – a charismatic community
- Celebrating diversity, giftedness, abundance, vitality

## LIVING OUT THE WHOLE GOSPEL

- Both evangelistic and prophetic
- Meeting the needs of the entire person (James 1:27; 2:14-17)



## A SLOW, PATIENT GOD

- God gives us innumerable opportunities to grow and know him
- God allows 'do overs'!
- It is never too late to come to the banquet