BIG CHURCH MADE SMALL

MAKE EVERYONE FEEL KNOWN

ACS Technologies®

A GROWING CHURCH IS EXCITING.

More people means impact, more opportunity, and more ministry.

More people also means more people—in other words, crowds.
No matter how hard we try, it's easy for someone to get lost. Instead of feeling meaningful connections with others, they feel overlooked.

The personal nature of church quickly becomes impersonal. Growth eventually stalls—maybe even declines—because people no longer get the relationships they hope for in a church.

Churches thrive when people feel connected and known.
Big churches feel small when everyone feels known. As more people join, give more focus to making the church feel small.

» **Imagine small groups** staying together for a decade or more

» **Imagine every single person** finding a place where they belong

» **Imagine growing** because relationships are so strong

These things, and more, happen when you focus on making everything feel smaller and more connected.

SOLVE A MULTITUDE OF PROBLEMS

Growing churches create a wide range of problems. The more problems arise, the stronger the temptation to tackle every one individually. Often, though, tackling one larger issue addresses a range of smaller problems, like making your big church feel small. Do that and solve these issues you see every week:

People feel overlooked.
People want to feel known. They want a place to belong. It's a core need we all share. Church is a place where people expect to be known. Faith is such a personal thing, and it's impossible to practice it in isolation.

People don't know if they have a place.
Many people want a place to belong, particularly a place where they contribute to a larger mission. Churches have a big mission to fulfill in their community and around the world. Connecting people to that mission gives them a role to play.

People don't stay and build a stronger church for the long term.
Relationships drive retention. If someone has meaningful relationships with people in a church, they stay. They'll stay longer than a single leader's tenure. They'll ride the waves of changes. All because of the deep relationships in place.

WHY DO SO MANY STRUGGLE WITH THIS?

Connections and community are what cause so many churches to grow and become stronger. Unfortunately, they don't come with clear metrics. So these things get overlooked or get placed on the back burner. As a result, tension arises that never gets resolved.

Assume connection happens.

Making people feel known, especially in a larger church, is critical to long-term health. But the rapid pace of ministry means so much can easily be overlooked, especially in areas like this. Since connection is hard to quantify or track, many assume it just happens. They only realize it's not happening when it's too late.

Leave small groups on their own.

Most connections happen in small groups. In some churches, you find small groups who've been together for 10, 20, 30 years, or more. They went to the hospital to see each other's newborn. They went to that child's wedding. They attended a funeral of someone's parent. But without leadership, support, and resources, those deep bonds rarely form.

Think technology replaces connection.

Technology is great. It enables us to do far more with fewer resources. And in the current age, it's easy to assume technology replaces offline connection or that connection can be automated. While these tools are helpful, they aren't a primary driver for building community.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Does this issue sound big? Yes. Especially when you're in a larger church. Big problems often feel unconquerable because the solutions seem daunting. Start small. Use the following tactics this week. The more you do these, the more ways you discover to make your church feel small.

Have your leadership team regularly send handwritten notes to key leaders.
Include deacons, elders, and key volunteers with your staff on this one. Church members want to feel known first by the people charged with leading them. This simple act takes less than 10 minutes a week and creates huge dividends. With your data all in one place and accessible from any internet-connected device, everyone can quickly find the information they need.

ACTION

Create a list of deacons, elders, key volunteers, etc. Schedule time every Monday to write 3-5 notes to this list.

Use data for personalized touches.

Celebrate the important milestones or dates with people. Birthdays are an easy place to start. Call people on their birthday. This shows you're paying attention, and the person feels known on a special day. Don't forget the kids, too. Call them or send a video message personalized to them. Either one takes just a couple of minutes.

ACTION

Choose what data points, like birthdays, you want to track in your ChMS. Delegate ownership to someone on staff to ensure this is maintained well.

Prioritize small groups.

As we saw earlier, people often stay in churches because of their small group. But these groups still have tremendous potential, especially as your church gets bigger. Invest time, energy, and resources into groups. Prioritize promoting them in your services. Create a culture where most everything happens through small groups, not the stage.

ACTION

Invest heavily in leaders. Give them the tools and resources they need to build strong connections with people in their groups. Create enough groups so everyone can find a place to belong.

NOW IT'S
YOUR TURN

Making a big church feel small is a culture shift. These things may take time. That's ok. Start small. Try the things listed above. Ask yourself What can we as a staff do today to make people feel known and connected here? Ask this question often. Act on the answers. And see your church grow in numbers and strength.

Large churches mean greater impact. They also mean more challenges, especially for growing churches. Each new phase of growth introduces new issues to solve. This guide, along with the other guides in the series, helps you navigate the potential roadblocks with clarity and confidence. Avoid the gaps and continue leading a stronger church.

![realm logo]

Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.

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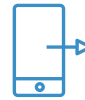
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Our Mission:
To help you have *real* ministry impact

ACS Technologies has provided over four decades of services and software to churches of all sizes throughout the world. During that time we have accumulated data, gained vital insight, and received thousands of first-hand testimonials on best practices and methods that most effectively help ministries.

Our years of service have allowed us to become the world's largest provider of ministry solutions to churches of all sizes. It is our mission to furnish advice, examples, tips, and information to help you turn your ideas into real ministry impact.

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The know-how you need from experts you trust.
ACS Technologies is the original pioneer of Church Management Software (ChMS). We are firmly dedicated to serving local churches all over North America by providing the best-in-class ministry software and service solutions that help you fulfill Christ's mission for your Church.

Tools and support to strengthen churches.
We build great software, but we don't stop there. We have a "service-first" approach that truly sets us apart. With hundreds of dedicated support and consulting personnel, your staff can reach our team 24/7. We're in your corner to help you with the ministry challenges you face every day.

Ideas and solutions powered by integrity.
Integrity is real for us, and it means consistently being faithful stewards by doing the right thing for church success. We have earned the trust of pastors, church staff, congregants, our employees, and colleagues for over 40 years.

A plan to meet your needs and move your ministry.
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We believe in YOU!
ACS Technologies believes in the local church. Over 75% of our team has experience serving in their local churches. We know firsthand that serving the Church means serving people, and we take seriously our commitment to helping ministries like yours achieve their God-given mandate - to make disciples in their communities, states, and across the world.

Let's Talk

We know the challenges of switching or implementing new technology and how that can be intimidating. But we also know the unbelievable changes that have happened within churches that have partnered with us for their ministry needs. Let's connect and see how we can assist you in the greatest thing you do - grow God's Kingdom.

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