

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



COMMUNITY

A background image of a church service. The scene is dimly lit with warm, reddish-pink lighting. In the foreground, several hands are raised in the air, silhouetted against the light. In the background, a large screen displays the word "COMMUNITY" in a bold, sans-serif font. The overall atmosphere is one of worship and community.

Try These 5 Non-Scalable
Church Growth Tactics

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Only 6% of churches are growing faster than the communities they serve. [ref]

Stop and think about what that means for a moment. A radical *minority* of churches are having an increasing impact on their communities. **This is a problem for all of us.**

If this pattern continues over time, then the message of Jesus will lose its impact on the broader culture. This is the inevitable outcome if we're not collectively concerned about reaching people in our communities. **All of our churches should be thinking about church growth on a regular basis.** Although attendance isn't the only metric we should study, it certainly is an important one for understanding the impact of our ministries.

Are you a church leader looking to make an increasing impact on your community but wondering about the value of quick-hit church growth tactics?

Are you thinking about running another series of Facebook ads because you heard that some other church saw an impact when they dumped a bunch of money into the Zuckerberg ad machine? Have you considered that it might require something more difficult and profound than an ad campaign for your church to have an increased impact on your community?

I recently heard a story about a car dealership that was trying to increase its conversion ratio. (I know, it can be dangerous to talk about car dealerships and church growth in the same

article but stick with me here.) This car dealership was analyzing what made a difference on the people who stuck around and bought a car from the dealership.

The sales manager found an intriguing pattern. When potential customers spent time talking with the sales manager and going on test drives, there was a noticeable increase in the number of people who purchased a new car. So, in response to this revelation, the manager and sales team flipped the script on what normally happens at a car dealership.

Typically, the sales manager would be huddled away in an office somewhere waiting for customers to come to them. At this particular car dealership, they decided that the salesperson would give the sales manager the phone number of prospective buyers who had been on a test drive but left the car dealership without purchasing. **The sales manager would then call the prospective buyer as they were driving away from the car dealership.** The goal was to try to get the prospect to turn around and come back to the dealership, ideally catching them when they weren't too far away from the dealership. This car dealership saw that when this return phone call could be made, it increased their sales.

Why am I sharing this story in an article about church growth? It struck me that this sales team was willing to do whatever it took to reach people and get them plugged in to what they were selling. **I reflected on my own church leadership and wondered, are we willing to do**

whatever it takes to see people connected with our church?

So, in the same way that the sales manager tried something that wasn't easy and doesn't scale very well, I present here five non-scalable church growth tactics that you could try in the coming months to help your church reach new people.

Personally Invite Four People Every Month

When was the last time that you, a church leader, personally invited someone to come to your church? When did you last hand someone an invitation to an upcoming series, tell them about the good things going on in your church, or go out of your way to invite them to come on a Sunday? I challenge us all to take the time on a monthly basis and personally invite not just one but four people to come to our church. Here are four types of people that you could invite this coming month:

- **The Easy Ask.** We all have those people in our lives that we can easily ask. It's the neighbor who told you they would be willing to come. It's your mom or aunt who has yet to visit the church but keeps saying at every Christmas and Thanksgiving that she'd like to come. Make time every month to think of an easy ask. Then reach out and invite them.
- **The Re-Ask.** We've all had people attend our churches and not return, and we're wondering why they don't come back. They could be people that we personally know, people that we've run into, or people who were attending our church at one point but no longer come. What if we intentionally re-invited these individuals to return?
- **The Totally Random.** As much as I'm not into dropping tracks at the lunch table when I go to my favorite restaurant, there is something about inviting random people to come to church that can be compelling. You never know how your story intersects with what God is doing in someone else's life. What if we all invited one random person this month to be a part of what we're doing at church?

- **The Long Shot.** You know that person who you think will never come to your church? Maybe this is a friend or family member who thinks you're crazy for being a church leader. What if you invited one long shot to church every month? Prayerfully consider who that person is; you never know what God could do in their life when you reach out to invite them.



Inviting people to church is an important practice for church leaders because it gives you a clear picture of what it's like for your people to invite others. When you go out of your way in this area, you'll get clarity on your church's invite culture and what it's like for other people to go out and do it too.

Call Every Guest from 90 Days Ago

Chances are that somewhere north of 80% of the guests who visited your church three months ago have not returned.

I know that's a high number, but we regularly see that statistic in the churches we study. This group is a particularly important one for us because it represents the people who have already had some sort of interaction with our churches. **What if this week you attempted to get everyone on the phone who came to your church 90 days ago?** You can ask them two questions:

- Would you be willing to come back and visit again?
- If you're not going to come back, can I ask you why not so that I can have a clearer idea of what's holding you back from returning?

By this point, their visit was long enough ago that your follow-up systems haven't worked in getting them to come back for another visit. Asking them about their reasons for not returning would give you valuable insight for the future, and your questions may prompt them to reconsider a return visit.

Serve Your Community

So many of our churches talk about being #forourcommunities, but when was the last time we served our community?

What if you pledged to get a meeting with the highest leader in your town within the next month? Maybe it's the school superintendent or the mayor or some other civic leader. Simply ask them what your church could do to be an effective community presence. Explain that you have both volunteer help and financial resources and ask them what area is of greatest need in the community. Then mobilize those people and resources to make a difference.

Time and time again, we see that the growing churches that are making a difference are the ones getting their people out of their seats and into the streets. They're not content to simply just gather on a Sunday, but they're finding ways to meet the needs of people in their communities. Obviously, we think this action is mandated by God as He commands us to make a difference in the world around us, but our communities also see it as a good thing when they receive unexpected service.

Answer Real Questions Online

Instead of trying to come up with the latest snappy meme that'll go viral or leveraging the latest pop culture trend to invite people, what if you generated helpful content that your people could share?

I think one of the best examples of this is [The Meeting House's Bruxy's Bag of Questions \(BBQ\)](#). Every week, Bruxy Cavey answers questions from people in the church and more importantly, questions that our friends in the community are actually asking. Past episodes have included:

- Why did God create us if He knew we'd suffer?
- Is prayer a numbers game?
- Does God pick our political leaders?
- Is Israel still God's favorite?



Develop regular content to address the questions that the people who may be interested in attending your church are asking.

Taking time to consider how to answer these questions thoughtfully and in an engaging way isn't easy to do, but investing in this area will garner increased respect and more influence for your church as you pay attention to the questions of your community.

Create a "Made-up" Big Day

We know that there are three or four days every year when your people are more likely to invite their friends and their friends are equally more likely to attend. **What if in the next six months you hosted a "made-up" big day?** We've seen variations of these pop up from growing, impactful churches nationwide:

- [Epic Church in Pennsylvania hosts an annual Epic Day](#) where they throw the entire kitchen sink at making it an incredible Sunday for people to invite their friends to, including free t-shirts, great kids' programming, a clear message from the pastor, and a number of other fun elements.
- [Hope City Church in Sarasota, Florida](#) hosted Sunday Fun Day last fall and offered fun activities for the kids and a great message, making it an easy invite for people in the community.

These made-up big days can galvanize your church towards inviting more people. Because this Sunday is explicitly designed around the idea of inviting others, it gives your people a rallying point.

Need Help Growing Your Church This Year?

Get the FREE three part video series on church growth

Is your church not growing as quickly as you'd like? **Are you wondering how to grow your church without compromising the message?** Would you like to see your church impact as many people as possible?

We've launched a FREE three part video series on church growth designed to help your church reach more people this year than you did last year. The lessons in this series have helped other churches reach new levels of impact and they can help your church too!

[Click here to learn more and get started today.](#)

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