



## HEALTHY CHURCH DEFINITION

This material is taken from page twenty-five of Comeback Churches by Ed Stetzer. It is an excellent read. In addition, it could also be used as a textbook for a Sunday night or Wednesday night study with the entire church (if that church falls into this category of needing a comeback).

“The Leavell Center at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary did a study revealing that only 11 percent of Southern Baptist Churches were experiencing healthy growth. The Leavell Center used the following criteria to define healthy churches:

1. The church experienced 10% total membership growth over 5 years.
2. The church baptized at least one person during the two years of the study.
3. These churches needed thirty-five or fewer members each year to baptize one new convert (a member-to-baptism ratio of thirty-five or less in the final year of the study).
4. For the final year of the study, the percentage of growth that was conversion growth must be at least 25%.

In his book Vision America, Aubrey Malphurs asserted that much of the perceived church growth in the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's was actually due primarily to the redistribution of believers, not genuine church growth. He stated, “The problems of the church in the 1980's carry over into the 1990's. The church as a whole continues to experience decline and the unchurched increase.”