

# CHURCH GROWTH BARRIERS



## How to Break Through the 4 Most Common Plateaus

### *PARTICIPANT CONVERSATION GUIDE*

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Different churches wrestle with different issues, and a lot of times those challenges are a reflection of the church's size.

At this webinar, we want to equip you to recognize the true indicators of a growth barrier at each size (from under 200 to 10,000+), and give you clear next steps to start addressing them.

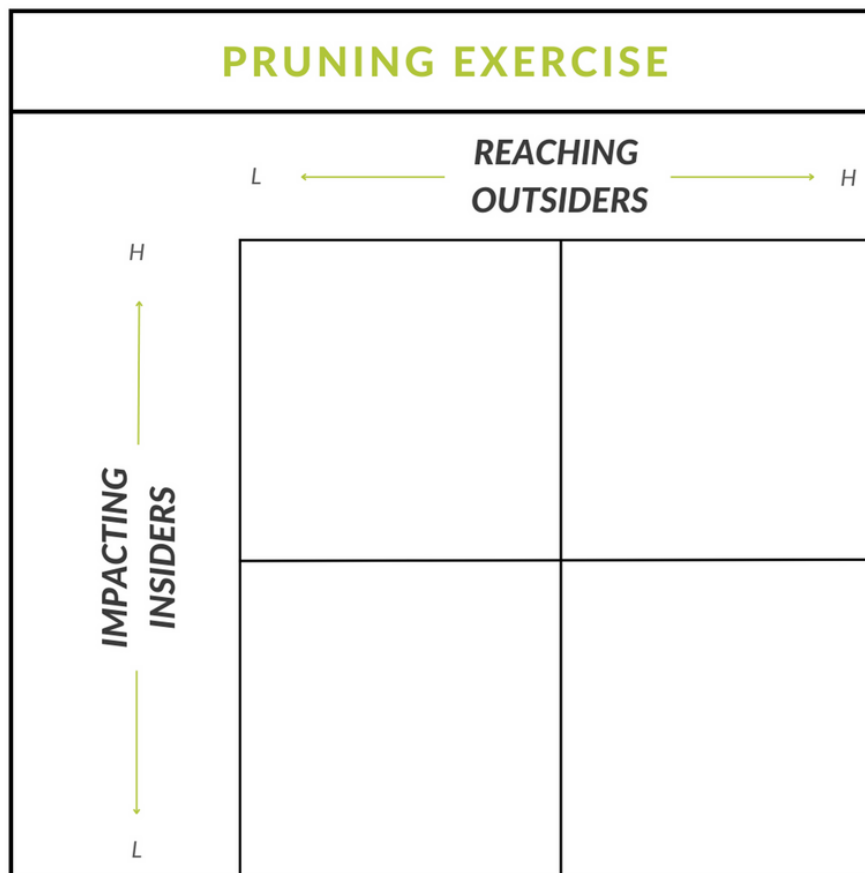
**Our hope is that you'll walk away confident and committed to taking one bold move towards breaking the barrier you're facing right now.**

— Tony Morgan

# BREAKING THE 200 BARRIER

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#1: Small churches maintain an insider-focus.



## Next Steps:

- Make your Sunday service more accessible to guests.
  - Welcome guests in service.
  - Make your guest services a welcoming environment.
- Encourage and equip your church to build relationships outside of church.

**#2: The pastor is either unwilling to lead change, or the church is unwilling to let the pastor lead change.**

- They're often structured to avoid change.
- If they try something new, they don't prune what they used to do.
- They're insider-focused.

If they are willing to lead through change, it's possible to break through this barrier.

**Next Steps:**

- Think like a missionary.
- Address governance issues.
- Identify one ministry strategy that needs to change to reach more people.

Churches that break the 200 barrier have committed to putting their mission over their methods.

**#3: Churches often want different results without any change—even if the pastor is open to change. But you don't get different results without change.**

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**REFLECT:** Regardless of what size your church is today, take a moment to rate yourself (red, yellow or green) on these 3 obstacles to healthy growth.

- Insider-Focus
- Unwillingness to Change
- Opposition to Change

# BREAKING THE 1,000 BARRIER

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#1: Mid-size churches are governed by large boards and many committees.

## Next Steps:

- The pastor needs an advocate.
- Clarify and align leaders around the church's DNA.
- Clarify the roles of the board and pastor/staff.

#2: They don't hire leaders and #3: They don't leverage volunteers well.

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER NUMBERS		
KIDS ATTENDANCE:		
STUDENT/ADULT ATTENDANCE:		
TOTAL IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE:		
	BENCHMARK	ACTUAL
VOLUNTEERS 50%		
VOLUNTEERS LEADERS 10:1		
STAFF 75:1		

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## Next Steps:

- Understand what you are aiming for.
- Based on what the benchmark data is telling you, define where those volunteer leaders and volunteers ideally would be plugged in at your church.
- Design a plan to cast vision around serving.
- Find the right people—and find the right approach to find the right people.

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**REFLECT:** Regardless of what size your church is today, take a moment to rate yourself (red, yellow or green) on these 3 obstacles to healthy growth.

- Complex Governance**
- Lack of Leaders**
- Leveraging Volunteers**

# BREAKING THE 2,000 BARRIER

## #1: The spiritual path is not defined.

It's essential to clearly define a path, supported by systems and leadership, and routinely communicate it.

MAKING DISCIPLES: YOUR DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY					
SPIRITUAL → CATALYSTS	BIBLE TEACHING + WORSHIP	SERVING OTHERS	CONNECTING WITH OTHERS	REACHING OTHERS	
MINISTRY ENVIRONMENTS	← SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES →				
PRIMARY PATH					

### Next Steps:

- Shift from competition to alignment around the discipleship pathway.

## #2: They haven't shifted to a staff-led structure.

Around the 2,000 mark, the wrong structure and systems can be the lid to your growth.

### Next Steps:

- Form a senior leadership team (3-8 people).
- Structure around strategy (clarify your vision and bold moves first).
- Clean up your ministry lanes.
- Get the right people in the right roles (especially senior leaders).



# BREAKING THE 10,000 BARRIER

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## **#1: There's not an intentional strategy for leadership development.**

Churches that break the 10,000 barrier have a superpower when it comes to leadership development: They create a very intentional strategy. Very large churches crack the code on helping future leaders develop spiritually, relationally and their competencies to lead well.

### **Next Steps:**

- Identify a leader to champion leadership development at your church.

## **#2: Ministry silos begin to develop.**

These silos are a natural outgrowth of the increased number of people and ministry programs. Rather than focusing on the overall health and growth of the church, ministries become protective of their own programs and begin competing with other ministries for leaders, volunteers, finances and attention.

### **Next Steps:**

- Embrace a collaborative effort to develop unified vision and strategy.
- Take a team-based approach (modeled by the senior leadership team).
- People > Structure > Strategy vs. Strategy > Structure > People

## **#3: They hold on to traditions.**

Not everything a church did in the past will necessarily lead to future health. Many times it's the very large churches that have the biggest challenge re-embracing "new." They become too big and lose their ability to be nimble and welcome change.



## Next Steps:

- Assess (beyond attendance and giving) how healthy is your church overall? Are you tracking other metrics that give you more information on the true health of your ministry?
- Ask: "When is the last time we tried something new? Are we predictable? What R&D have we done to develop new approaches to reaching and discipling people?"

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**REFLECT:** Regardless of what size your church is today, take a moment to rate yourself (red, yellow or green) on these 3 obstacles to healthy growth.

- Leadership Development
- Ministry Silos
- Holding On to Traditions

## Our Bold Moves:

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