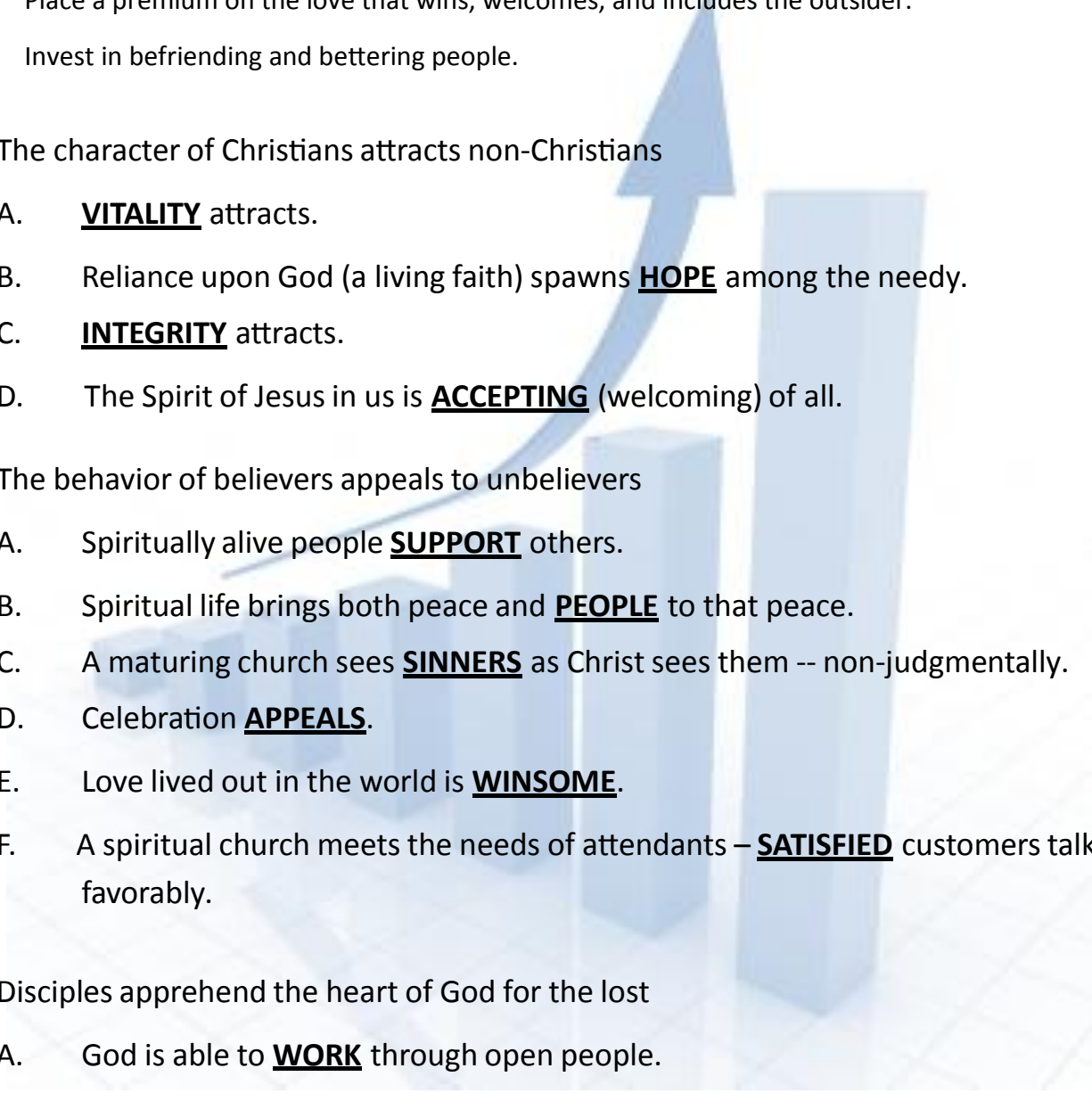


How Spiritual Vitality Affects Numerical Growth Participant's Handout

Purpose: Free the Spirit to influence outsiders through us, the church.

Objectives:

- Reinforce the importance of a spiritually alive church.
 - Place a premium on the love that wins, welcomes, and includes the outsider.
 - Invest in befriending and bettering people.
- I. The character of Christians attracts non-Christians
 - A. **VITALITY** attracts.
 - B. Reliance upon God (a living faith) spawns **HOPE** among the needy.
 - C. **INTEGRITY** attracts.
 - D. The Spirit of Jesus in us is **ACCEPTING** (welcoming) of all.
 - II. The behavior of believers appeals to unbelievers
 - A. Spiritually alive people **SUPPORT** others.
 - B. Spiritual life brings both peace and **PEOPLE** to that peace.
 - C. A maturing church sees **SINNERS** as Christ sees them -- non-judgmentally.
 - D. Celebration **APPEALS**.
 - E. Love lived out in the world is **WINSOME**.
 - F. A spiritual church meets the needs of attendants – **SATISFIED** customers talk favorably.
 - III. Disciples apprehend the heart of God for the lost
 - A. God is able to **WORK** through open people.
 - B. Spiritual living **MOTIVATES** witnessing which results in converts.
 - C. God keeps His promise of **GROWING** his church through our obedience.
 - D. Prayer generates life-changing **POWER**.
- 

IV. Spirituality meets a basic human need for God.

- A. When we meet the **SPIRITUAL** needs of people, we will have more people who want an experience and a knowledge of God.
- B. Why aren't people **FLOODING** to our churches?
 - 1. There are many **SUBSTITUTES** for spiritual fulfillment, e.g. entertainment, relationships, sexual gratification, clubs.
 - 2. The church does not know how to **MINISTER** to the world.
 - 3. The church is **AFRAID** of the world's rebuke.
- C. Unchurched people have a need for **INTERACTION** with God's people.
 - 1. The church that attracts people will view people as **DISCIPLES** -- people in the process of becoming the people of God.
 - 2. Most people are **WRESTLING** with the daily problems of living and want support in that process.
 - 3. People are **WARMED** by the people of God as they study life-related issues from the Bible and seek to apply those.
 - 4. God's people, who are growing spiritually and are open to **PERMITTING** others to grow at their own speed, will draw other people to themselves.
 - 5. The church, **SERVING** as Jesus' disciples, ministers primarily to unbelievers.
 - 6. That's why numerical growth should follow spiritual growth, i.e. the **CLOSER** we are to God the more we **CARE** about people.

Conclusion:

- 1. Some would object, saying: "Our church is **GROWING** spiritually, but not growing **NUMERICALLY.**"
- 2. A church should be **PRODUCING** life-changing behavior in people -- that very process attracts and those people attract others.
- 3. A church that is growing spiritually -- becoming more like Christ; showing love to people; **REACHING** out to those who need God -- should grow numerically.

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

Work with your church team to complete the following:

1. Who are the people in your congregation who have brought others to Christ and the church?

a. Describe what they are like. (They may not always be considered saintly.)

b. Which of their characteristics can people imitate?

2. What factors about your church may keep people from attending or returning?

a. What are the negotiable and non-negotiable (i.e. if changed would make your church less than a God-approved body of believers) factors?

b. How could you go about making changes (in the negotiable factors) that would attract outsiders?



Action Planning/Reporting Form

Homework:

1. Complete the Level of Love Questionnaire with your church members/attenders. Prepare an analysis of the results.
2. From the information discussed in the small group exercise and the results of the survey, identify at least three things you will try to change that will attract the outsider. Use the chart to record your information.



Steps to Implement Project/Plan	Who will do this step?	When will it be done?	What were the Results?	What might you do differently next time?