



People Spot Missile: Church 101 part 2

Just as there are 4 critical ministry areas that must be addressed by any healthy church, there are 4 logistical barriers that must be understood and recognized in any healthy church. These barriers are as real and formidable as the cement barriers on a super highway. Vehicles and people will be hurt when they hit them. Churches and people will be hurt when they run into these barriers.

Barrier #1: space in the sanctuary. What is the comfortable seating capacity of your church? The pew salesman will say 18 inches. Not too many adults can sit in 18 inches. I measure pew space based on 25 inches. Determine based on 25 inches what is the comfortable seating capacity of your worship area. The annual average worship attendance will not tend to rise above 80% of the comfortable seating capacity of your sanctuary. Should you have more than one worship service the annual average worship attendance will not tend to rise above 70% of the comfortable seating capacity. I'm not talking about what can be crowded in on Christmas Eve or at a wedding. I'm not speaking about one Sunday. The annual average calculates there will be holiday Sundays and bad weather Sundays where your attendance may be at 50% of capacity.

There are several pew configurations that make it difficult to get maximum use of the pews. Pews more than 14 feet long have few people who sit in the middle. Pews with armrest in the middle lose a full seat in each pew. Pews that run against the outer walls leave people feeling trapped. Balconies and overflow areas will seldom ever have a one for one value. By the time worship attendance reaches 65% of the comfortable seating capacity, the congregation needs to consider a second service.

Barrier #2: small group foundation. If your annual worship attendance is less than 200, divide it by 8. That tells you how many small groups your church needs to support its attendance. Another way to look is to count all your small groups and multiply by 8 and that will tell you the worship attendance that can be supported by that total. You build a foundation of small groups to support the tower of worship. Worship can get no larger than the capacity of the small group foundation to support it. Churches between 200 and 500 divide by 10. Churches above 500 divide by 12.

There are a variety of small groups. Sunday School classes, care groups or home groups, support groups such as addiction groups, or others such as men's, parents of pre-school children etc., task groups such as choirs and worship teams and work teams, athletic teams, and worship services

with an attendance of less than 35. Though it is worship if the average is less than 35 it takes on all the characteristics of a small group.

Barrier #3: available parking spaces. There needs to be a parking space for each 2.3 persons on the inside. When I visit a church with a self-contained parking lot, I count the cars and multiply by 2.3 I will have a number larger than the number of people on the inside. I have seen that number as low as 1.5 persons on the inside for each car on the outside. Many families send 3 cars to church. Husband goes in one, the wife in a second and the kids in a third. The question then becomes how creative can you become in the use of parking.

Barrier #4: the number of different people in attendance. In a static or declining church it takes 2.5 people to average one for a year. Simply stated it takes 125 people walking through the door over a year to average 50. If you want to average 60, that takes 150 different people. Conversely if your average drops by 10, you haven't lost just 10 but 25. In a growing church it may take 3 persons to average 1 because the new people's attendance patterns haven't solidified. It is taking more people to average the same number. When I was a young pastor, the people who came 2 Sundays a month were considered sporadic. Now they will be in the top 50% of your attenders,

These last two missiles deal with information that is as basic as the 3 r's. They can't be ignored or pretended to be irrelevant. It will get you my friends.

A Thought: ***“Satan doesn't bother a church he already owns. He only bothers churches that have the potential to make a positive impact for the Kingdom. If your church is having a positive experience in Kingdom work, please bathe it in prayer.”*** Jim Moss, Sr.

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