

Adding to the Church Body

Scripture Reading — Acts 11:22-24

A great number of people were brought to the Lord. Acts 11:24 —

Less than 5 percent of Christian churches in North America today are growing through evangelism. Many churches are growing, but most of the growth is in transfers from one church to another. A "rotation of the saints" doesn't add to the number of believers. Statistics show there isn't one county in the United States in which the overall percentage of Christians is growing.

The new church in Antioch was healthy, filled with people of real and deep faith. Its members were radically generous. They were encouragers. Something amazing was happening, with a great number of people being "brought to" the Lord. The word in Greek here is *prostithemi*, often translated in Acts as "added to." It's one of Luke's favorite terms for church growth. The Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper often used this word to define missiology. When a church grows by adding people who are new to the kingdom of God, that is church growth.

Our word prosthetics also comes from this term. Though to us that usually means "replacement limbs," we wouldn't want to think of new believers as replacement members or parts. But the idea of "additional limbs" can help us focus on adding people to God's kingdom. Would you pray that your church may be one in which God adds to the number of believers?

Prayer

Father, we know that only your Holy Spirit can cause people to believe. Please add to our church through new believers and help us all to serve you faithfully. Amen.

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Printed on June 18, 2019

