

When there is talk of a movement, or even just church growth, it makes some believers uneasy. Rapid growth is said to produce immature or poor quality fruit. I have sometimes heard comparisons to fast-grown vegetables, which are not as good or healthy as when allowed to grow naturally. Even the rapid multiplication of cells can be morbid – like cancer... Reason with me, please. Yes, lettuce needs certain „normal“ growth rate to be healthy. But if we slowed down growth of such lettuce, would it be healthier or of better quality? I doubt it.

### **Slower growth is certainly no guarantee of better quality!**

As for the growth of the church as the whole (or the movement directly), I wonder:

### **What is the „normal“ pace of healthy church growth?**

The last thirty years in our country suggest that new believer additions to congregations have been between 0 and 5 % per year. In a congregation of fifty, 0-2 (or 3) new people are added each year. Somewhere, five new people would come to the Lord per year – great growth rate of 10%. However, from long-term observation of the Czech evangelical environment, it does not appear that the aggregate number of believers is growing in any significant way. On the contrary, we hear of towns and villages where years ago „there was something“, and now those places are white on the evangelical map again. Believers there prefer to commute to larger cities for fellowship.

What is „normal“ pace of church growth? Would it be too fast for believers in a congregation of fifty to bring an average ten people to the Lord Jesus in a year? That is, 20%? And why each average believer couldn't bring at least one more person to the Lord per year? What would be unhealthily fast about that?

If we look at the beginning of the book of Acts or some of the historical and contemporary places with a movement, the people there would tell us that if one believer reaches only one new person per year, that is unacceptably retarded growth. „Are you content to bring only one person to Jesus a year? Where is your commitment to Jesus?“ my friend Alex Abraham in India would say.

So far, we talked about growing numbers. But inseparably, with new people there is a



question who will take care for them and how! Quite an ingrained idea: „One meeting a week where some basic truths of Scripture are taught.“ Is this healthy standard of care for a new person?

Alex, from his experience with thousands of people, says that

**What the new ones learn to do in the first three months after their conversion, they'll probably pass on to others for the rest of their lives.**

That's why Alex strives to meet the new believer preferably every day! Or he supplies him with specific growth incentives at least three times a week.