

Church Scouts is born

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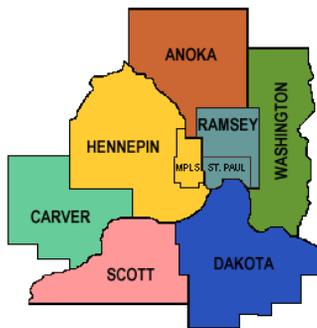
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# BRIEFING 1

## About Church Scouts

Twin Cities Metro Minnesota

*– Has been updated by recent Briefings –*



This briefing is for pastors and church boards, an announcement about the start of Church Scouts

January 2017

All Briefings – and more – are online at [www.churchscouts.org](http://www.churchscouts.org)

# Introduction to Church Scouts

## TAKEAWAY 1 - Announcing new service to help churches grow

This is to announce a new service beginning January 2, 2017 – called **Church Scouts** – to help Twin Cities churches grow. This is a non-denominational, laymen-led, self-organizing service based on the concept of **Scouts**.

In the military, called *reconnaissance teams* ... in government, called *intelligence agents* ... in business, called *market researchers* ... in athletics, called *sports scouts* ... here, called *church scouts* ...

But all the same role: *to go out and bring back key information for important decisions.*

Now this new service gives local churches teams of **Church Scouts** to bring key information to pastors and church boards about *what's working and what's not working* for church growth in the Twin Cities. **Scouts tell people on the inside what's happening on the outside.**

## TAKEAWAY 2 - This new service is free for all churches

No individual church has the time, money or expertise to track the experiences of other churches and do intensive community research to learn how people are thinking and how people are responding to what churches are saying and doing.

**Church Scouts** are committed Christians in the Twin Cities who are skilled professionals – market researchers, focus group facilitators, analysts, communication experts, web developers, database administrators and other specialists – who volunteer time to help with church growth, and pay all costs.

## TAKEAWAY 3 - Reason for this new service

The **charts on Pages 3 and 4** explain the need for Church Scouts. *Twin Cities churches are experiencing unprecedented stress – **two-thirds of the 3,344 churches in the Twin Cities are in 5-year decline!*** This is more than a dip. This is a *major long-term trend, a major paradigm shift*, caused by **demographics** and **disconnects**. No one can do anything about the demographics, but Church Scouts can help considerably with the disconnects, as **explained on Pages 5 and 6.**

This service gives local church leaders greater awareness and understanding of social changes occurring in the community and actions being taken by other churches.

## TAKEAWAY 4 - Churches have become fractured

Many churches excuse the 5-year decline in attendance by saying it's just a change in worship patterns, that Christians now don't go to church every week ... they often watch online ... they still go to church but rotate among different churches depending on needs and interests at the time (maybe one church for music, another church for sermons, another for youth activities, still another for meeting new friends).

***But that's a critical breakdown of church community!*** It's a big problem for development of spiritual maturity and for raising children who will stay in the church. It's a big problem for church income and recruitment of workers.

**Our churches were built with faithful attendance and strong internal community, but most churches are now losing it.** Just attending a church meeting once every week or two cannot build strong community.

## TAKEAWAY 5 - Need stronger churches, not more churches

For perspective, in the Twin Cities there are 141 McDonalds, 105 Starbucks ... and 3,344 churches. The biggest problem is not that there aren't enough churches to serve this area, but that most of the churches are weak, and getting weaker. It's time to re-think strategies and methods.

## TAKEAWAY 6 - More about Church Scouts

**Pages 7 and 8 provide an overview** of how Church Scouts can help your church. We give Twin Cities pastors and church boards practical help not available anywhere else.

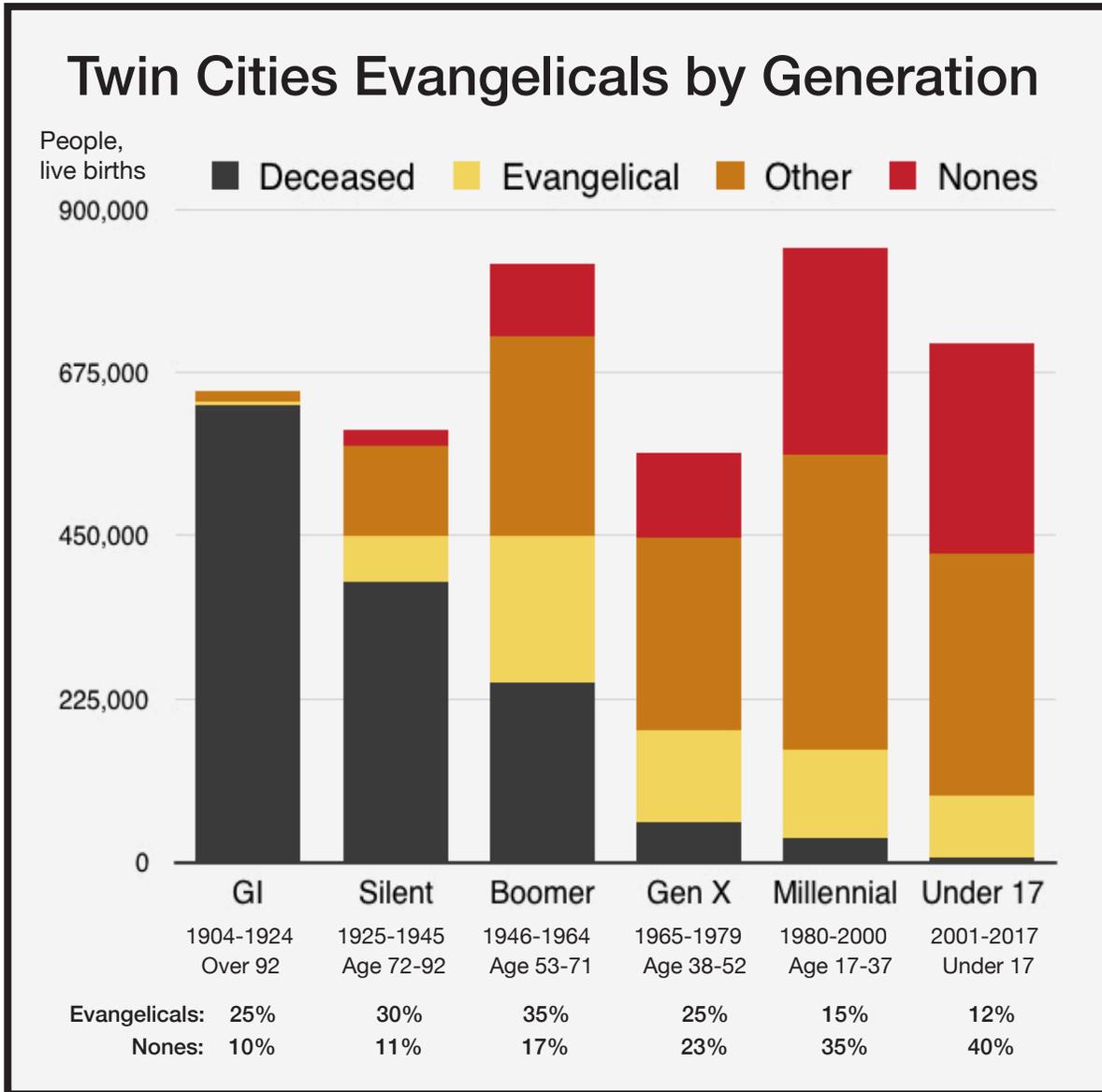
## TAKEAWAY 7 - Church Scouts are your friends

If you're a pastor or board member of a church in decline ... discouraged that all efforts to reverse the trend so far have failed ... struggling with income squeeze ... feeling alone and disconnected from confusing changes occurring around you ... ***you'll love Church Scouts!*** We're your friends, and we'll help you.

## TAKEAWAY 8 - Website

To learn more about Church Scouts and to benefit from our free services, go to our website at [www.churchscouts.org](http://www.churchscouts.org).

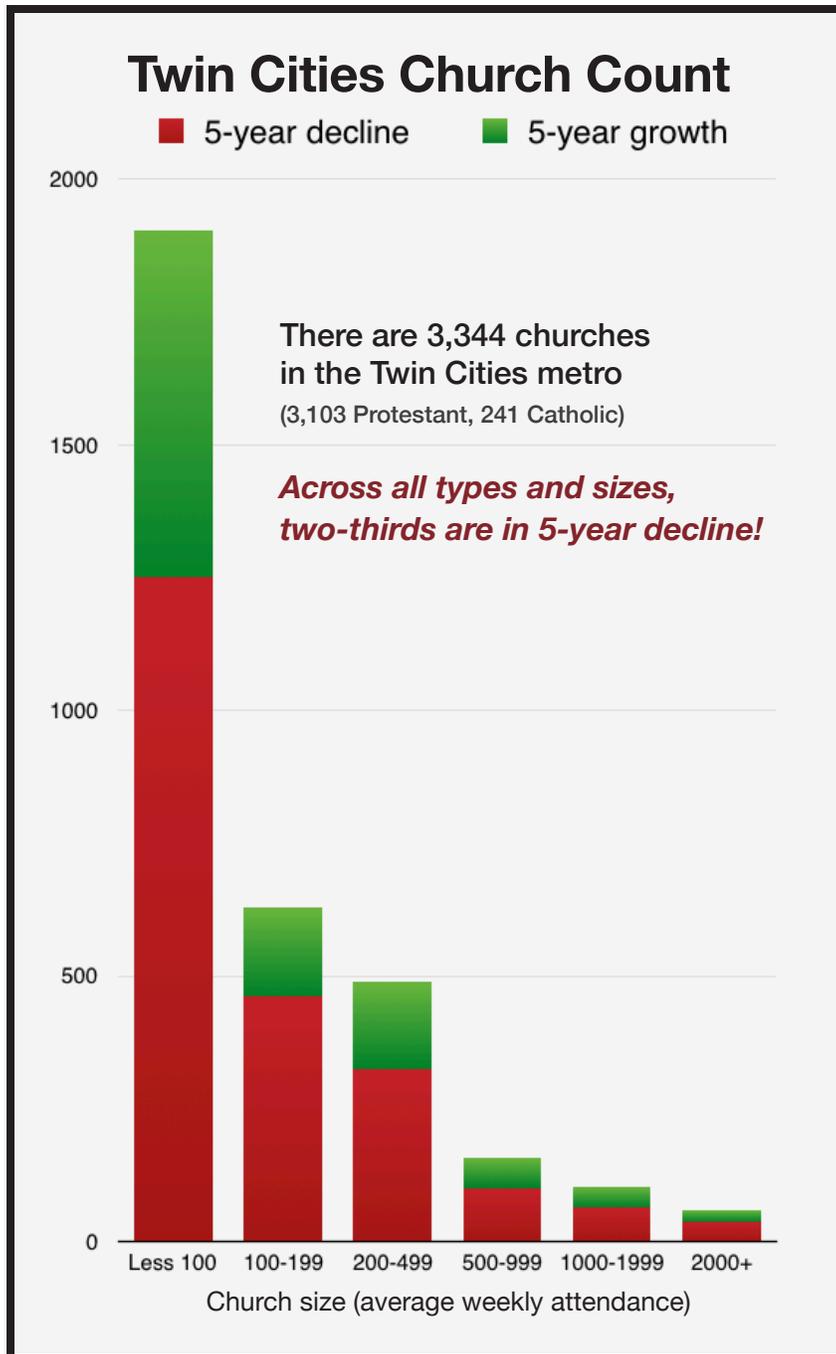
# Growth Problem: Demographics



### What this chart says:

- Without aggressive evangelism and first-time church membership, **people's involvement with churches will drop dramatically** in the coming years as older generations die off and the Under 17 (and successive) generations arise.
- Fertility rate (live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44) has fallen from 123 in 1957 to 62 in 2015 – **fertility rate in half!** Churches can **no longer grow by ministering primarily to church families** and their children. Large numbers of children are rejecting the faith and practice of their parents. Christian percent of population is in steep decline.
- **Millennials** are now in child-bearing age, raising **children with no Christian heritage**.
- To reverse the trend, it is imperative for churches to connect better with the thinking, needs and hurts of **secular people** and learn how to become relevant to their lives.

# Growth Problem: Disconnect



## What this chart says:

- Generally speaking, at beginning of 2017, Twin Cities churches are **fragmented, shrinking and increasingly disconnected** from each other and from the people they need to reach.
- Only 808 churches (24%) have been able to cross the **200 barrier**. (Churches experience a whole new dynamic above 200 per week attendance – called the **200 barrier** – but churches below that number usually have serious limitations due to income and are unable to provide the family services their members need.)
- The **disconnect between churches** is seen statistically by the fact that there are so many small struggling churches.
- The **disconnect with community** is seen statistically by the fact that two thirds of churches of all sizes are in five year decline, unable to attract and hold enough people from outside the church.
- Unless this trend is reversed, hundreds of Twin Cities churches will have to consolidate or permanently close.
- **Loss of attendance is a leading indicator of other losses that follow:** loss of commitment, loss of income, loss of participation and loss of community influence.

Statistics in this Briefing are from the City Vision Master File of Twin Cities Churches. For over 20 years, City Vision under direction of Rev. Dr. John Mayer has been gathering and reporting local church statistics for the Twin Cities metro area Minnesota.

City Vision's 185-page **City View Report** – available at [www.cityvisiontc.org/cityview-reports](http://www.cityvisiontc.org/cityview-reports) – is known to be the most comprehensive church reporting for any major metropolitan area in the world.

# THE MODERN WORLD: Everything **connected**

The word that best describes and explains the modern world is **connected**. The meanings and implications of that word are changing everything, even churches.

For the past 50 years, the basic concept of church growth was essentially to do more of the same, but do it bigger and better, usually with more buildings, staff and programs, with technology and contemporary flair.

In the past, there were enough children coming up through the ranks of church families to keep our churches growing.

But now church growth is becoming something different and much more challenging. Most growth will have to come from people outside of the church, not raised in the church, from **conversions** and **first-time church membership**.

Form will become less important; content will become more important. Content will have to be relevant, clear and life-changing. Authenticity, genuine love and personal relationships will be extremely important. Outsiders must immediately feel welcomed into a caring community.

## How will a Twin Cities **connected** church look *different*?

- Connected to other churches for information, collaboration and encouragement
- Connected to the real-life thinking, needs and hurts of secular people
- Connected to persuasive answers for the hard questions secular people are asking
- Connected to secret shoppers, exit interviews and other feedback systems
- Connected to flow of new ideas, experiments and success stories
- Connected to new technologies for better communication and efficiency
- Connected to big thinkers and doers

**Church Scouts will help get your church connected in all these ways.**

**OF COURSE**, as always through the centuries ... each church and leader needs to be **connected to the Lord's leading** through faith, prayer and Holy Spirit ... to discern God's will in light of new circumstances ... to act when it becomes clear that change is needed.

# Church Scouts

## we help churches grow

Scouts *go out* and *bring back* key information for making important decisions

### OUTWARD LOOKING



There are more than **3,300 churches** in the Twin Cities metro area of **3,500,000 people**. **Two-thirds of our churches are in five-year decline!**

Church Scouts work to help reverse the trend by supplying pastors and church boards with connections, databases, tools and briefings for making better, bolder, faster decisions.

**MISSION (Why):** Church growth in the Twin Cities

**STRATEGY (How):** Church Scouts supply key information

**TACTICS (What):** Connections to churches and community  
Databases with facts and figures  
Tools for communication and feedback  
Briefings for pastors and church boards

**CAUTION!** It's possible for a church to grow just by out-competing other churches, with larger staff, more programs and better facilities, by human effort with marketing and money. But drawing from one church to another, with winners and losers, is NOT the Church Scouts vision of growth. Church Scouts is about **new conversions** and **first-time church membership**, and that's why so much attention is given to understanding and communicating with modern secular culture. For overall growth, churches must learn to be good in cross-cultural missions right here in the Twin Cities.

**No cost to churches.** This free service is a non-denominational, laymen-led, self-organizing initiative. It is implemented by committed Christians who are skilled professionals – market researchers, focus group facilitators, analysts, communication experts, web developers, database administrators and other specialists – donating time and money to help Twin Cities churches grow.