
Notes from *Taking Your Church to the Next Level*

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The following notes are guidelines regarding church size and growth. They are general principles and represent helpful steps to take in most church situations. However, there will be exceptions based on unique conditions in each local church.

Relational Church (0-200)

1. 35 - Consists of:

- bi-vocational pastor
- may be just one family and closer friends

2. 85 - To grow from 35-85, the church needs to add:

- F/T pastor with good personal skills to cast vision publicly and personally
- Basic children's ministry up to elementary ages
- Critical mass of 50 (means 65 in practice)
- Facility that seats 100-125, 40-50 parking spaces
- Add people outside the immediate "family" group - this is the small church's most difficult challenge

3. 125 - To grow from 85 to 125:

- Add 3 new adult programs for men and women
- Children's ministry up to 6th grade
- Start a small groups ministry (7 groups per 100 in worship)
- Add a secretary for the pastor
- Facility that has minimum capacity of 150, 70 parking spaces

4. 200 - To grow from 125 past 200 there are 9 key factors:

- Add staff - add 1 pastor and 2 support staff (1:1 ratio of ministry staff:support staff) Be creative in how to fund it
- Lead Pastor moves to more administrative shepherd and less caregiving
- Pastor delegates ministry to others, can't do it all himself
- Lay people must be mobilized to use their gifts and natural talents
- Keep adding programs - i.e. youth program (but not necessarily a youth pastor yet, can be lay-led at this point)
- Add a 2nd worship service
- Add classes - a church of 200 should have 6 adult classes or other mid-sized groups, and 14 smaller groups
- Maintain a simple decision-making structure - avoid bureaucracy
- Expand facilities (note that 90% of churches will find these steps necessary and helpful, though some will need additional steps due to their unique situations)

Managerial Church (200-400)

Characteristics:

- A Mid-sized church is squeezed between wanting to go back to being smaller and wanting to grow to be bigger - one of these pulls will win
 - *May have pressure to eliminate multiple worship services, let staff go under guise of cutting costs, have pastor do more visitation*
 - *May have pressure to add more programs*
- Focus shifts from relationships to managing the growing programs
- Pastor shifts from caregiver to administrative leader

Key Issues to grow from 200 past 400:

- Add staff - about 125:1 (or 150:1) pastors to people, 1:1 pastors to support staff
 - *Need 3 to 4 ministry staff people, (4 if not enough support staff)*
- Senior Pastor becomes Leader
 - *Shifts from administering ministries to long range planning, vision, overseeing staff, preaching excellent sermons, designing systems to reach, win, disciple and keep people*
- More Congregational care by congregation, less by pastor
- Specialization of staff roles, rather than just being generalists
- Add a worship service - 2nd or 3rd, depending on facility capacity
- Build on success (80/20 rule)
 - *Pour resources into the 20% of ministries that are producing the best fruit*

Organizational Church (400-800)

Characteristics:

- Pastor becomes player-coach
- He is the leader, but still involved personally in some ways

To grow beyond 800:

- Pastor must become a leader, not a caregiver or administrator
 - *Small and medium church caregiving/administrator expectations must be dropped*
- Staff must be specialists who build teams of people to do the ministry, not do it themselves
- Leadership Development emphasis
- New Ministry Development
 - *Develop niche ministries to help specific groups of people*
- Caregiving by laypeople
 - *Small group leaders, Bible class teachers, music leaders, etc... become pastors*

Centralized Church (800-1500)

Characteristics:

- Pastor becomes a visionary
- Multi-level staff
- More decision-making authority for staff

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- Pastor-directed and board-protected
 - Management divisions/silos

To grow past 1500:

- Board must become a policy-setting board, not a management board
- Typically call an executive pastor to manage on-campus ministry, somewhere between 1200-1500 people
- Staff transition from being practitioners to "team builders"
 - *Note that some staff cannot make the transition*
- Be a church **of** small groups, not just *with* small groups
- Think beyond the local church, since outside people will be coming, watching and learning from this larger church, beyond the local neighbourhood

Decentralized Church (1500+)

Characteristics:

- The centralization of the previous size becomes limiting to growth
- Must become interconnected matrix rather than silos

To keep growing past 1500:

- Add more than one executive pastor (often 2 divided between ministry and admin functions)
- Add staff members who build teams
- Select experienced board members
- Add new departments (ie tech or HR)
- Maintain the church's image/branding (since it is well-known now)

Final Note about Authenticity and Size

Growth and Authenticity are not incompatible.

Authenticity relates to four strands of meaning:

- The church's **Story**
- **Passionate** people
- Being connected to a **Great Purpose**
- Being connected to **Values** that align with the story

Also, see charts on pages 192-197, that combine lifecycle and church size insights

- Larger churches tend to have longer high points of effectiveness (multiple decades rather than a few years or a decade)
- The goal is to find the sweet spot - the growth point - can last for 20 years and be reinvented