

stuff you wish they taught in seminary

A silhouette of a hand raised in the air, palm facing forward, against a blurred background of warm, golden light. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers spread. The background is a soft, out-of-focus glow of light, suggesting a church service or a moment of worship.

FIVE

LESSONS TO LEARN FROM LARGE CANADIAN CHURCHES

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5 LESSONS TO LEARN FROM LARGE CANADIAN CHURCHES

Leadership Network has once again released a study that church leaders should consume to understand the dynamics of leading today. This study is all on large Canadian churches and what we learn from them. It points out things these churches have done well, which caused them to grow and reach a younger audience. Even if your church isn't considered large, you can still take some tips from the Leadership Network's study to help in growing your own ministry.

"For Canadians who attended a Protestant church last weekend, an estimated one in eight attended a church that draws 1,000 or more in weekly attendance. "[Leadership Network/Large Canadian Churches Draw an Estimated 300,000 Worshippers Each Week: Findings from a National Study](#)"

How do churches in Canada compare with churches in the United States? Roughly 9 million people (1/4 of the population) are Protestant in Canada, whereas 150 million people (1/2 of the population) are Protestant in the US. 13 million Canadians (1/3 of the population) are Catholic, while 68 million Americans (1/5 of the population) are Catholic. There are about 300,000 Protestant churches in the US and 18,000 in Canada. Of these churches, 7,000 of them in the US draw in more than 1,000 in attendance, while only 150 in Canada draw in more than 1,000. When you look at those numbers, it may seem that Canada's churches aren't growing like they are in the US, but the numbers are jumping quickly for our neighbors to the north.

• **76% of the surveyed churches have increased in attendance** //

Between 2013 and 2014, more than three-quarters of the churches surveyed grew in attendance, while only 5% stayed the same and 18% declined. Canada's largest Protestant churches range in attendance from 1,000 to 10,000 each week, with 63% of churches reporting attendance in the 1,000 to 1,999 range.

• **Growth comes from transfers, births or spiritual renewal** //


Churches reported that 40% of their growth came from transfers, with 17% of those being new members who moved from another area and 23% coming from another church within the area. 31% of new members were children born to current members. That leaves 29% of growth coming from conversion or spiritual renewal. Church leaders reported that 16% of their new members are new to the Christian faith and 13% returned to Christianity after time away from the faith.

• **More than half have started another church** //

55% of churches surveyed reported they have started another location. Of these, 40% became multi-site. 27% reported they hadn't yet started another site, but are considering it. Of those that had already become multi-site, 22% had 3 or more campuses and 18% had 2 campuses.

• **Children's and youth ministries fuel growth** //

It isn't a big surprise that churches reported the biggest fuel toward their growing membership are the children's and youth ministries. These accounted for 55% of the reported growth among churches. Inside these ministries, 68% report they focus on ministries that also positively impact the parents. If you draw in a younger crowd through activities and ministries that touch them, you'll be sure to keep pulling in more people. Other top trends in growth are a strong vision and mission (51%), passion of the church leader (43%), emphasis on worship/music (35%), and meeting needs in the community (18%).



• **83% are effective at inviting others to know Jesus**// Canada's largest churches don't put their focus solely on those already with them. A great majority reported that they were "somewhat" or "very" effective at reaching others and inviting them to know Jesus. 15% of the large churches surveyed estimated that at least 50% of their congregation are inviting people to Christ on a regular basis.

You can learn more about these findings and other trends among Canada's largest churches by [reading the Leadership Network survey here](#). I'd love to know what you think about this study, and how it might help you in expanding your own ministry within your church.

6 Very Large Canadian Churches to Follow

- [Beulah Alliance Church](#) // Edmonton, AB
- [Centre Street Church](#) // Calgary, AB
- [Eglise Nouvelle Vie](#) // Longueuil, QC
- [Northview Community Church](#) // Abbotsford, BC
- [The Peoples Church](#) // Toronto, ON
- [The Meeting House](#) // Toronto, ON

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