

Pastor Rodney D. Smith



- Presently, Rev. Smith is the humble pastor of Parks Chapel AME Church, in Dothan, AL. He is an active clergyman within his district, serving on the ninth district finance team, chairman of the southeast finance team, Dean of the board of examiners for the Southeast conference, and Director of Church Growth and Evangelism for the Southeast Alabama Conference. Pastor Smith has traveled throughout the connectional AME Church preaching and teaching the goodness of God.

Growing the Church:
“Role of the Laity in Growing the
Church through effective
Church Language”

St. Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 5:1-7

Church Language Defined:

- Church language creates the culture of our local church. Every living thing is shaped by it's surroundings. The growth of our churches depends on us building healthy church environments.
- Our fundamental assumption, about our local church creates a "Church Language,"
- When the clergy and Lay speak the right language, the Church grows!

“Church Language”

The starting point for Growth!

- Who is responsible for growing the church?

Argument for presentation:

Until we can change the assumptions that our clergy & lay persons have about themselves, God, church, and their community the culture of the church cannot change or grow!

Church Language
is
the life and death
of
every ministry!

What “Assumptions” ... are you making?

Research shows that there is a new group of people who are attending church and their needs are parking, child care, and net-working.

However, one of the hidden strategies in growing a church and its leaders may be hidden. That’s right the hidden energy field can be found in the assumptions people have about a particular church. What you think and assume does matter?

- *Our “Church Language Shapes our Church”*

There are 5 critical questions that shape our **Church Language**

- How we see ourselves?
- How the community sees us?
- What we believe to be true about our church, that others may not see.
- Who's job is it to grow the church?
- Are we a healthy congregation?

Question 1

"How do we see ourselves?"

- How did Jesus see those disciples he called?

Using Luke 5:1-7 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

- 5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,^[a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.
- ⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."
- ⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."
- ⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Question 2

How does our community see our local church?

- If our local church moved today would our community care?
- How do you think our community would describe our church?
- In what way do people in our community talk about our church?

Question 3

What do we believe to be true about our church,
that others may not agree, to be true?

- What language do we speak locally about our church that may not be true to others?

- **(Discussion)**

- **What's *true* what's *false* about our local church?**

Question 4

Who's job is it to grow the church?

Matthew 28:19-20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

- ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”[[]

Using Matthew 28:19-20

1. Who was Jesus speaking to?
2. How do we as *Clergy* and *Lay* work together to grow the church?
3. How has the “Church language” of the *Clergy* and *lay* effected the church?

Question 5

Are we an healthy congregation?

- What makes us a healthy congregation?