

How to Navigate Rapid Church Growth: Interview With Chris Freeman From City Church - Episode 455

Fast-growing churches don't necessarily impress us. More often than not, growth reveals the areas where churches are actually *stuck*. But every once in a while, we run into a church that is both growing and healthy.

City Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, has seen **51% year-over-year growth**. But they've experienced more than a bump in attendance. They're seeing growth in groups, serve teams, discipleship, baptisms—you name it. And if you're leading a fast-growing church, you know how rare that is.

In this episode, I sat down with Pastor Chris Freeman to talk about the remarkable growth story of City Church and how they managed to stay healthy through intentional decisions, leadership and strategic planning.

Key Quotes

- "Growth in churches doesn't necessarily build health; it reveals where the health already is."
- "Lost people are the very best at reaching more lost people."
- "They're joining a small group before they're even coming to church on a Sunday."
- "One of the most important decisions we've made is that when we hire people to join the staff, we do not hire doers. We hire leaders who can develop people."
- "Lean into volunteer leadership because it's not just about getting things done; it's about the discipleship and spiritual formation that happens in people when they lean into owning a part of the ministry of the church."
- "Every organization is one or two hard conversations away from their next level of growth."

Self-Assessment: How Are We Doing?

If your church is experiencing attendance growth like City Church but your health in other areas seems to be lagging, use the questions below to help uncover where you may be stuck.

1. Who can we turn to for advice on things like our structure, setting decision rights, etc.?
2. Have we been hiring doers rather than leaders?
3. How easy are our on-ramps to serving or joining a group?
4. How intentional are we in training our church to be outwardly focused—even on Sundays—and to not shy away from hard or uncomfortable conversations?
5. Are we planning for beyond the growth that we are experiencing today?

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