
Three Kinds of Church Growth

Karl Vaters, author of *The Grasshopper Myth* and an author/advocate for small churches, says, “Church growth should always be a part of every pastor’s prayers, passion and strategy.”

Pastors should want their churches to reach more people. But that’s not the only kind of church growth in the Bible.

Here are three kinds of growth you can look for in your church:

#1 – Numerical Church Growth

Numerical growth happens when churches reach more people and grows in size.

It’s simple to track numerical growth and the result is the church gets bigger. The Outreach 100 Fastest Growing Churches list is based exclusively on this type of growth.

The 10 Fastest Growing Churches (according to [Outreach Magazine](#))

1. Bayside Church in Roseville, California
2. Rock City Church in Columbus, Ohio
3. Northview Church in Indianapolis, Indiana
4. Radiant Church in Tampa, Florida
5. The House Forth Worth in Forth Worth, Texas
6. Christ Church in Gilbert, Arizona
7. Coastal Community Church in Parkland, Florida

8. Action Church in Winter Park, Florida
9. NewSound Church in Wellington, Florida
10. Journey Church in Winter Park, Florida

[Read profiles of some of these churches here.](#)

This kind of growth was reported in the early church and recorded in the book of acts. Despite persecution, a lack of buildings, and little formal training, the early church grew as people shared the gospel with friends and neighbors. Luke tells us people were added to the church on a daily basis. That's church growth.

The desire churches have to reach more people for Christ should come from God's heart for the world and understanding Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost. Churches that want to grow in numbers should do out of a desire to live out the great commission.

#2 – *Spiritual Church Growth*

Spiritual growth happens when the people in the church come to love and follow Jesus.

People in church should grow to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength and take intentional steps to obey his commands. That's discipleship.

This kind of growth is also reported in the book of Acts, as you find new believers gathered in homes for community and prayer. As the church grew in size, it also grew spiritually. The early church wasn't content to make converts, they wanted to make disciples.

Spiritual growth is much harder to measure, and there's no Top 100 list. But when we talk about church growth, we must not limit our discussion to attendance and budgets. There's something far deeper at work.

#3 – Kingdom Church Growth

Kingdom growth happens when there is both spiritual and numerical growth.

When individual churches grow numerically and spiritually, there is a great opportunity for Kingdom growth.

The Bible says the Church grew through multiplication. For example, the church at Antioch prayed, fasted and sent leaders out to start new churches (Acts 13:1-5). This intentional decision to get smaller resulted in the Church getting larger.

Ironically, it was the persecution of the early church that led some of the first Christians to spread throughout the world, taking their faith with them and building the Kingdom in the process.