



CHURCH GROWTH NETWORK

The Numbers You Need

What's the State of Your Church?



It's Not All About the Numbers

Except it is! Here's why.



The Basics

Those numbers that "everyone" seems to count. And there's a good reason why they're counting them.



The Money Factor

What's the cost of growth ... or more precisely, the cost of NOT growing.



Visitors Count

Or more importantly, are you counting your visitors?



The Sticky Numbers

Some numbers are more important than others. Knowing this one is the key to your church's future. Or rather, doing something about this number is the key to your church's future.



The Rule of 32

The one percent that really counts (and I don't mean 1%!).

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It's Not Really All About Numbers

Except it is ...

For years, I've heard progressive church leaders decry the emphasis on numbers, especially average worship attendance and member giving. Like virtually every church consultation firm, we get accused and badmouthed for our continued insistence that the churches we work with provide us with their numbers for the previous ten years.

Numbers like:

- Average worship attendance
- Per capita giving
- Weekly first-time visitors
- Percent of visitors that become returning guests
- Annual baptisms
- New members

I suspect there are a couple reasons why church leaders don't like the emphasis on numbers. First, numbers are cold and impersonal. They can't measure things like the warmth of a moving worship service or the tears of a repentant addict making a life change. But I think there's a second and more personal reason why church leaders don't like numbers ... too often it makes them look less than effective. With 85 percent of US churches in some stage of decline, in-your-face numbers do little to boost morale. It's not surprising there's pushback and diversions when we bring up numbers during a seminar. No one wants to look bad.

There are at least two good reasons why numbers are so important to the church today.



First, they're important today because they've always been important to the church. As I've pointed out in the past, the church counted ...

- Jesus fasted for 40 days
- He had 12 apostles
- He fed 5000
- He fed the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish
- They picked up 12 baskets of leftovers when everyone was through
- He fed 4000 on another occasion
- The apostles caught 153 fish
- Jesus appeared to more than 500 people post-Easter
- There were 120 at the first post-resurrection prayer meeting
- 3000 were baptized after Peter's Pentecost preaching
- The next wave of growth took the church to 5000
- The scrolls burned were worth 50,000 drachmas
- 144,000 were sealed before the final judgment

And those are just a few of the New Testament numbers.

But there's a second reason why numbers – especially butts in seats and bucks in buckets are important today. So long as we pay pastors and have buildings, we've got to get butts in seats and enough bucks in the buckets. If we don't, the church will close. It's as simple as that.

If we're willing to do ministry for free and we're willing to use our homes instead of having a facility, then we can go all-out for ministry in the street for the sake of the kingdom and for the sake of those in the street.

But so long as we're dependent on the prevailing model of church, we'd better get with the reality that butts in seats and bucks in buckets are still of key importance.



The "Normal" Numbers

Back to the Basics



Just the facts
and nothing but
the facts.

Membership:

Avg. Worship Attendance:

Annual Giving Income:

Total Annual Budget:

Non-Adult Baptisms:

Adult Conversion Baptisms:

INVEST

Pastor, here are some numbers you should always have in hand



But first ... a little church math
-btlb

Total tithes, offerings, gifts last budget year: \$ _____

Average Worship Attendance (AWA) last budget year: _____

$$\text{\$} \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \div \text{AWA} \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \text{\$} \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ Per Capita Giving}$$

Currently, the national per-capita giving for US Churches is approximately \$1000 – your results will probably differ.

Although it takes the average new member 2–3 years to achieve your congregation's per-capita giving, you can count on between 25–50% the first year. IF even 1 first-time visitor becomes an active participant, you can see the financial return on your church's investment of time, talent, and treasure.



Truth: Without new people coming through your doors, your church is going to close.



Are you getting the visitor count you need?

-btlb

Total number of first time visiting households last month: _____

Total number of first time visiting households last year: _____

(a)

$$\frac{(a)}{\text{Total number of first time visiting households last year}} \div \frac{(AWA)}{\text{Total number of first time visiting households last month}} = \text{Annual Visitor Ratio}$$



Pastor, you should know THESE numbers too ... even if they're less than awesome!

Let's do a little more church math ...

-btb

Total number of first time visiting households last month _____ (a)

Total number of THOSE households who are still attending _____ (b)

$$\underline{(b)} \div \underline{(a)} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ Visitor Return Rate}$$

If you kept records, you may want to do the math to get your annual return rate – that will be more accurate

How Does Your Church Rate?

- >80% ... Outstanding
- 50% ... Very Good
- 15% ... The National Average
- 11% ... The Mainline Average
- 6% ... Declining or Plateaued Church Average



The Rule of 32

According to a study by Outreach Magazine, to avoid decline you must receive 32 new members annually for every 100 in worship!



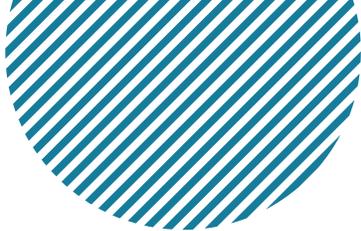
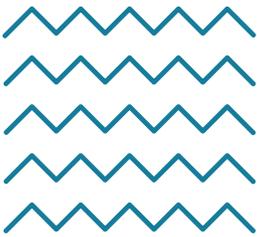
*Hmm.
More church math ... ?
-bth*

Current year: Average
Worship Attendance (AWA) _____ (awa)

(AWA) _____ **×** 32% = _____
Annual Minimum
New Members

How Many New Members Did You Take In Last Year? _____

What Will You Need To Do To Overcome the Deficit?



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