

Planting People; Growing Giants

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I'm often asked, "What business are you in?" I sometimes ponder what reaction I'd get if I said, "I'm in the people-growing business." Ministers are grown. Students don't arrive in our Bible school classrooms as spiritual giants. They come with willing hearts and pass through a spiritual formation and maturation process. Effective Bible school programs enable students to reach their maximum potential. We're equipping others for works of service in God's kingdom (Ephesians 4:12) and in apostolic ministry. Like Robert Dale once said, we're "sowing seeds of ministry and growing believers toward leadership." That is the sole purpose behind the Global Association of Theological Studies. Like a sign I saw, "We build Pentecostal leaders to grow Pentecostal churches." Spiritual growth is one of our four core values. We value helping people grow!

GATS is made up of six academic programs, in multiple languages, with a growing edge: certificate, diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree, distance education, and faculty development. It's a gigantic project encompassing nearly one hundred subjects that need to be revised, written, and translated into major world languages. I used to think of it as a mountain to chip away at; an obstacle. Now, I'm changing my attitude. It's an opportunity; a mighty tree that we are growing. Its encircling shade provides a global education covering. GATS causes us to stretch heavenward to our supplying God; outward to a waiting, wanting world. It calls us to continuously improve.

In classes and among staff we must create a "culture of growth." It's the way we do things around here. Involvement with the *Advance Educators Series* (GATS) provides eighteen to twenty-four opportunities to grow. A new lesson is available most every month. Other faculty education courses are

planned for the future. Instructors only truly help others reach maximum potential when they have attempted to reach it ourselves.

I sometimes lament when I see other churches with more developed educational programs than ours. We can make a difference. John Maxwell in *Go for Gold* mentions a nursery in Canada that displays a sign on its wall: "The best time to plant a tree is twenty-five years ago...The second best time is today." We hope you will avidly support GATS and its programs. Come, grow with us!

Our work will affect long after we're gone. A Greek proverb says, "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." Be deliberate at leaving a mark on this planet, to do something that imparts seeds of truth to the next generation, and impacts eternity for our world. Someone once said, "If your vision is for a year, plant wheat; if your vision is for a decade, plant trees; but if your vision is for a lifetime, plant men." Because of your help with GATS, when a friend asks, "What have you done today?" thankfully respond, "I saw someone grow today and I helped. I've been planting people; growing giants!"