



New Ideas for Growing Churches

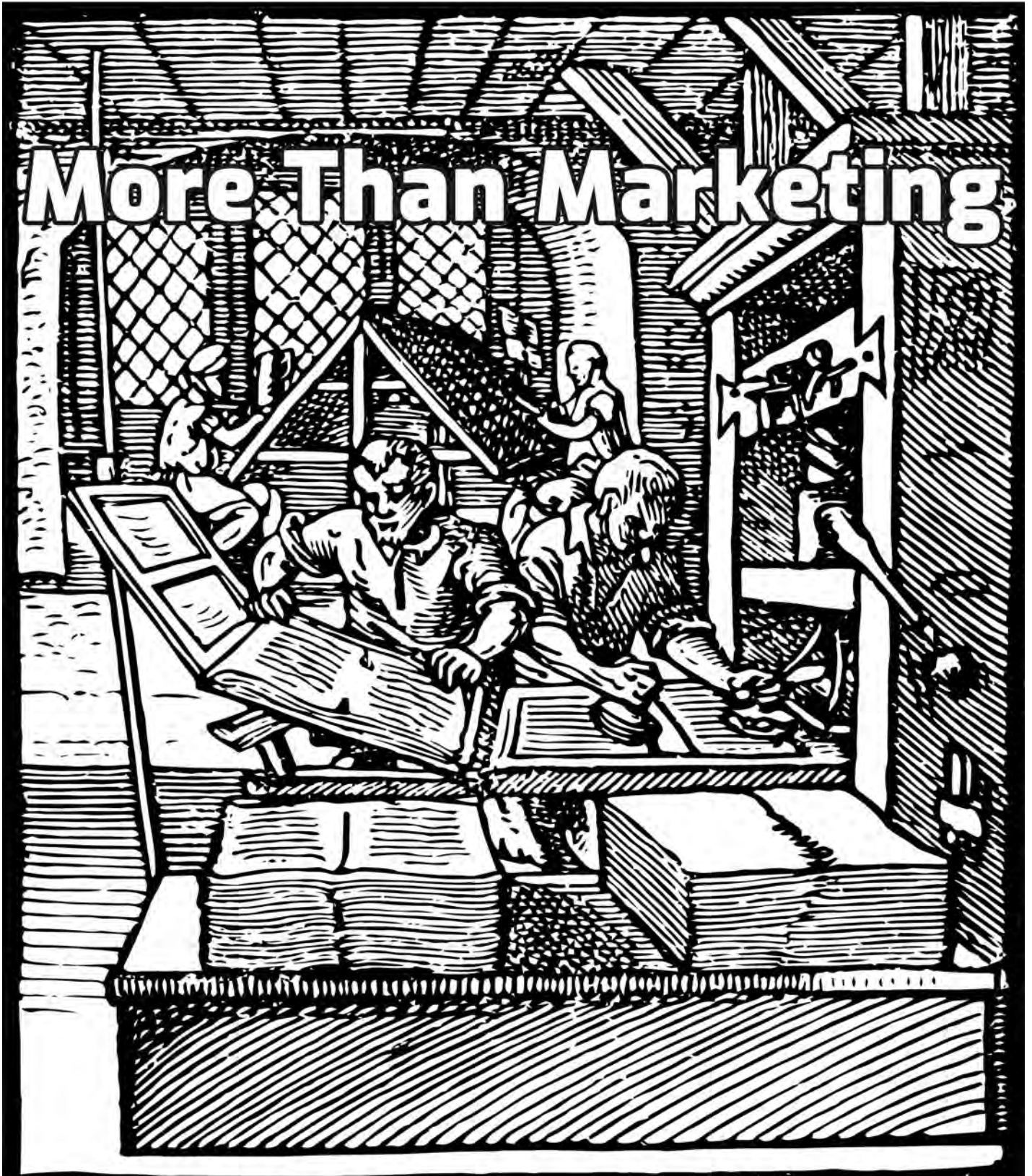
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Since 1980

More Than Marketing



What's Inside...

MORE THAN MARKETING

REFLECTIONS

By Bill Tenny-Brittian 3

SHOWING UP ON UNCHURCHED RADAR

By Andy Romstad 8

TOUGH SKINNED AND DOGGED DETERMINATION

By Tom Cheyney. 14

JUMP START YOUR MARKETING

By Kyle Ermoian 20

CHARACTER IS YOUR MARKETING

By Christopher L. Scott. 24

NOT *THAT* KIND OF CHURCH

By Bill Easum. 28

EVERYONE'S FAVORITE MARKETING: DOOR TO DOOR MARKETING *101 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP GROW YOUR CHURCH*

By Bill Tenny-Brittian 30

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

By Mary Frances 34

ARMED SECURITY: OPTIONS, IMPACTS, AND INSIGHTS *THE GREATER GOOD*

By Peter Mahler 38

NOTHING BUT NET: A TOUCH OF HUMOR

Cartoonist Tim Oliphant 40

JUST BECAUSE YOU EXIST DOESN'T MEAN PEOPLE WILL COME *WOODDALE ADVANCE*

By Paul Borden. 43

BEFORE YOU START SOMETHING NEW

By Bill Tenny-Brittian. 45

THE NEXT BIG THING IN CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

Horizons Stewardship 47

MORE THAN MARKETING

PARTING SHOT

By Scott Musselman. 51



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Reflections

By Bill Tenny-Brittian

MORE THAN MARKETING

WHAT'S THE POINT of marketing? Though that probably depends on who you ask, it seems to me that most people seem to think marketing is all about getting people's attention and convincing people to make some sort of an investment, i.e., make a sale of some kind.

But just getting someone's attention isn't enough. The old elementary school game "Made you look!" may get someone to stop scrolling their Insta account for a moment, but just because they looked at your meme or even clicked on it, doesn't count for much. It's the same if someone reads your church sign. If they looked but never visited, you haven't accomplished much.

Just making a sale isn't enough. If you sell one banana and the customer never comes back, that's not much of a return on your marketing investment. The same is true if someone gives their heart to Jesus during your worship service and never darkens the doors of your church again.

There's has to be more to marketing than just making noise or ringing in a sale.

The best definition of marketing I've ever heard came from Glenn Kelley, an IT guy who ran a website hosting service. He said, "The purpose of marketing is to make friends." When he shared that, it struck me just how profound his reflection was. He knew he had to get noticed by potential clients and he knew he had to make sales. But he also understood that if you don't make a connection with a would-be customer and if you don't nurture that connection into a friendly relationship, then you'll end up having nothing more than a temporary relationship.

There are several articles in this issue of *Net Results* that deal with the reality of relationship building (see Mary Frances' "It's All About Relationships" article for one). However, you might be asking, "Is it even possible to build a friendly relationship through marketing?" And the answer to that is yes. Companies have been doing that for decades.

Consider Apple, especially under the genius leadership of Steve Jobs. It is one of the better examples for marketing as friend-building. As Simon Sinek pointed out in his TED Talk "Start with Why," when Apple markets, they're making an attempt to speak to your limbic system, that part of the brain where your emotional heart resides. Their goal is to make a connection with you so that when you think Apple, it just "feels right." Now, I'm not talking about unicorns and rainbows mixed with YouTube puppy kisses. If you're an Apple aficionado, you probably get it – Apple connects with you at some deeper level. If you're a PC or an Android person, then you're likely baffled by it all – there are a lot cheaper phones, computers, and watches. But Apple's consistent messaging of chal-



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as a speaker for almost any church training event.

You can reach him at billtb@NetResults.org.

Bill Easum AND Bill Tenny-Brittian

FOREWORD BY Ed Stetzer

EFFECTIVE STAFFING FOR VITAL CHURCHES

The ESSENTIAL GUIDE
to Finding + Keeping the Right People

There's More to Staffing than Hiring and Firing

- Discover the Four Core Processes every effective church must staff.
- Uncover the secret to effectively staffing the small church by "hiring" unpaid staff.
- How to not make the #1 staffing mistake almost every church makes.
- Ask the right questions so you can hire the right people with confidence.
- Master the skill of coaching your staff ... including how to hold them accountable for results.
- Discern when it's time to hire the next staff member, and what position you need next.
- Explore the skills you need and the personal values that must change as you lead your church through each growth barrier.



"This book is a winner!"
Rick Warren, Saddleback Church



"A tremendous help for church leaders."
Dave Ferguson, Seacoast Church



"I wish I had this book when I started."
Darrin Patrick, The Journey Church

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lenging the status quo of corporate America resonates with some of us. In fact, it resonates with enough of us that Apple has become the most profitable company in the world (as announced in August 2021 by the Fortune Global 500). They've done that by building more than just loyal customers. As Glenn Kelley suggested, they've used their marketing to build friends, loyal followers who are willing to pay a premium price for products that are beautifully designed and that challenge the status quo. (To be fair, there are plenty of beautifully designed products out there, but it's Apple's "why" coupled with their designs that are captivating.)

While all this might be interesting, you're probably asking by now "What does this have to do with marketing the church?"

Everything.

For decades the church has been marketing itself by what Sinek calls the What and the How. When we market, we largely rely on telling the unchurched world, our "potential customers," what we do. In some churches, we do social justice ministries. In others, we do classic or contemporary worship. And in a few, sadly too few, we make disciples. A few churches go beyond the *what we do* to *how we do it*, sometimes called the "features." We do social justice ministries by engaging in protests, marches, lobbying, or providing food-services for the indigent. We offer classic worship with a talented organist, orchestra, and choir. We make disciples by offering classes in life management and by a spiritual mentoring program.

But none of that gets to the heart of the matter. None of that likely taps into your emotional heart. You may like classic worship and perhaps a marketing campaign that emphasizes a classic service will "sell" you on visiting the church sometime, but it's unlikely to turn you into a regularly returning guest. And with all the other churches in town that offer classic worship, it's probably not enough to drive the unchurched to your worship service.

The Why of a business isn't nearly as easy to discover as it seems, which is probably why so many businesses can only tell you their What and the How. At first glance, the Why of any business is self evident, right? To make money. But if you read a Steve Jobs biography or if you've seen the movie *Steve Jobs*, you know that making money isn't why Apple exists – even though they're the wealthiest company on the planet.

And *that* brings us to the big question: Why does your church exist? If you say "To make disciples" you get the Good Try award, but you fail the class – that's the same as business' *to make money* response. Making disciples, at best, is the what. Why do we make disciples? The response, "Because Jesus commanded us to" is an unsatisfying answer. Again, it would be like saying, "Apple builds iPhones because Steve Jobs told them to."

Why does the church exist?

I thought that'd be an easy question to answer, but apparently I was wrong. I visited quite a few church websites that were intentional about sharing their Why statements (all ostensibly fashioned from Sinek's work). The responses were literally all over the map.

- "Our church's why is to make relationships."
- "Because your forever hangs in the balance."
- "To make a kingdom difference in people's lives."
- "To be the visible sacrament of God."
- "Evangelism is our white hot why."
- "Because we love God and we love our neighbors."
- "To forgive sins."

All of a sudden, what seemed like a simple exercise got really, really complicated. It's much easier to stick with the What we do than to share the Why we do it. But the What is just a fact; the Why can be, yea should be, inspiring. And the church does actually have a Why. We all have a why, but most people, most businesses, and most churches haven't done the work to discover it and to articulate it.

So, let me land this albatross of an airplane. Marketing is more than getting people's attention. It's more than trying to make a sale. It's more than your What. And it's more than your How. And, honestly, it's more than your why, but as Sinek suggests, you've got to start somewhere and we'd be so much better off if we started with Why and then worked our way to the rest.

Discovering your church's why is at least a cornerstone to effective and inspiring marketing. It's the heart behind your church. But finding your church's authentic Why can take you in many different directions that don't necessarily end well, as you can see from the bullet list above. (To be fair, there are a couple of those I really liked.) Over the years, I've used Sakichi Toyoda's Five Whys to try and get to the heart of it (ask "Why do we do that?" and respond with an answer followed by a "Why do we do that?" over and over until you get to the core response). But in my experience, that ultimately takes you wherever it is

you were predisposed to go in the first place. If you're convinced that the purpose of the church is to relieve the suffering of the poor, you're going to end up there. Same for disciple making, evangelism, or building relationships.

But once again, Sinek provided an interesting exercise that not only makes sense, it takes it out of your personal subjectiveness. He produced a short video that can help someone get to their own personal Why, and you can adapt the process to dig down and discover your church's Why. You can watch his two minute video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eriQjFMiLuE>.

The core of his process is to ask "Why are we friends?" and then ultimately to move to the What questions ... "What is it about me that makes me know for sure you would be there for me no matter what?" (For this to make

sense, you REALLY need to click the link and watch the video.)

I recommend you use his adapted process repeatedly with several, probably many, of your church members. After a few of those conversations, you'll begin to see a pattern, probably a very clear pattern. And that pattern will give you a good indication about what your church's Why really is. The next step will be to put it into words, a one sentence inspirational statement about what makes your church so very different from every other church in town. And with that, you can begin to connect the dots of the What and the How and the Get Attention and the Make Friends (customers!) to create a plan for reaching your city.

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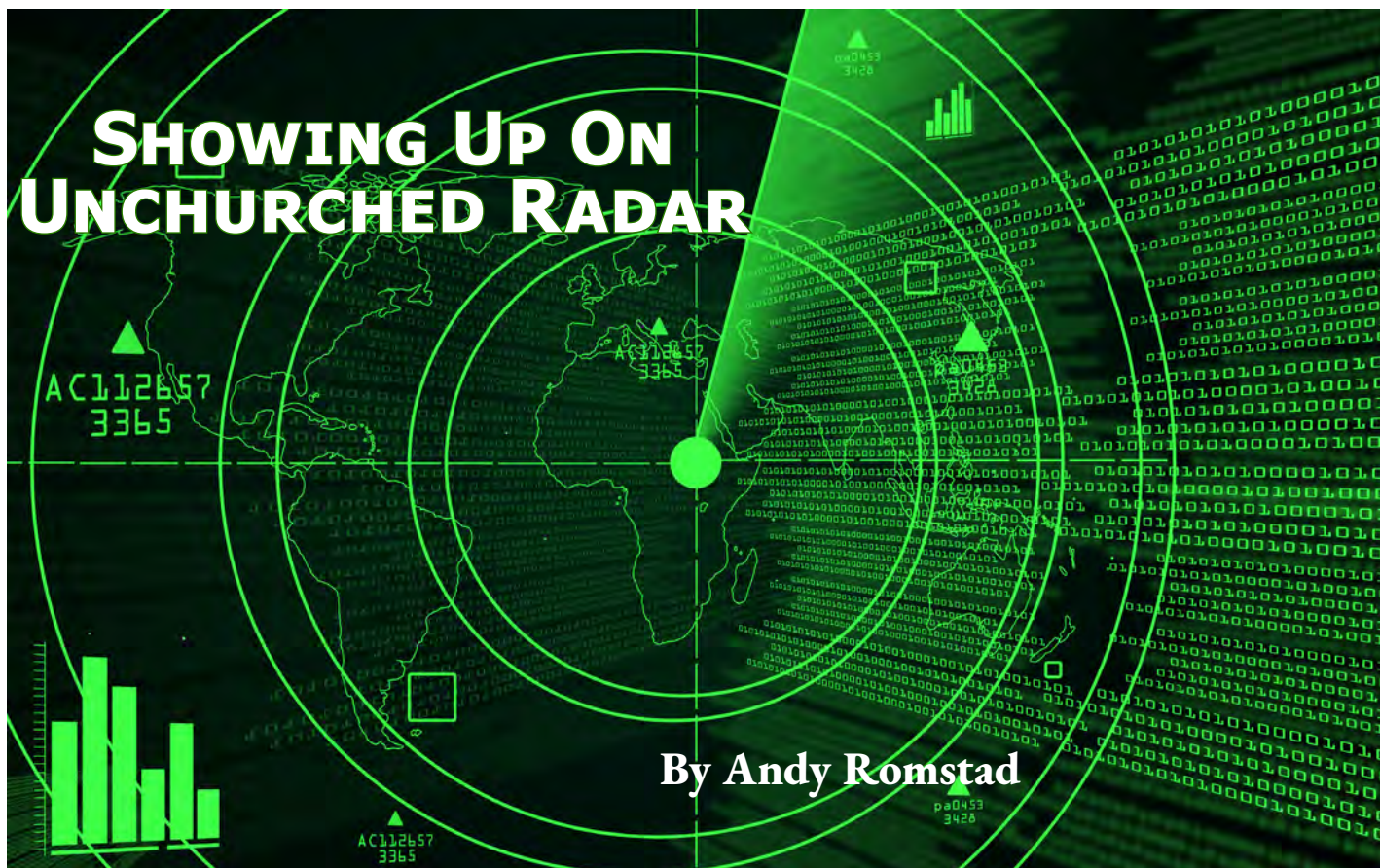
"Pastors tell me all the time that they do so much church management and membership care that they don't have time to do the things that will grow their churches."



"The *Get More Time Planner* identifies the key areas where you can shave off hours, still get the job done, and re-invest that time to do what really matters."

***Bill Tenny-Brittian
The Effective Church Group***

GetMoreTime.Today



By Andy Romstad

THE PROBLEM: PASTORS sitting around with other pastors speculating about how to reach the unchurched.

Worse: Pastors who gave up thinking about it. Ministry maintenance devours all our energy.

The Reality: On Sunday mornings, the unchurched masses surrounding our churches are not thinking about whether or not to go to church. As Carey Nieuwhof notes, our churches are not even on their radar.

The Question: What could change that reality?

More Than a Rebranding

Our challenge as ministry leaders who care about Jesus' Great Commission is to connect with people outside our faith communities. It takes more than marketing to connect with these people.

So, let's explore the question of how to connect with folks by asking three groups: a) A church committee; b) An expert; and, c) Ourselves.

We did a rebranding about a dozen years ago. Artistry Marketing (now Artistry Labs) told us, "No one driving

by your church thinks anything even remotely relevant to their lives happens inside your building."

We're here. They aren't noticing. Our tall steeple, towering above our town's treeline, isn't beckoning the masses to line up at our doors to confess their sins and experience Jesus.

Why not? Well, let's try to find out.

Idea #1 – Let's Ask a Church Committee

There's a good solution, right? They should know. It is their job. They're dutiful church members tasked by church "leadership" to connect with new people.

The evangelism and youth committees are typically similar. Evangelism is tasked with reaching the unchurched. Youth committees are tasked with reaching the unwillingly churched. Same assignment. Different ages.



Andy Romstad has served as Sr. Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minnesota since 2005. (Avg. weekly worship: 530.) He has also served as an ELCA Mission Developer and Associate Pastor in urban, suburban and exurban settings. In addition to an M.Div. from Luther Seminary ('94), he has a Masters in Organizational Management.

Typically, in these meetings, everything is quickly framed as: “What on earth are we going to do to get somebody to show up?” The answer to this desperation is inevitably some version of “better events.” Eventually, “too busy” emerges as the catch-all reason nobody goes. Interspersed along the way are negative critiques of today’s culture. (“Darn people!”) Someone is bound to reminisce about a big personality ministry leader from the past. Someone might as well sing a chorus of “Those Were the Days” like Archie & Edith Bunker on *All in the Family*.

It doesn’t matter what state you’re in. (I’ve served churches in four states.) The faces may be different, but the meeting is the same.

Eventually the “program calendar” you’ve been assigned to create gets filled with whatever you did last year. More than one committee member is secretly making plans to be somewhere else those days. Flyers on windshields in the parking lot inevitably is suggested. (You love that, right?)

If you’re a pastor and your family’s livelihood is dependent upon the success of the dysfunctional legacy structures of old institutional churches, you’re probably losing sleep.

I’m pleased to not serve such a committee-driven church. We’re not all so lucky.

The point: Well-intentioned evangelism committees don’t know how to connect with the unchurched masses. They will inevitably descend into creating programs and events that neither they, nor the people they’re trying to reach, want to attend.

The lesson: Our existing structures can’t lead us out of the mess we’re in.

Smile. Look elsewhere. Lead!

Idea #2 – Let’s Ask an Expert

This is a somewhat better idea. But which experts? The experts at the seminary? Pastors are trained in how to lead ministries, right? Let’s put that myth to rest.

When I was at the seminary, I had six or seven pastoral care classes. (Apparently, pastors do all the “care.”) I don’t remember any classes about leadership, management, or stewardship. Evangelism was an elective. (That’s ironic.) The remainder was mostly Bible and theology (explaining why Lutherans are right and you’re not). Outside of church history (Luther, Wesley, Hauge, etc.) you weren’t

learning much about how to lead a spiritual movement, much less lead a twenty-first century church. After I left, the “Reading the Audiences” course was started to help us understand our communities. It was resisted, of course.

Apart from the occasional rogue seminary professor excited about Kingdom expansion, you didn’t find enthusiasm for innovation or church growth. Seminary professors are bookish scholars talented at identifying aorist passive participles. Movement-maker mentors they were not. If they were, they’d be leading movements.

The point: Well-intentioned evangelism committees don’t know how to connect with the unchurched masses

The Point: The “experts” at our ministry training centers, seminaries, don’t train us how to do Jesus’ most important mandate: the Great Commission. Lay people often roll their eyes in disgust when they learn this.

The Lesson: Young pastors quickly learn that they need to ask around. Find mentors. Get coached. Keep their eyes open. Learn. See what God is doing today. Those that don’t, struggle. Only the entrepreneurial survive. Good pastors figure out what to do.

In his book *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*, author Thom Rainer gives us over a dozen practices to help us connect with people outside our church

1. Major on the Majors: Do only what you can do. (Preach. Lead. Cast vision.) Give away as much of “the ministry” as you can to others.
2. Believe in Something: What are you passionate about? What is your church about? (Rick Warren preaches “balance” among the five purposes.)
3. Prioritize Evangelism (which is typically minimized): Invite. Tell. Welcome the stranger.
4. Deep Teaching: Rainer, surprisingly, found that both unchurched and current members want deep, “meaty,” biblical teaching. (Warning: Definitions of “deep” vary widely.)
5. Develop Small Groups: The old mantra for newcomers: “Give ‘em a group, give ‘em a job.” People need to be needed and need to know people.

6. Spouses: Lots of the unchurched are your member spouses. How might they be included?
7. Facilities: Does your building pass the smell test?
8. Greeters: Train your greeters.
9. Be Friendly: Studies show new people need to be greeted at least four times at a worship service before they consider a church to be “friendly.”
10. Excellence! Solve lingering problems. (You know that microphone that always pops?)
11. New Member Class: Combine your “inquirer” class with your new member class. Make it one and give it a name. Saddleback’s “101 Discovering Your Church” and Northpoint’s “Starting Point” are the most well-known examples. (You can adapt their content.)
12. Set High Expectations: “Churches that reach the unchurched are high-expectation churches,” says Rainer. Make membership mean something.
13. Exist to Serve a Purpose (or five purposes): Tell people what you’re about. Regularly. Here’s why we exist. We exist to ... If you don’t tell them, they’ll fill in the blank with something else.

Blackhawk Church in Madison, Wisconsin, an Evangelical Free Church, though you’d never know it, tells their people a few times every service what they’re doing: “We’re building a community to reach a community.” Catchy. Memorable. Beautiful.

14. Involve People: New people want to do something.
15. Pray: “Prayer is the key to reaching the unchurched,” says Rainer.
16. Pastors Should Lead! Pastors, get out there and *do* something. Lead your church from here to there. Define “there.” You’re leading people on a spiritual journey. Lead! And if you don’t have that spiritual gift, get some people around you that do.

But how do you connect with people for the first time? Here are three practices that are helpful:

Include Outsiders: Regularly ask people to include people from outside your church family in anything they are doing (Bible study, small group, serving, etc.) New people will be the most likely to do so. They will all tell their friends how fun it was to feed people at the food ministry.



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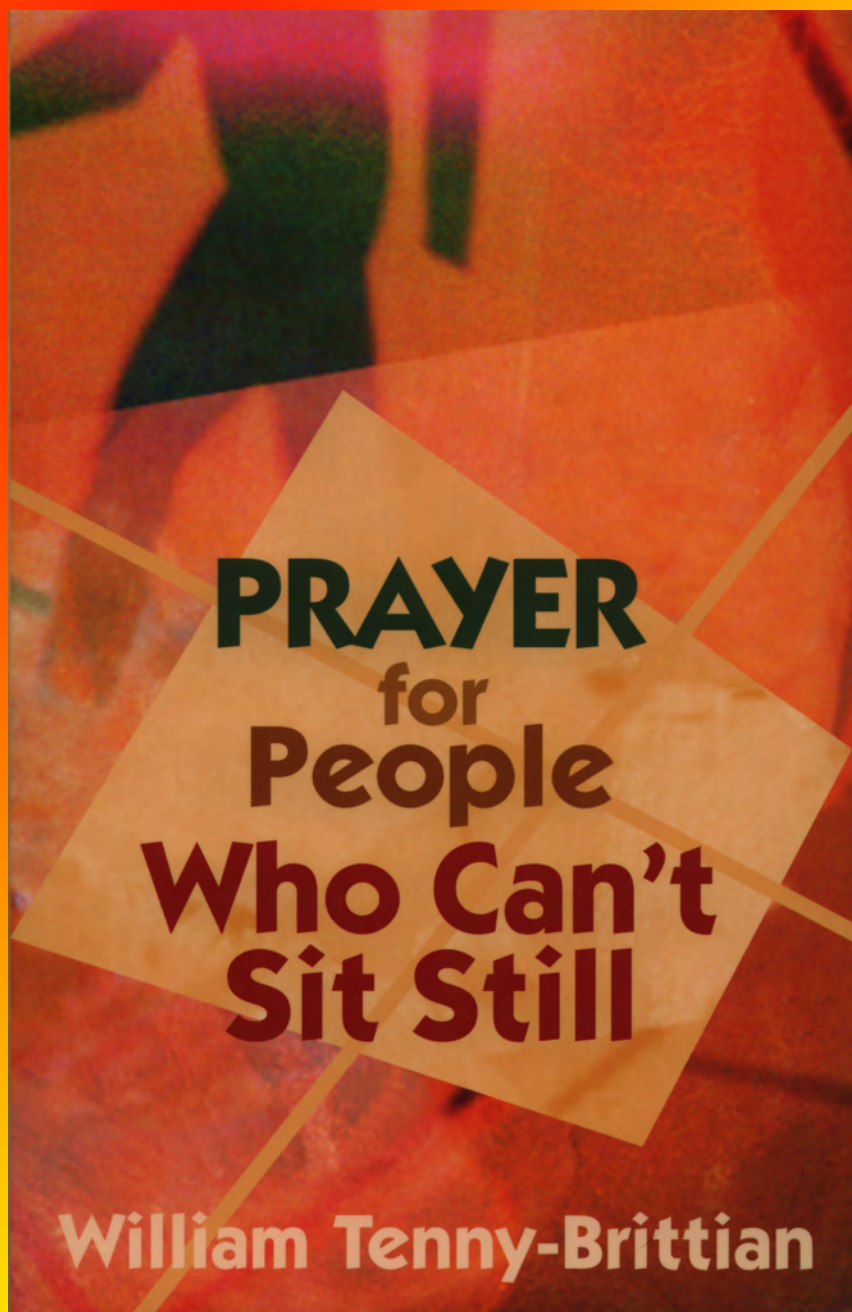
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A book by Managing Editor
Bill Tenny-Brittian





The Prayer Book for ADHD Children and Adults

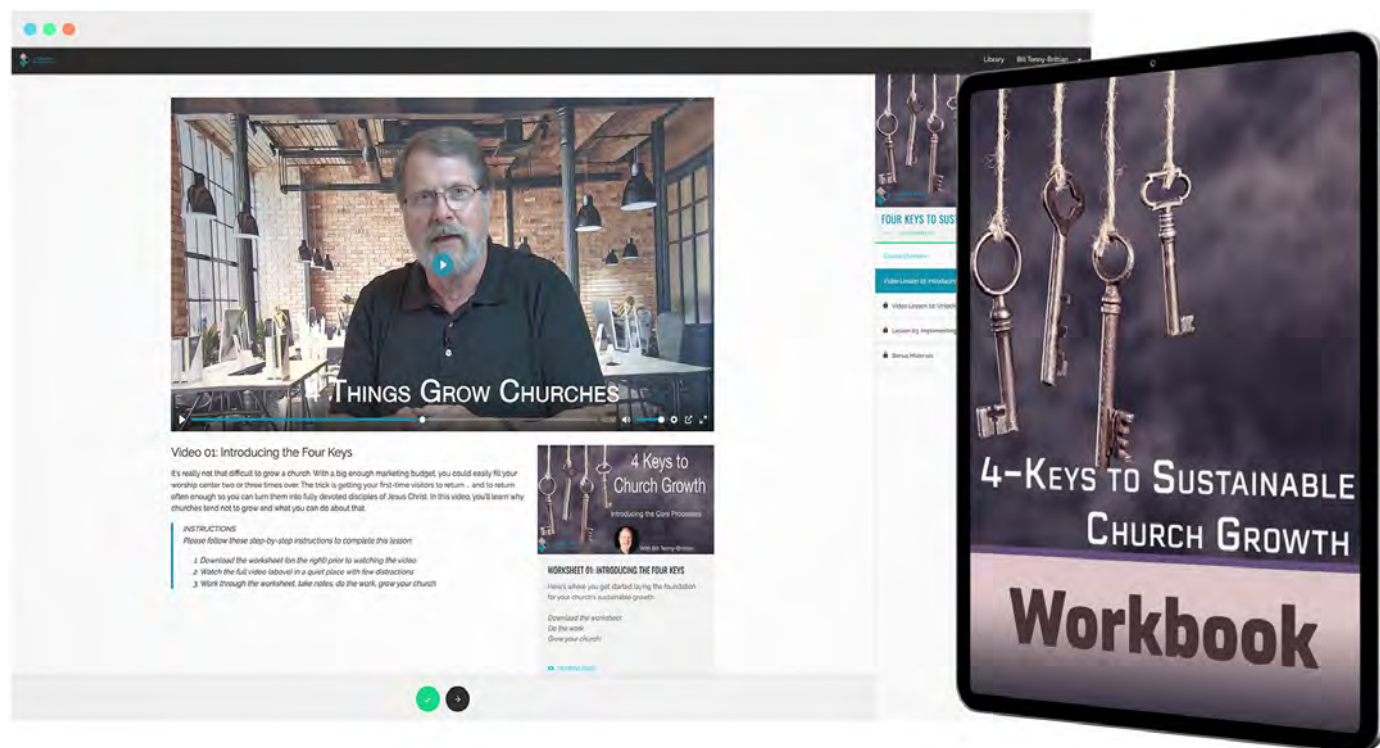
If you or someone you know finds it difficult to sit still during prayer, this book might not be a lifesaver, but it might be a spiritual sanity saver.

"Whether ADHD or not, Tenny-Brittian effectively persuades readers that kinesthetic prayer is a new way to experience communion with God."

–Publishers Weekly

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- 4-Keys Workbook
- Bonus: *Ten Things You Can Do Today to Grow Your Church* ebook



Be Visible in the Community: Ask a team of social media addicts to share your social media posts. Write articles for the paper. Be seen in the community. I chatted with three people at a cafe yesterday, two of whom I didn't know. Care about people and be seen caring.

Northpoint Community Church in Atlanta recently announced their new strategy for reaching out to their community includes visibility as the primary element, described as "Endear Your Community." The strategy includes:

- Love – Endear Your Community;
- Connect – Inspire Your Audience;
- Involve – Equip Your Core.

Add Value to People's Lives: Sending out a daily devotional via email connects you to a wide cross-section of people, many of whom were not members or regular attenders. It provides an entirely different connection point.

People like to be included. People like people who care. People appreciate other people adding value to their lives. That leads to some further questions. That opens eyes.

Idea #3 – Let's Ask Ourselves Some Questions

If we're anxious to connect with the unchurched, our own motivations matter. Are we trying to grow the kingdom? Or get new members?

For churches who wish to connect with the unchurched, here are a few key questions to ask of every ministry: ***What need does this meet?***

When I was a mission developer, we were told to ask this question about everything: What need are you meeting? Inevitably, I thought they meant physical needs and were referring to food shelves, homeless shelters, or any physical need. I was missing the point.

Most people have those needs met. If they don't, other churches have that covered. Here are the needs I didn't realize were out there: Meaning, Good News, Community, Contribution, Growth. Once you get past Maslow's pyramid of needs, these are the real needs people experience.

People have a need for a life filled with meaning, to bear good news to their neighbor, to know and be known, to make a difference in the world and to get better as a hu-

man being. Saddleback calls those the five purposes. They are universal needs.

Here are the needs I didn't realize were out there: Meaning, Good News, Community, Contribution, Growth. Once you get past Maslow's pyramid of needs, these are the real needs people experience.

Here's a second key question to ask: ***Who is this for?***

We often create worship services based on our "tradition," based on our leaders or based on our preferences. Who is that going to reach? Probably just us.

One of our former pastors, the late Dave Everett, would ask of every single thing we did: Who is this for? Something that is intended to reach everybody is designed to reach nobody.

Summary

The short answer to reaching out with "more than marketing" is this: Meet people's needs. This question really separates ministries that will connect with outsiders from insider ministries that reach insiders.

Ultimately, people vote with their feet and their checkbooks. Those two numbers tell the cold hard truths of what people think about our churches.

It doesn't matter how right you are or how much you care. If you don't add value, they don't show up. There are too many other things to do in life. The pandemic shutdowns gave everyone a taste of the alternatives. So, what real needs are we meeting?

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10) Let's help people "find life."

And as for the word "unchurched" I keep using, someone here in Cambridge once said to me, "You know, I've never heard anyone ever say, 'I really wish I could get 'churched!'"

It sounds dramatic! But wouldn't that be cool if they did!

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TOUGH SKINNED AND DOGGED DETERMINATION

By Tom Cheyney

I LOVE THE cartoon that shows a collie looking up into a tree with a caption which says “Once I figure out how to climb this here tree, you’re mine squirrel. You are mine!” If you are going to be successful as a Church Revitalizer working in revitalization and renewal, you must develop some degree of dogged determination wrapped in a spirit that’s toughed skinned.

I define being tough skinned as a steady persistence in following a course of action, a belief, or a purpose. It’s steadfastness in action. It’s seen when continuing on a course of action without regard to discouragement, impediments, opposition, or previous failures. Every church revitalizer has experienced all of these at some point in the journey.

We need to acquire this leathery skin complexion as renewal leaders because culture and the forces of evil will place stumbling blocks in our path. It’s important that you practice perseverance. It especially matters in revitalization and renewal. It matters because our lights will shine in the darkness, reflecting the light of Christ to a hurting, chaotic, and broken world. So don’t be dismayed, and don’t give up when the going gets tough. Instead, dig deep into prayer and study of the Word. While I am encouraging you to be toughed skinned, let me give you a little wisdom for you to chew on. Here it is:

In Revitalization It isn’t All About You, So Quit Picking On Yourself

Here’s an important rule for every church revitalizer. It isn’t all about you. To develop a tough skin, you must first remember that you are not the center of that church’s universe. Yes, sorry to say, you are not the fixed point around which the church universe turns. Stop brooding about how little attention you get while your church is being revitalized. Ask your spouse for more attention if you need more. Go build a friendship with another pastor. The fact is, your gloomy thoughts will only intensify, leaving you emotionally crippled and thinking that you have ruined everything. Please stop it for the sake of your church. People in your church are going to behave badly.



Tom is the founder and directional leader of the RENOvATE National Church Revitalization Conference and leader of the RENOvATE Church Revitalization Virtual Coaching Network where he mentors pastors, churches, and denominational leaders in Church Revitalization and Renewal all across North America. He serves as the National Host of the weekly Church Revitalization and Renewal Podcast. Dr. Cheyney has written over 5,000 print, audio resources, guides, or books for church revitalizers, pastors, church planters, and lay leaders. Tom is a nationally recognized conference speaker and a frequent writer on church revitalization, church planting, new church health, and leadership development.

There will be jerks in your church, just like there are in mine. Fussing and feuding over it won't help.

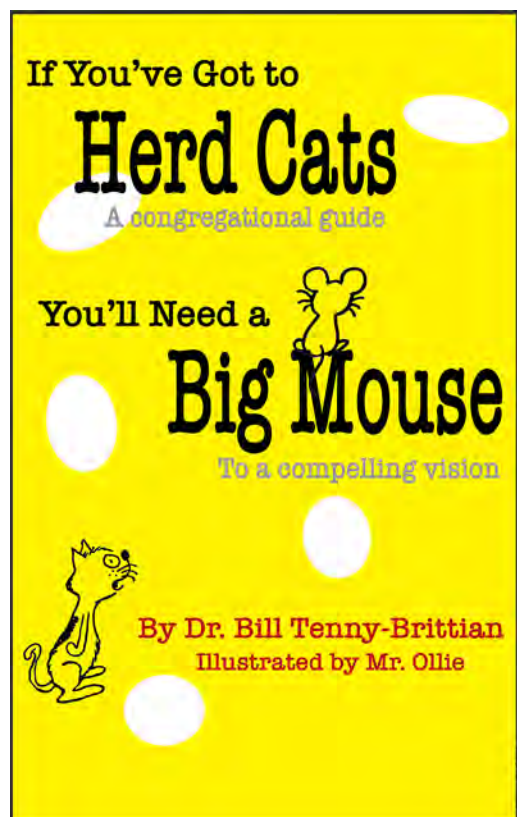
So, here are a few tips to developing a toughed skinned:

- Church Revitalizer's Must Not Take Things Personally Because It isn't About You.
- Church Revitalizer's Must Not Let Others Get to You.
- Church Revitalizer's Must Remember that Everyone Gets Rejected Sometimes, So Pick Yourself Up.
- Church Revitalizer's Understand When Members Decline Your Idea – They are Not Rejecting You.
- Church Revitalizer's Don't Hesitate to Unstick Sticky Situations.
- Church Revitalizer's are Not Self-Focused.
- Church Revitalizer's Don't Worry About Looking Stupid.
- Church Revitalizer's Learn to be Patient.
- Church Revitalizer's are Not Quick to Blame Others.
- Church Revitalizer's Think About Their Church Members First and Foremost.

Thinned skinned pastors are miserable in revitalization – and they make everyone miserable around them – so if that's who you are, do anything but try to revitalize a church.

Practicing Dogged Determination as a Church Revitalizer

Alright, you're going to practice getting toughed skinned. Now what? It's time to muster up some dogged determination. Dogged determination is the quality that you show as a church revitalizer when you have decided to do something (to take a course of action) and you won't let anything stop you. When you describe someone's actions as dogged, you mean that they are determined to continue with something even if it becomes difficult or dangerous. And if that's not church revitalization, I don't know what is. Church revitalizers practice this quality when they are tenacious towards a goal and achieving a challenge. I believe that as revitalization pastors, we need to ask the Lord our God for dogged determination. There have been countless times in my church revitalization and renewal journey that I have found peace and comfort in Galatians 6:9. More than once, it has given me the strength to take the next step forward: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we don't give up." That's a prayer worthy of church Revitalizers everywhere. Pray that scripture



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DINOSAURS TO RABBITS

TURNING MAINLINE DECLINE TO A MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENT



BILL EASUM
BILL TENNY-BRITTIAN

Many observers have talked about mainline decline, but few have offered any real thoughts on how to reverse it, that is, until now. In *Dinosaurs to Rabbits*, Easum and Tenny-Brittian offer insightful perspectives on this important issue. Building on their experience as successful pastors in North America's mainline denominations, they add years of fruitful ministry as church consultants to provide a **radical and doable approach for turnaround** among America's mainline churches. Believe me, it's worth your time to read it. Even more, it's worth your time to put their ideas into action.

Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.
Professor, Writer, and Speaker
Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, CA

Many of the mainline churches in North America were once multiplication movements. With years of wisdom and practical experience, Easum and Tenny-Brittian are **prophetic voices** calling mainline churches back to the foundation of church multiplication. If you want to unleash a disciple making movement within your denominational context, I highly recommend this book!

[Available at Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Dinosaurs Weren't Designed to Multiply
Rabbits Were

Dinosaurs are Extinct
Rabbits are Everywhere

Don't Be a Dinosaur ...

What People Are Saying About *Dinosaurs to Rabbits*

Having first met Jesus in a mainline "dinosaur church," I am thankful for their faithfulness. Having also spent my life multiplying autonomous congregations, I believe the **future hope of mainline churches** is found in the pages of this book. If you are interested, you can multiply "rabbits" by following the trails outlined by Easum and Tenny-Brittian. Our culture awaits you.

Ralph Moore
Founder
Hope Chapel Churches

I do a lot of work with leaders of mainline denominations. A lot of it is grief therapy. It doesn't have to be this way. In *Dinosaurs to Rabbits*, the authors give practical, grounded, proven suggestions for church leaders who want to shift their church culture from church-as-institution to church-as-movement. **This book nails it**—from diagnosis to prescription. Nothing less than creating Jesus-followers who view and lead their lives as a mission trip will give mainlines a shot to move beyond paleontology.

Reggie McNeal
Speaker, Consultant and Best-Selling Author

Dr. Winfield Bevins
Director of Church Planting
Asbury Seminary

right now and thank God that you can pray such a prayer. Many pastors are declaring to the Heavenly Father that the road towards renewal is a lot longer than they expected. The rocks and barriers have not been easy to overcome. There have been times in my own life as a pastor when I was tired. Times when I wondered if I should try to do something else. I prayed, "Lord give me the dogged determination to not become weary in doing good revitalization activities, even when I don't see any immediate fruit." Church revitalizer, I want to tell you that I really believe the harvest is coming, that the Lord has promised it to those who refuse to give up. My prayer for all of you

is that the Lord God will fill all of you with a dogged determination to bring renewal to our churches and that we won't let go of this vision until church revitalization comes to pass in each and every church.

Church Revitalizer's Never Learn How to Blow Retreat

Let me give you two verses to hang your perseverance on. In James 1:12 he declares: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

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- The High Cost of Conflict Resolution
- The Leadership Covenant
- The Eight R's of Reconciliation



Then in Revelation 2:10 we read: “Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Church revitalizer, if you are going to be what God wants you to be in your personal spiritual walk with him, it’s going to take the quality of perseverance. Every successful church revitalizer has it. It would be so easy to look back at what all of us have had to go through during this past year. A lot of us look at what we are still going through right now, even as we look at plans that have gone awry. We reflect on the prayers for revitalization that have gone unanswered. We dwell on the various difficulties that have arisen. We are weighed down by the pressures that face us every day and we can easily begin to question the Lord. Listen to me, church revitalizer, God will never tempt you to do evil, but he *will* test you. The devil tempts you with evil to cause you to stumble, but God sends a test to cause you to stand, to see whether or not you are willing to be the one he will use to bring revitalization and renewal to the church.

Church Revitalizer’s Know that Perseverance is Necessary for Spiritual Growth

I want you to see why it’s necessary to persevere. If you are going to be a spiritual leader, perseverance is necessary for spiritual maturity. Notice what James 1:2–4 says:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

God allows trials in our life in order to stretch us, in order to test us, in order that we might struggle that our spiritual muscles might grow, that we might exercise our faith until we have been disciplined in the crucible of the problems and the stress of life to become all that God wants us to be. Many church revitalizer’s want God to remove the struggle; we want him to remove that difficulty in our life when it seems we are stretching and struggling and hurting, but we have not become what we ought to be. We want God to remove these things. James said rather than praying for God to remove these things, count it all joy. He reminds us that struggle builds your endurance. Perseverance is necessary for spiritual growth.

Church Revitalizer’s Know that Perseverance is Necessary for Spiritual Victory

Perseverance is necessary for spiritual victory. In 2 Corinthians 2:14 Paul writes, “Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.” Paul said I am always triumphant. We are always in a victory march as the people of God. We don’t fight for victory, we fight from victory, and the victory has been won through the Lord Jesus Christ. We may be going through struggles, but we are praising God all the way because we have the victory. A revitalizer will never know what victory is until they go through struggles. Paul understood this when in 2 Corinthians 4:8 he said, “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair.” He said it’s coming from the east, the west, the north, and the south. Difficulties come from every direction. It’s coming from below and from above. He said we are pressed in on every side but we are not crushed – we are perplexed but not in despair. We are persecuted but not abandoned. We are struck down but not destroyed. He is talking there about the victory we can have in the midst of our problems.

Church Revitalizer’s Know that Perseverance is Necessary for Spiritual Prosperity

Look too at what the Lord’s brother says in James 5:7 “Be patient then brothers until the Lord’s coming.” How long are you supposed to be faithful pastor? How long are you supposed to read your Bible? How long are you supposed to pray for the revitalization of your church? How long are you supposed to believe God for the renewal of your church? It’s until Jesus comes again. We are to persevere until the Lord’s coming. I want you to see that spiritual prosperity is through perseverance. Spiritual prosperity comes to the person who waits for God to send the harvest. And God *will* send the harvest.

Church Revitalizer’s Know that Perseverance is Necessary for Spiritual Peace

In addition, perseverance is necessary for spiritual peace. James reminds us of Job in the Old Testament. Look at James 5:10–11a, “Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered.” The Bible says we look at the people who have persevered and we consider them blessed.

Then he says in James 5:11b, “You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.” Think about Job’s perseverance. Job did not understand what was happening to him. One day everything was fine, one day he was enjoying prosperity. He said, “Man it doesn’t get any better than this!” Then all of a sudden, everything came collapsing down on him. Satan attacked him in three ways. The devil came against his fortune. They came with the news that everything you own is gone. You are bankrupt. You have zero! That’s pretty tough for somebody who has always had affluence. And that’s the way Job was. Satan attacked his fortune. Then the darkness came and attacked his family. In fact, the only thing left was a nagging wife. Finally, the devil attacked his flesh. He became an outcast. He sat in an ash heap and mourned. And his friends told him, “Job you have obviously done some great sin.” They turned against him. And yet through it all, the Bible says Job did not lose his faith – that his faith endured under pressure, that even when he lost his fortune, his family, and the flesh, he continued to trust God. That kind of perseverance means that you *have* to have a peace.

Do You Have Perseverance?

Let me ask you church revitalizer, do you have perseverance? Are you ready to give up on your ministry and your church? If you are, let me say don’t do it. You go to your dictionary, you find the word quit and you cut it out because it isn’t in God’s dictionary. The Bible says “Be thou faithful even unto death and I will give you a crown of life.”

Many years ago the story is told of one of the battles of Napoleon in the Swiss Alps. In that great battle, Napoleon watched from his vantage point higher on the mountain and watched his army in a death grapple with the opposing forces in a valley below. Napoleon watched with dismay as his men became disorganized and disoriented. They were losing the battle. The enemy was pushing them back further and further. Finally Napoleon turned to a young sixteen-year-old boy who traveled with them

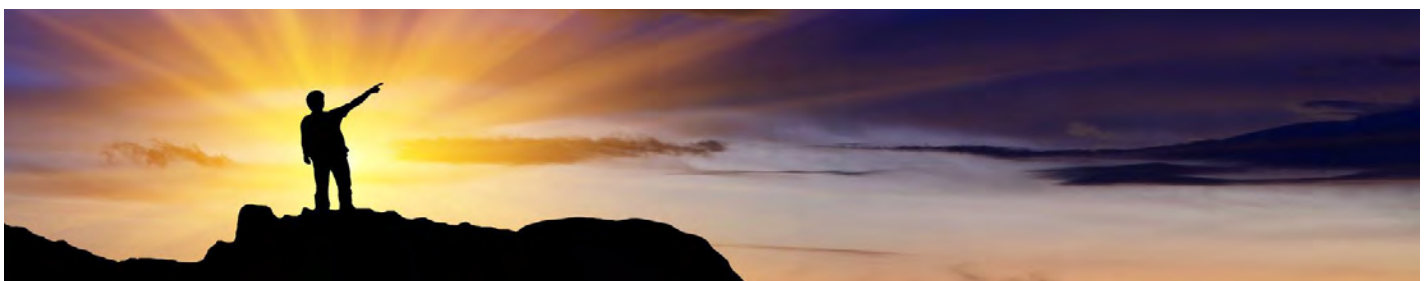
as their bugler. Napoleon didn’t know this young man because he was new to their troop. So he said to him, “Son blow the retreat for our men. They are going to be slaughtered in this battle. Blow the retreat; we are going to regroup to fight another day.”

The young man replied, “Sir, I am sorry. I am so sorry sir but I don’t know how to blow a retreat.” Napoleon was dumbfounded. “What do you mean you don’t know how? You are a bugler boy. You are in this company for this very purpose. What do you mean you don’t know how?” Then he said to the lad “Do the best you can.” So the bugler boy put the bugle to his lips and blew with all of his might. But when he blew, instead of blowing a retreat, there came the glorious sound to charge and it rang out all across that battlefield. When Napoleon’s troops heard the bugler sound the charge, they believed reinforcements were coming up from the ranks to help and they began to stand their ground against the enemy. They began to fight harder. They reached down within them and they found something that was there that they hadn’t previously tapped. They fought like they had never fought in all their lives. The enemy began to drop back until finally the enemy was routed. All because a bugler never learned how to blow retreat.

I want to tell you church revitalizer, we need pastors who don’t know how to blow the retreat. We need church revitalizer’s who have never learned defeat. We need leaders who never learned to give up. We need men and women who never learned to not trust God. We need the faithful who have never learned to turn their back on the Bible and who never learned to give up in their Christian walk. We need Church Revitalizer’s who are triumphant even though they are pressed and under trials, but who know they are in training for that day when they are going to stand before him who will give the crown of life.

Press on and persevere Church Revitalizer. Press on!

NET Results



JUMP START YOUR MARKETING

By Kyle Ermoian

ALTHOUGH THE WORD “marketing” never appears in the Bible, the Bible is filled with examples of successful marketers: Solomon, Joshua, Nehemiah, and Paul, to name just a few. These dynamic men of God had the ability to identify people’s needs and then find the best ways to meet them. Jesus told his followers to do the same – to bring his message to people in a way they could understand and relate to. That is the heart of marketing. And those principles can be immensely useful as you seek to turn your church around. It’s time to move beyond the question of whether or not marketing is a biblical practice. The real question is whether your church can afford not to use such a powerful and readily available tool.

Every church markets. When a church puts its name on a building or prints up a bulletin for Sunday services or orders business cards for the pastor, it’s involved in marketing. So, the issue is: Are you marketing intelligently and intentionally?

Proctor & Gamble distributes an assortment of soaps that are all basically the same soap. Why package them differently? Because diverse groups of people are attracted to different things. Some like the green wrapper instead of the red wrapper, or the small bar instead of the large. We can do the same for our churches without prostituting our values, theology, or purposes. No church in the community is able or called to reach everybody in the community – it’s just not possible. Even Jesus had a focus group: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” (Matthew 15:23–24). Choosing a target doesn’t exclude, but it does provide focus. So, if a church has a particular group

of people they can reach, why not try to understand that group and focus on them? Marketing is asking how you can communicate and minister most effectively to that group.

When you hear or read the word *marketing*, what does that conjure up in your mind? If you’re like most people, you are likely thinking about advertising, branding, websites, email blasts, special promotions, etc. All too often, we equate marketing to these tactical, albeit very important activities. We tend to forget or do not realize that it’s much larger than this.

Years ago, when I took a college marketing class, one of the first things I learned was the Four P’s – product, place, price, and promotion. Product is what you are selling; place is where you are selling it; price is how much you are selling it for; and promotion is the tool or the tools you use to make your product known.

In the church, the product is the gospel and the changed life that results in hearing and responding to it. The place is anywhere the gospel is shared, whether on the church campus, in the community, or in the digital world. The price is harder to define, but could best be described as



Kyle Ermoian loves the local church and has committed over one half of his lifetime into breathing new life into congregations that are struggling in addition to planting and coaching new ones that are thriving.

Kyle currently serves as a coach/consultant with the Effective Church Group, who is publishing his latest book, *Church Turn-around A-Z*.

the level of commitment necessary to become a member of the congregation. And promotion is comprised of advertising, social media presence, news releases, public relations efforts, and anything the community says about your church. While this definition is broad in scope, it boils down to the process of how the product (the gospel) is delivered to the customer (the church, current, and future), and what they do say about it (the desired outcome – committed discipleship).

Richard Reising summarized marketing in a more simplified way in his book, *Church Marketing 101*. He wrote, “Marketing is the management of perception ... Managing people’s perceptions toward the end that they will respond to Christ and His church.”¹

Perception is how people feel about a thing. If I say “coffee,” how many people first think Starbucks? It’s not that Starbucks necessarily has the best coffee, but they have managed to shape your perception of coffee sellers to think of them before you think of Folgers, Seattle’s Best, or any other brand. If we were to try the same test with the word “church,” what would the result be? Some might think Baptist, while others may think Catholic. Some might think locally, while others think of church universal. If we were to be more specific and ask, what church do you think of when I mention a city? An effective church would be the one you think of first. If your church is not the first one, or one of the first one’s, that people think of, then you haven’t been creatively marketing your church.

Working with our definition of marketing as the management of people’s perception, we must understand that management is understanding where your church is today in regard to people’s awareness, knowing where you want your church to be, and then coming up with a plan to achieve that level of recognition. Reising writes,

At the very core of marketing is (1) the ability to understand how people perceive you today; (2) to have a vision for how you would like them to perceive you (within their own frame of reference) and (3) to make decisive strides and adjustments in your way of doing and communicating things to ensure that people ultimately learn to perceive you as you desire.²

The essence of marketing is how it seeks to help meet unmet needs in the marketplace. “Find a need and fill it, find a hurt and heal it,” was a popular marketing slogan in the 1980s. In days gone by, church marketing was as simple as designing a marketing campaign for Christmas, Easter, Vacation Bible School, Back to School, and/or other church-wide growth campaigns, and then rolling out those campaigns in the newspaper, on the radio, and maybe even on cable television. But that was “then.”

In today’s digital age, marketing is heavily dominated by social media. Most of the population does not just show up somewhere in person – whether at a restaurant, hotel, or movie theater – without checking out the place online first. Using search engines like Google has increasingly become the norm for people of all ages to fully vet a place prior to their visit. Churches are especially vulnerable to this type of searching, since most people are not comfortable walking into a place of worship without knowing something about it. When unchurched people search for new churches, they will use keywords that will return a local pack of responses, for example, “churches near me,” “local church,” or “churches in (location).” Thus, the first three churches the searcher is likely to see will be those that are chosen from the local pack. Being one of those churches for searches in your community is of great importance. Therefore, understanding things like SEO, Search Engine Optimization, is especially important.³

In addition, churches need to optimize their websites to help reach unchurched people in their communities. These days, people are searching for all kinds of answers online. The internet is most often where they turn when they are looking for answers to questions about marriage, divorce, parenting, finance, mental health, and many other felt-need topics. You want your church to be ranked high in the mix of websites listed with answers to these questions, thus, leading those with those felt needs to connect digitally with your church.

Your website’s homepage is where visitors get their first impression of your church. Ultimately, you want people who reach your church’s website to engage with it in some way. It is of no use to you if someone lands on your website and takes no action. In fact, when enough people navigate to your website and immediately leave, this sends negative feedback to the search engine that delivered

1 Richard Reising, *Church Marketing 101* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 23.

2 Ibid, 24.

3 SEO is the science of getting your website to the top of a search engine’s results, that is, getting your church listed as one of those top three results.



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them. Therefore, church websites need to offer some kind of call to action.

A call to action is anything that prompts users to take further action on your site. A short, *Welcome to First Church* video that a searcher can view is an excellent way to make a great first impression. In pre-pandemic times, an important call to action was one that encouraged new visitors to “Plan a Visit,” converting them from website visitors into in-person visitors. The Plan a Visit page is where they were most likely to decide whether or not they will visit in person. As the pandemic comes under control, this will be an important practice again. Until then, consider making a short video that highlights both your in person worship and your online options.

While blogging is not absolutely necessary for churches, it can be extremely helpful if you are looking to reach searchers with “felt-needs.” Your church blog is an ideal places to produce favorable SEO content, and regular blog updates also keep your church relevant. The more blog posts the better, and even posting once a month can keep your church expanding its reach through various Google searches. The blog is also a great venue to showcase various successes in your church’s ministries, to highlight different church leaders, to educate your readers, and to direct the focus of your congregation toward a particular need or issue.

As far as advertizing goes, the effectiveness of newspapers, radio, and television marketing has seriously waned, while Facebook ads have become a most effective choice. Facebook is an astonishing advertising vehicle for churches. It offers the most targeted features of any online advertising platform to date. And don’t forget, Facebook owns Instagram, so advertising cross-platforms has become increasingly easy and quite cost effective.

Millions of Americans are now attending church online because of the pandemic. Now more than ever, churches who have struggled to catch up to the modern-day standards of web presence needed for any organization are scrambling to bridge the gap. Deficiencies in a church’s online presence become glaringly obvious when the option for in-person services no longer exists. This is the real challenge many Christian churches are facing today. But, as with any challenge, there are unique opportunities.

In a blog post on Lifeway.com titled *5 Ways the Pandemic is Saving the Church*, James Emory White writes,

If most churches did not have an online presence before the pandemic, it goes without saying they were not embracing or using social media. Now, virtually overnight, the vast majority of churches do have some kind of an online presence.⁴

In other words, churches are finally going where most of the world “lives.

While social media has become a more popular tool for church marketing in recent years, some of these platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter are still untapped resources that you can use to mobilize and broaden your influence in the community. And there are new social media platforms being released all the time ... and some of them will likely help shape the future.

According to Missional Marketing, an advertising marketing agency that focuses on helping their clients grow their web presence in ways that produce measurable results,

We’d love to tell you that all your church marketing can be easily replicated by your staff members, but the truth is that understanding search engine optimization and how it works in tandem with website development and digital advertising is something that requires very technical and deeply specialized knowledge. It also requires constant education to gather the most current information, since Google is always updating its process for adjusting rankings through a wide variety of measures. Remaining knowledgeable about search engine visibility factors is essentially a full-time job.⁵

To jumpstart your church’s social media marketing plan, it would be most helpful to find someone in your congregation who is already fluent in Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Discord, Clubhouse, or whatever other social media platform you decide to focus on, and has the time to commit to making your online presence relevant and effective.

NET Results

4 James Emery White, “5 Ways the Pandemic Is Saving the Church,” <https://www.crosswalk.com/blogs/dr-james-emery> (accessed April 20, 2020).

5 “What Should We Do Ourselves,” FAQ, *Missional Marketing*, <https://missionalmarketing.com/about-us/faq/> (accessed September 10, 2021).



CHARACTER IS YOUR MARKETING

By Christopher L. Scott

THE POOR CHARACTER of too many church leaders is killing our churches. While in seminary I worked as a caddie at a private golf club for three years. That job provided lots of time to talk with my coworkers. Time after time they shared stories of disappointment and disgust about the church and Christians.

They talked about TV pastors getting rich from the pennies of poor elderly women. They talked about local pastors caught having affairs with women in the church. They talked about so-called internet pastors who fancied themselves as “apologists” that could disprove evolution when the pastor had no training or knowledge of basic science.

The poor character of the church leaders they knew about repulsed them from ever wanting to visit a church or become a Christian. We can talk about marketing tactics all we want, but until we fix the character issues within our church, no marketing efforts will work. Thankfully, the Bible gives us plenty of examples of how to be Christian leaders of good character. Some are examples to follow. Some are examples to avoid. Let’s look at one of those from the Old Testament.

Character in Genesis

Judah was outraged when he heard Tamar, the widow of his deceased son, had become pregnant because of prostitution. He demanded, “Bring her out, and let her be burned!” (Gen. 38:24, NLT). What a shame to their fam-

ily name! What an embarrassment for her! But this story exposes Judah’s poor character, not Tamar’s.

We can talk about marketing tactics all we want, but until we fix the character issues within our church, no marketing efforts will work.

Judah’s firstborn son was Er who married Tamar, but Er died. So Judah had his second-born son, Onan, marry Tamar, as was customary to continue the family name and keep their land secure. But Onan died too (Gen. 38:3–10). Judah’s only living son was too young to marry Tamar, so Judah told Tamar to go live with her parents and remain a widow until his youngest son, Shelah, could marry Tamar. Although “Judah didn’t really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers” (Gen. 38:11).

When Shelah was old enough to marry, Tamar realized no arrangements had been made for them to wed (Gen. 38:14). So Tamar devised a plan. She put on a veil to dis-



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guise herself, sat beside the road, and waited for Judah. Judah thought that Tamar was a prostitute and told her he would pay her with a goat from his flock if she had sex with him (Gen. 38:14–17).

Tamar was smart. She asked Judah to leave his identification seal, cord, and his walking stick as a guarantee that he would bring the goat (Gen. 38:18). After their night together when Judah sent the goat to the woman he thought was a prostitute, she was gone (Gen. 38:20).

Three months later Judah heard that Tamar had “acted like a prostitute” and had become pregnant. In response Judah demanded, “Bring her out, and let her be burned!” (Gen. 38:24). But before anyone could kill Tamar she sent the seal, cord, and walking stick to Judah saying, “The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?” (Gen. 38:25).

Judah recognized his items and admitted, “She is more righteous than I am, because I didn’t arrange for her to marry my son Shelah” (Gen. 38:26). Judah’s poor character caused him pain, shame, and heartache.

Judah’s Failure

There were three significant failures of Judah’s character. First, Judah never intended to do what he said he would do. His two older sons had died. He told his daughter-in-law, Tamar, that when his youngest son was old enough for marriage, he would allow them to get married. However, the text in parenthesis provides an insight into what Judah was truly thinking, “But Judah didn’t really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers” (Gen. 38:11b).

Second, Judah didn’t maintain sexual purity. He had gone to the city of Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep (Gen. 38:12). While on that business trip he must have had time to spare and decided to pay for sex (Gen. 38:15–16). Without knowing it he paid for sex with his daughter-in-law!

Third, Judah did not follow Israel’s customs to protect property ownership and family lineage. When a married man died his brother was supposed to marry the widow and have children through her (Deut. 25:5–10). Judah

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was scared to do this because he thought his youngest son would die like his other two sons had died.

Defining Character

In a postmodern culture, sometimes we are confused about what “character” is. Let's define it. The Dictionary of Bible Themes defines character, “The moral and mental features that define a person, whether good or evil. The term also means moral strength, which Scripture regards as something to be highly valued.” The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines character as “the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.”

As you can see from those two definitions, character is the reputation someone has based on their actions. As Christians, we want to cultivate a righteous character. Righteous character is good and ethical character that shows our love for people, as well as our love for God. One way we cultivate this type of character is by doing what we say we will do.

A Contrast in Character: Joseph

Joseph was the half-brother of Judah. As a teenager he didn't always exhibit the best judgment. In one situation he gave a bad report to his father about his brothers pasturing a flock (Gen. 37:2). He told his brothers about a dream in which they bowed down before him (Gen. 37:5–8). (This meant Joseph would reign over his brothers.) And he also told his brothers and father about another dream he had in which the sun, moon, and stars were all bowing down before him (Gen. 37:9–11). One person told me Joseph in his younger years was “a little bit haughty,” and I agree.

But as Joseph grew older, his character got better. His brothers, in their hate for Joseph, sold him to some Ishmaelite travelers, who eventually sold him as a slave to Potiphar in Egypt.

Joseph grew into a smart and handsome man. Joseph “succeeded in everything he did” while serving Potiphar (Gen. 39:2). Everything that Joseph did prospered (Gen. 39:3). Joseph soon found favor in Potiphar's mind (Gen. 39:4) and he put Joseph in charge of everything that Potiphar owned. Joseph was so competent that Potiphar only decided what he was going to eat because Joseph took care of everything else (Gen. 39:6).

When Potiphar's wife expressed her desire to have sex with Joseph (Gen. 39:7) he refused and tried to avoid her

(Gen. 39:8–10). When Potiphar's wife was alone with Joseph she grabbed him and demanded he have sex with her. But Joseph ran away from her (Gen. 39:12)! Potiphar's wife lied and said that Joseph had tried to rape her, so Joseph was placed in jail (Gen. 39:13–20).

While in jail, Joseph quickly proved himself a faithful servant and good manager, just as he had been under Potiphar. Soon the chief jailer put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners (Gen. 39:21–23). Later Joseph was released from jail and given responsibility by the Pharaoh of Egypt.

In Pharaoh's service, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of his court and all the people of Egypt took orders from him (Gen. 41:40). Joseph gathered food during the seven years of good crops in Egypt (Gen. 41:47–49). And when the crops stopped producing food and the people were hungry, they all came to Joseph because he had stored the extra food from the seven good years of harvests. When famine came, people from all over the earth came to Joseph and he sold food to them (Gen. 41:56–57).

During the severe famine Joseph's brothers, which had sold him into slavery thirteen years earlier, came to him asking him for food. Joseph told them to bring their families to live in Egypt so that Joseph could provide for them (Gen. 49:9–11). Which he did until his father died.

Cultivating Good Character for Christian Leaders

How can we cultivate a good character for our lives?

First, we need to do what we say we will do. Judah said one thing, but planned to do something different. Judah could have avoided a lot of embarrassment and shame if he would have simply done what he told Tamar he was going to do. Or if he would have been honest and told her he had no intention of marrying Shelah to her, she could have found another person to marry (see Ruth 4 for an example). But he did not. He said one thing knowing he intended to do something different. But Joseph said he would help his brothers and he did help them multiple times (even when he didn't have to, and when no one would have blamed him for not helping). For us to be people of good character, we need to do what we say we will do.

Second, we need to stay away from sin. Sin can be blatant gossip about others, uncontrollable anger, drunkenness, or envy of others. Judah sought sex with a prostitute while traveling. Joseph fled the sexual advances of his

boss' wife. There are several things we can do to stay away from sin. The place to start is to not put ourselves in front of temptations. If we struggle with eating a healthy diet we shouldn't go to the grocery store while hungry. Or a better idea is to only shop at a health food store. Doing everything possible to remove temptations is the best way to start. Another way we can stay away from sin is to pick specific verses of Scripture to memorize that will help us stay away from sin. When we feel tempted we should quote that verse in memory to help us combat the temptation. Another way we can stay away from sin is to surround ourselves with healthy people that are good influences in our lives.

Third, we need to look different. Judah was "one of the guys." He had a business and enjoyed the luxuries of travels. Joseph stood out among everyone he was around. Potiphar, the jail warden, and Pharaoh all recognized that something was different about Joseph. As Christians in a non-Christian world people should look at us and see that something is different. Paul told the believers in Philippi that even though they lived in the city of Philippi (which was part of the Roman Empire) they were "citizens of heaven" (Phil. 1:27; 3:20). To live as a citizen of heaven while on earth means we should pray unceasingly, participate in a faith community, and provide for our family and church. Regardless of where we physically find ourselves, living as citizens of heaven should make us look different.

Character counts for church leaders. It effects our lives in more ways than we realize. We saw this in Judah's story above. Hopefully we can cultivate a good character and be like Joseph. And when we've dealt with our character issues, marketing the church will be a much easier task.

NET
Results

CONGREGATIONAL STUDY GUIDE

1. Which Christian leaders are you aware of that have exhibited good character?
2. Why do you believe they have good character?
3. Are there any practices you can implement into your life to cultivate a better character?



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NOT *THAT* KIND OF CHURCH

By Bill Easum

NOT LONG AGO our organization received a response from a pastor to one of our posts that showed one of the major misconceptions about Christianity. Here is the quote “If I must go somewhere else to have those needs met I will. Like any other service organization care for the caregiver is critical.”

The pastor made two critical mistakes in this post. First, the church isn’t here to meet his needs. Second, the church isn’t a service organization. It’s this second mistake I want to spend some time on because I run into it far too often.

I’m not sure where this concept came from. I guess from the goodness of our hearts, but it certainly didn’t come from Scripture. Consider a few passages from the book about the church – Acts.

“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.” Acts 9:31

“They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. Acts 14:27

“The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how

the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.” Acts 15:3

In Scripture the church is understood to be here for the redemption of the world. The entire book of Acts, even the passage where Stephen is chosen to take care of widows and orphans, is dedicated to the spread of Christianity, not the care of those within the church. Yes, the church does serve both individuals and the community, but that is far from its primary reason for being. God didn’t put the church here to serve our needs. The church is here to serve God’s needs. Our needs are met when we serve God. We exist to serve and praise God, not one another.

In the book of Revelation we see the church gathered around the throne. What is it doing? Praising God. Everything is focused on God. Period. “Day and night they never stopped singing, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God almighty” (Rev. 4:8).



Bill Easum is the founder of The Effective Church Group. He retired in 2019 to enjoy golf. He is the author of over a dozen best-selling books and the recipient of the Donald McGavran award for Outstanding Leadership in Church Growth. Bill can be reached at: easum@EffectiveChurch.com

Instead of a service organization, the church should be seen as a redemptive organization. It was put here to bring us closer to God, not to serve our needs. Its primary focus is to channel our hearts and minds from ourselves to the living God.

One of my favorite comparisons in Scripture is the difference between the Jerusalem church and the Antioch church. The Jerusalem church hunkered down and cared for itself while the Antioch church gave itself away to plant churches all over the known world. And what happened to the two churches? It wasn't long before Paul had to gather a collection to keep the Jerusalem church afloat.

I could make other comparisons, like centralized authority versus decentralized authority, but I'll leave those for another day.

Folks, your church is here to change your community, not to care for your members. Does that mean you don't take care of your members? Of course not. But the care and feeding of your members always takes a back seat to the redemption of those who are far from God. Never, ever forget that if you want to fulfill your calling.

NET
Results

Hard Times Got You Down?

Don't Just Survive – Thrive!

Contents Include:

- Living in a Wildcard World
- Strategic Dreaming Trumps Hard Times
- Now's the Time to Return to Basics
- The Hard Times Budget Formula
- Budget Items You Always Cut in Hard Times
- Overcoming the Beast
- Budget Items You Always Increase In Hard Times
- Leadership in a Wildcard World
- It's a Waste of Time if ...



Download from: ecCart.biz/hardtimes



By: Bill Tenny-Brittian

Things You Can Do to Help Grow Your Church

Ideas for Everyone In Your Church

EVERYONE'S FAVORITE MARKETING: DOOR TO DOOR MARKETING

EVERY NOW AND again, I'll get a door-hanger hung on my door. Most of the time they're advertisements for take-out pizza or Chinese. However, once upon a time, there'd be an ad for something a local church was doing. To be honest, it's been a long time since I've seen either. I suspect it's because door hangers aren't exactly cheap and they're not labor efficient.

Which can be a good thing for us. In a culture where we're bombarded with upwards of 10,000 online and television advertising impressions, it's become relatively easy to tune-out and ignore it all. But it's much more difficult to tune-out a medium that has little or no competition. And so the "door hangers" idea has some merit.

A couple years ago, I met ELCA Pastor Ted Carnahan at the Spirit of Grace Church in Holdrege, Nebraska. In our conversations, I learned how they were letting the community know about upcoming events at the church. They'd tried door hangers, but the stiff Nebraska prairie winds kept blowing them off of the door handles – never mind that many door handles today aren't round, so the cardstock door hangers were often difficult to leave. Pastor Ted is a gifted creative and he discovered that 4 X 6 Post-It notes were easy to distribute and they tenaciously held on in the face of the wind. Beyond that, he discovered he could create a custom flier and have PaperDirect.

com print them for way less than the cost of door hangers. It was win-win all the way.

That said, one of the ways you can help grow your church is to let folks in your neighborhood and beyond know about upcoming events at your church using custom-printed Post-It notes. It's easy to do and not terribly expensive. PaperDirect.com was able to print 300 copies of a 4 X 6 flier for about 17¢ each.

To engage this idea, begin by choosing an upcoming event from your church's calendar. If your pastor preaches series, you might want to check to see what's coming up. The printing has about a two-week lag time, so be sure to choose an event that's at least a month out. If you're able to create your own 4 X 6 image digitally, then by all means get creative. Remember to include the church's critical contact information – name of the church, address, and web address – on the flier. And of course, include the event and the date. If you're not terribly talented at digital design, ask your youth leader if they have a youth who has that kind of talent ... even a very small

101 Things You Can Do to Help Grow Your Church is a work in progress. Editor Bill Tenny-Brittian is in the process of writing a near exhaustive book of things the average church member can do to help grow their church. Each of these columns are sample chapters from the upcoming book ... look for it by the end of 2020.



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ChurchMysteryShopper.com



youth group probably has someone who could whip this out in just a few minutes. Alternatively, your church office might already have a graphic for the event that you could use. It never hurts to ask!

Once you've got your flier digitally designed, head over to PaperDirect.com and do a search for "Large Post-It add your own design." They have great instructions on the site to get you all set up and ready to go. Once you've proofed and approved the flier, it takes about two weeks for them to get it from their printing plant to your house. From there, it's just a matter of getting the 300 fliers distributed – and the good news is that it's easy. Just walk up to a house, peel off the flier, and stick it to the door.

You'll want to be strategic about which neighborhood/s you deliver the fliers to. For instance, if your church is hosting an Easter egg hunt for kids, there's not a lot of sense in putting fliers on the doors at a senior living complex. Yes, there are residents who have connections with grandchildren, but you're much more likely to reach a greater number of families if you put them on homes and apartment doors near elementary schools.

Finally, it can be pretty time consuming to deliver 300 fliers. Of course, if you take walks regularly, you might en-

joy taking the time to walk the neighborhoods. (And while you do, you might as well practice Prayer Walking as you go.) However, if time is of the essence, or you're just not that into walking, then it's time to call in some reinforcements! If you have a large family, you can probably press them into service, but there are other groups that it might be more advantageous to recruit. For instance, your small group might be willing to help. Your church's youth leader may be willing for the youth to take it on as a project. If your church has an active outreach or mission's team, they may see this as a worthy mission. And if your church has an evangelism team, they'll probably jump at the chance to get out there and share the church's witness. And of course, there's the old "I'm hosting a barbeque for those willing to help" gambit!

In the end, with 300 fliers delivered to 300 homes, it's pretty certain that most of them will at least get a look because there's so little "competition" in the door-to-door kind of marketing.

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- Leadership in a Wildcard World
- It's a Waste of Time if ...



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DINOSAURS TO RABBITS

TURNING MAINLINE DECLINE TO A MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENT



BILL EASUM
BILL TENNY-BRITTIAN

Many observers have talked about mainline decline, but few have offered any real thoughts on how to reverse it, that is, until now. In *Dinosaurs to Rabbits*, Easum and Tenny-Brittian offer insightful perspectives on this important issue. Building on their experience as successful pastors in North America's mainline denominations, they add years of fruitful ministry as church consultants to provide a **radical and doable approach for turnaround** among America's mainline churches. Believe me, it's worth your time to read it. Even more, it's worth your time to put their ideas into action.

Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.
Professor, Writer, and Speaker
Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, CA

Many of the mainline churches in North America were once multiplication movements. With years of wisdom and practical experience, Easum and Tenny-Brittian are **prophetic voices** calling mainline churches back to the foundation of church multiplication. If you want to unleash a disciple making movement within your denominational context, I highly recommend this book!

[Available at Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Dinosaurs Weren't Designed to Multiply
Rabbits Were

Dinosaurs are Extinct
Rabbits are Everywhere

Don't Be a Dinosaur ...

What People Are Saying About *Dinosaurs to Rabbits*

Having first met Jesus in a mainline "dinosaur church," I am thankful for their faithfulness. Having also spent my life multiplying autonomous congregations, I believe the **future hope of mainline churches** is found in the pages of this book. If you are interested, you can multiply "rabbits" by following the trails outlined by Easum and Tenny-Brittian. Our culture awaits you.

Ralph Moore
Founder
Hope Chapel Churches

I do a lot of work with leaders of mainline denominations. A lot of it is grief therapy. It doesn't have to be this way. In *Dinosaurs to Rabbits*, the authors give practical, grounded, proven suggestions for church leaders who want to shift their church culture from church-as-institution to church-as-movement. **This book nails it**—from diagnosis to prescription. Nothing less than creating Jesus-followers who view and lead their lives as a mission trip will give mainlines a shot to move beyond paleontology.

Reggie McNeal
Speaker, Consultant and Best-Selling Author

Dr. Winfield Bevins
Director of Church Planting
Asbury Seminary

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS



By Mary Frances

THE LIST OF things they don't teach you in seminary seems to get longer and longer all the time. They didn't teach us about church administration, how to be a good supervisor of staff, how to understand church finances, or what to do in a pandemic. Now it seems we can add marketing to that list. After all, there was no Facebook when I was in seminary; no online metrics to delve into or distract me. Was it yard signs that were the most effective or should we once again be going door to door to pass out pamphlets about the upcoming pancake breakfast or Holy Week offerings? These days, I think traditional marketing is the frosting on the cake and while I do like frosting, we need to focus on the cake itself. By traditional marketing I mean Facebook ads, newspaper ads, yellow page ads, putting up yard signs and banners and handing out brochures. In other words, traditional marketing is the church telling other people about the church.

I have had my own businesses since 2010 and this particular coaching and consulting business since 2016. I don't do any traditional marketing for my business. Yes, I have a website, a Facebook page, and a LinkedIn page all of which I rarely touch. I rely solely on word of mouth to grow my business. I rely on word of mouth which comes from relationships that I have nurtured across the coun-

try for the last twenty years. The reason this is effective is that it's authentic. Some of these people I have known for a long time, others a shorter duration, but I stay in touch. I reach out just to say "Hi, how are you?" without any agenda. I am interested in their lives, their work, and then share what I am up to. Sometimes that translates to referrals, sometimes it's just conversation. But it's always about the other person and our relationship rather than what I can get from them.

That is really the key. That piece, right there. I stay in touch because I value the person and I value the relationship. The work that may come from that relationship is secondary, a bonus you could say. But, in the church, we have lost that vital piece of just being with people because



Mary served three ELCA congregations in the suburbs of Chicago that included a small church turn-around or redevelopment, the discipleship pastor in a large congregation, and a solo call following a church planter. Mary then served for seven years as the Associate Director for New Congregations at the ELCA. In addition, Mary opened a yoga studio ministry, Divine Power Yoga in 2010. She now offers coaching and training for pastors as well as new and existing congregations through **Frances Consulting & Coaching**. Mary lives in Naperville, Illinois with her husband, Kent, who is a holistic chiropractor and functional medicine physician.

we care about them. In my consulting work I hear these words all the time, “How can we GET people to ...?” Fill in the blank. Get people to come to worship; Get people to give more; Get people to teach Sunday School; Get people to volunteer; Get people to be part of the church. Well, we can’t GET people to do anything. And, I would say, that is not our job. In the church, our job is to *love* people and how can we love them if we don’t *know* them. In real estate, the slogan is location, location, location. In the church, our slogan needs to be relationship, relationship, relationship.

As part of my consulting work, I share demographic reports with congregations and judicatories. I let them know if their community is growing or shrinking and paint a picture of who lives there: the generational make-up of a community, the diversity of the community, the cost of living there, how many are employed and what kind of work they do. I also can share information about the unemployed, the numbers of people on food stamps or living in poverty, if they have health insurance or a disability. When I deliver this report, I always start by asking for the demographics of the congregation. What genera-

tions are represented there? What races or ethnicities? How are you involved in the community where you’re located? And over and over again, we find that the community is not represented in the congregation. Or, to say it the other way, the congregation does not reflect the community in which it lives. And yet, we continue to ask the question “How can we GET people to come to our church?”

In real estate, the slogan is location, location, location. In the church, our slogan needs to be relationship, relationship, relationship.

When that’s the case, there is no amount of brochures, flyers, ads or yard signs that will bring people to your church. What will bring people to your church is a mutual relationship which means that congregations need to get outside their walls and become part of the community. The other day I met a good friend for a long walk and chat. She shared with me that she is connected to a religious community that is aging. And though the community is



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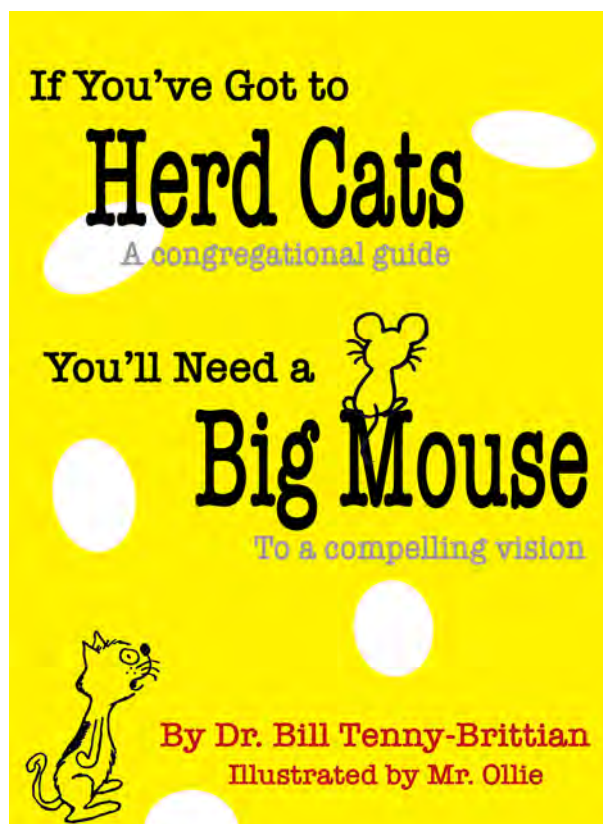
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aging, they believe they are doing good work, good ministry, because they give generously to particular causes around the town, the state, and even internationally. This is indeed good work. The money they give helps good things happen for those in need *but* it is missing a vital component of connectedness, of relationship, of actually knowing if this is indeed what people need.

When I point out to a congregation that they no longer reflect their community, they deflect, they change the topic, they want to move on. They don't want to hear about the hard work that will actually change and ultimately save their congregation. They want me to point to a hole they can fill, a reason for people to want to come to them when all along it has needed to be the other way around. That is when I point out to congregations that the demographic report is only one part of the equation. There is more to do, and it won't be found on Google or Facebook. It can only be found in relationships with the larger community.

So how do we go about this important piece of building relationships within the community? Talk to people. It's really pretty simple. Make a list of ten people that you would like to get to know better. Call each of them and set up a time to talk. In community organizing this is known as the One-to-One Relational Meeting but you can just call it a coffee date. While you would never want this kind of conversation to be scripted, here are some conversation starters that might be helpful:

- How long have you lived here?
- What brought you to this town? What keeps you here?
- How did you get started in your line of work?
- Tell me about your family.
- What do you like best about this town?
- What are some of the issues here that you feel need to be addressed?
- Who else do you think I should be talking with?
- Would you like to meet again?

And, because this isn't an interrogation but a conversation, you might share some of your story, a little bit about the work of the church and how you would like to be more connected in the community. If they say they'd like to meet again, make sure it happens. If they give you the name of someone else to talk with, make sure you call that person. Of course, it would be wonderful if lots of people were out in the community having conversations like this. We call it external listening. Some call it one of

the three great listenings ... listening to God, listening to one another and listening to community. Whatever you want to call it, it's sacred and holy and you never know where it might lead or what ministry might come of it.

I hope you will set a goal today for those ten conversations. You might start with one a week and then increase to two a week and go from there. Those ten conversations have the capacity to expand into dozens and dozens of conversations. Those conversations have the capacity to develop into real relationships and those relationships have the capacity to change your ministry. Make your list, pick up the phone, start today. Let me know what happens.

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The poster features a dark blue background with a white crescent moon and a star. It includes several circular images: a church building, a group of people in a meeting, a laptop displaying a map, and a group of people in a church service. The text is in white and yellow, with the website URL in white. The contact information is in a white box at the bottom.



ARMED SECURITY: OPTIONS, IMPACTS, AND INSIGHTS

CHURCHES AND OTHER faith organizations around the country are returning to in-person services, events, and activities. While health and safety considerations related to COVID-19 remain important, now is a good time to review and update other aspects of your overall security program. For example, some organizations are considering the use of a security team and evaluating whether they want to incorporate armed or unarmed security personnel. This can be a complex question, and, of course, the choice you make can impact your insurance coverage.

We recommend sitting down with your insurer to discuss any proposed changes to your security program and how they might impact your organization's policy. As you're researching your options, here are answers to some of the common, big-picture questions we receive.

What are our options for security personnel?

As mentioned above, there are two categories of security personnel: armed and unarmed. Unarmed security teams often are made up of volunteers or employees trained to observe and identify suspicious behavior. Organizations that choose this option may find it useful for de-escalating potentially violent situations.

Armed security personnel may be paid (typically off-duty local law enforcement or private security contractors) or

volunteer. Each option has different implications for liability. Local law enforcement officers will be trained and often assume their own liability, but you can't presume that either armed option will assume liability for their actions, so you need to ensure that it is clearly defined in your contract. Armed volunteers represent the most significant liability risk, and each member of the team must be thoroughly vetted and trained.

What are the risks of using armed security?

When you ask or allow individuals to carry a weapon on behalf of your organization or while serving your organization, much of the responsibility and liability for their actions transfers to your organization. Anyone considering the use of armed security personnel must be fully informed on the impact to liability and be prepared to assume the risk.

We strongly recommend that organizations using armed security create a formalized security team and ensure that all individuals on the team are highly trained before be-

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ing permitted to carry a weapon. You need to be confident as an organization that your security team has the training and experience required to respond appropriately and handle weapons safely in high-stress situations. Untrained volunteers often lack this level of preparation and experience, which represents an additional layer of potential risk for your organization.

How will an armed security team impact our insurance coverage?

All organizations should consult with their insurers to review security policies and procedures to determine acceptability – especially if you are using or considering the use of armed security. You should know in advance that insurers may exclude coverage for an armed security team, as it creates an additional exposure that may not be con-

templated in your policy. If your organization does not meet best practices, an exclusion may be added.

As more organizations gather in person again, we're also seeing an increase in questions about coverage of events. Each event is evaluated independently by insurers. Generally, an organization will have coverage if not specifically excluded, but it can vary based on the situation. Our advice is always to consult with your insurer to build the strongest understanding of your policy in advance of any event. If you do incorporate armed security into the event, addressing this additional exposure is a particularly important step to take.

Should our organization allow concealed carry?

Ultimately, each organization needs to make its own decision about allowing or prohibiting weapons on its prop-



"Seminary didn't prepare me for this."

erty. If you choose to allow concealed carry, it is vital that the organization and each individual carrying weapons complies with all local and state laws. Regardless of your decision, your organization needs to document it in the form of policies, procedures and/or signage.

When it comes to your organization's level of liability and responsibility, the best practice for concealed carry is straightforward: Only members of a formalized and well-trained armed security team should carry weapons on behalf of the organization or while serving the organization.

Should your organization decide to allow concealed carry for members and guests, those individuals should be carrying on their own behalf and in the interest of self-defense, bearing responsibility for their own actions. If your organization allows a concealed carry holder to serve in a non-security-related function, however, the organization may still be liable.

Church Mutual advises organizations that use armed security not to allow concealed carry on their property. The intent of an armed security team is to support greater safety and security for everyone present, but if an event should occur, having armed parties who are not on the security team may cause confusion and unintended safety risks.

If we want to use armed security, how can we create an acceptable level of risk?

There are several best practices organizations can employ during the planning and implementation stages of an armed security team. The following practices may help develop an insurable exposure and potentially improve pricing.

- Establish clear policies/procedures and formalize a written security plan.
- Require all security team members to be over the age of 21.
- Conduct mandatory background checks on all security team members.
- Prohibit the use of fully automatic weapons.
- Provide comprehensive training for all security team members (in addition to any previous training provided by other organizations).
- Notify local law enforcement that you have an armed security team.

Do you have any guidelines for organizations debating which type of security is best?

We understand that this is a difficult decision. Both armed and unarmed security practices have practical, situational, philosophical and even religious implications to consider. Here are several questions to help you evaluate the best approach for your organization.

- Do your state and local laws allow concealed carry and armed security?
- Are you willing to carefully manage and control the risk exposure weapons create?
- Have you consulted with local legal counsel and law enforcement regarding your plans?
- Are you willing to accept the risk and liability exposure created by incidents that arise from the use of weapons on behalf of your organization?

What are other ways we can shore up security?

There are many steps you can take to protect your people and property, and only some of them involve personnel. In fact, basic security measures should always serve as the foundation, with weapons used only as a supplement.

Physical Spaces and Systems

It's important to maintain control of your facilities. As a regular practice, keep exits clear at all times to support a quick evacuation if needed. All entry points to your building should be locked or monitored, and you should conduct regular checks of locks, doors, security cameras, lighting, alarms and gates. If anything doesn't work, fix it immediately. These security measures – including equipment and personnel – should be visible and obvious to all on your property.

Communication

Your staff should know your security processes and procedures inside and out, and you need to keep members updated as well, especially when you make changes. Members should ensure their guests understand your policies, and you should have clear signage available to share this information as well. Additionally, whether volunteer or paid, any security personnel should be equipped to communicate easily with each other from anywhere on your property.

Training

Preparation is key in matters of safety and security. You should implement a workplace violence prevention program and ensure all staff and volunteers are trained. It's also helpful to conduct armed intruder drills on a regular basis, as you do with fire drills. Before an event takes place, coordinate with local law enforcement to include officers in your training and provide them a facility map. Decide how you want security personnel to respond to an event – especially if armed – and ensure they understand how to act once law enforcement arrives on the scene.

Where can I learn more?

We know that determining the right security measures for your organization can be challenging. Church Mutual offers free resources on our website at www.churchmutual.com/armedintruder. There, you'll find a summary of armed vs. unarmed security considerations, insights on the 10 essentials of a security plan, a security assessment for organizations to take and many other relevant documents.

If you rigorously assess your security options and collaborate with partners, you can identify what best meets your needs and facilitate the right insurance coverage.

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JUST BECAUSE YOU EXIST DOESN'T MEAN PEOPLE WILL COME

By Paul D. Borden

Director, Wooddale Advance

THIS JANUARY A pastor nearing sixty years in age was called to lead his fourth congregation, whose average age was in the fifties. This congregation had been declining for two decades and its pre-covid worship attendance averaged 170 people. You would think this is not a recipe for growth and expansion. Yet, the worship attendance in August has been over 80 percent of their pre-covid numbers, averaging approximately 150 each weekend. What is more amazing is that close to half of those attending are new to the congregation and many of them are in their twenties and thirties.

Like many pastors, when the current leader arrived he helped the staff and lay leaders develop a mission and vision. He also began to develop a strategy to help the congregation achieve the mission and vision. This whole process took about four months of meeting, exploring, and training. He helped staff members gain clarity about their roles and the development of teams to assist them in creating ministry wins that reflected the actual implementation of the mission and helped to begin to achieve the vision.

During this same period of time, he began to meet with all the families and individuals in the congregation, first by Zoom and then as restrictions lessened in coffee shops and meals in homes. He and his spouse were out most evenings getting to know people and listening to their

dreams and aspirations. During the day, when not in his office, he was meeting with community leaders and individuals in their various places of business. He was constantly asking how the congregation could serve these people while inviting them to visit on Sunday.

One other key decision he and the leaders made was that as the restrictions related to the pandemic decreased their commitment to ministering digitally both in terms of their service and becoming involved with social media increased. The pastor recognized that the majority of younger people, in the world communicated through these forms of media. And if the congregation was going to reach them it would not be by traditional methods.

The first team he put together and trained with rigor was the guest services team that interacted with all who attended the in-person service on Sunday. The pastor understood that congregations only have one chance to make a good first impression and how that happens cannot be left to chance by people who have not been trained to do it well.

This congregation is planning to go to a second service in September.

This is not the usual story we hear of congregations as we struggle to come out of the pandemic. Therefore, what can be learned from this most unusual congregation?

First, it is led by a pastor, and now a staff and lay leaders, who believe that congregations do not exist for themselves but for others. Those not attending currently are given a higher priority of consideration than those that attend regularly.

Second, while marketing and advertising are important in reaching people, the more important aspect is the intentional development of relationships. The primary way people come to Jesus is through the relationships that have been established with people who already have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Most congregations sit back and wait for people to come to them and then hope to es-

tablish relationships with such individuals. The truth is that in our day most people are not going to come to these congregations, which is evidenced by many congregations declining and eventually dying. Jesus came to SEEK and to SAVE. The congregation described understands that to see people get saved, we must seek with love, care and wisdom first.

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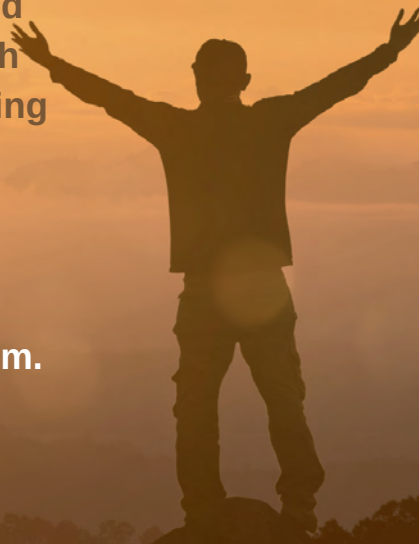
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BEFORE YOU START SOMETHING NEW

By Bill Tenny-Brittian



IT'S TIME TO gear up for back from summer vacation, back to school, and back to church Sundays. If your church is like most, you're already looking at how you can leverage the annual return of the migrating church members and perhaps even pick up a few extra first-time visitors who are new to the community. Every television and radio station, every newspaper and direct mail piece will be reminding families in your community that now! is the time to get back into the swing of things.

And it's a time when many churches put together new programs, ministries, and events in an effort to attract the elusive unchurched Mike and Mary. But before you start anything new, consider this: most churches in decline are doing too much and they're doing most of it badly. Most churches have a handful of good, faithful people who have been on the frontlines of ministry serving in a half-dozen positions and they're tired. Worse, they're mostly serving outside of their personal passion, so though they're filling a slot, they're not able to give any ministry their full energy or attention, and so mediocrity is what you get.

So, before you start anything new, right now is the perfect time to stop and take an inventory of all the ministries, programs, missions, and events the church is engaged in. And once you do, it's exactly the right time to lay to rest as many of them as you possibly can.

I hear your trepidation, that sharp intake of breath, and the not-so-slow rise in your blood pressure. You wonder what I'm talking about. Surely, I don't mean that you should pull the plug on the annual Christmas Bazaar, the Thanksgiving Quilt-a-thon, or the Men's iHop Breakfast Bash?

I'm not sure ... every church is different. But if you're a church on a plateau or in decline, I can almost guarantee there are some things the church needs to stop doing before it takes on one more thing. I'm talking about putting an end to those ministries that probably got started years and years ago but have failed to bear sufficient fruit (but that keep on going and going and going anyway). I call these ministries, programs, and events the church's Zombie Ministries ... they're already dead, but they just keep on walking and as they do, they suck the life out of nearly everyone who participates.

The Zombie Ministries in your church could be:

- The children's moment that's still in the bulletin even though there hasn't been a kid in church in four years.
- The Saturday evening worship service that has an average worship attendance of six people.

- The Vacation Bible School that hasn't brought a single new family through the doors of the church in a decade.
- The Pennies from Heaven program that raised 47¢ last month.
- The all-church small group ministry that has an average attendance of three: the pastor, the pastor's spouse, and Widow Baumgartner.

Many churches are so "busy" with Zombie Ministries that their leaders are in danger of becoming zombies themselves. And once your leaders move past being tired, past being burned out, then are in danger of sliding into cynicism: "Yeah, we tried that once, but it didn't work."

Now, there are a ton of reasons why churches continue to support Zombie Ministries, even though it's killing them. But here are five of the most common:

- The church has decreased in size over the years, but never stopped any of the ministries it did when it was large.
- The church's leadership has a hard time saying "No" to people who want to get their personal pet ministries started.
- The church's leadership doesn't have the chutzpah to pull the plug on a fruitless ministry because it's somebody's pet project and they won't risk conflict.
- The church's leadership believes it has to be engaged in all these ministries in order to be a faithful church.
- The church's leadership has set no benchmarks for what is or isn't success, and thus has no criteria for bringing a ministry to a close.

Make no mistake: Zombie Ministries plague most churches, and they suck down church resources faster than (WARNING: Metaphor Switch) a vampire under a full moon. But not only do Zombie Ministries suck resources from a church, by their very existence they keep other vital and life-giving ministries from starting. And if by chance a new ministry starts anyway, it has almost no chance of succeeding because the leaders heading up the new effort are already busy with a dozen other ministries, so the new ministry may get a little extra energy to get it launched, but that energy will quickly wane and shortly thereafter, the new ministry will become just another less-than-successful ministry that no one has the heart to

kill. Another Zombie Ministry that someone, someday, will have to pull the plug on ... unless, of course, the church dies first.

It's never easy killing off an existing ministry, but it's absolutely necessary to prune off branches that aren't bearing adequate fruit (the story of Jesus and the fig tree in Matthew 21 comes to mind). Here are five ways to help you put an end to some of your Zombie Ministries:

1. Measure everything you're doing against your congregation's mission and vision. Any ministry that isn't fully supporting them must come to an end.
2. Set measurable benchmarks for success and then measure each ministry against those benchmarks. Stop the ones that don't measure up.
3. Practice Sakichi Toyoda's "Five Whys." For every ministry, ask "Why are we doing this?" and then question each answer with "Why?" until you have a clear understanding about why the church is engaging the ministry. Often you'll discover the reason a zombie ministry still exists is because "We've always done it." And doing something just because you've always done it isn't a success-based benchmark.
4. Be sure every outreach ministry does three things: blesses those who serve, blesses those being served, and creates visibility for the church. It's the last one that should be the criterion for killing many outreach ministries (See Matthew 5:16 for Jesus' visibility mandate). If a ministry doesn't create visibility for the church, it must come to an end.
5. Finally, don't start any new ministries without pre-determining the expected results. Set a go/no go date so the ministry team is fully aware that if the results fall short by that date, there will be no surprises when the plug gets pulled and the ministry is ended.

It can be painful putting an end to a beloved tradition, but any Zombie Ministry that's allowed to continue will continue to be a distraction and a drain on the church's resources. Better to risk the ire of one of the saints than to feed a zombie and kill your church's future.

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STEWARDSHIP

THE NEXT BIG THING IN CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

GIVING TO CHURCHES in the United States is changing dramatically. There was a time when giving to the work of the church was more frequently modeled in the home and regularly taught in Sunday Schools, discipleship programs, and from the pulpit. In this time, the church received over 60 percent of all charitable giving, but since 1980, giving to religion has experienced an increasingly rapid decline, hitting a new low of just 29 percent of total U.S. Giving in 2020.

Unfortunately, far too many church leaders have failed to understand and adapt to the changing realities which are behind this decline in giving to the local church. In this blog, I will focus on a few changes that are having the biggest impact on church funding:

- The changing perspective on giving to the church.
- How people understand the role of the local church.
- The rise of nonprofits as a philanthropic option for Christians.

Depending on your own experience, you may view the impact of these shifts differently. They must be understood, appreciated, and addressed strategically and in a compelling way. Otherwise, churches will continue to experience an erosion of ministry funding.

The Changing Perspective on Giving to the Church

There are two very different worldviews that are impacting the rapidly growing complexity of giving in churches. It is important for church leaders to appreciate and reflect on the impact both are having on giving habits.

One perspective maintains an organization-centric view of the local church as an institution. Those who subscribe to this thinking largely believe their responsibility is to give to the church, and then the church will know how to best use the funds to achieve its ministry goals and mission.

The alternative perspective is more impact-centric. This point of view subscribes to the idea that there should be a connection between giving and its impact that is clear, compelling, and measurable. This perspective is growing among church givers each year, and it introduces some new challenges church leaders must consider and address.

How People Understand the Role of the Local Church

Prior to the pandemic, Builder and Boomer generations (who are funding most of the ministry in churches today) were largely satisfied if their church delivered an acceptable on-site worship experience, offered a variety of at-



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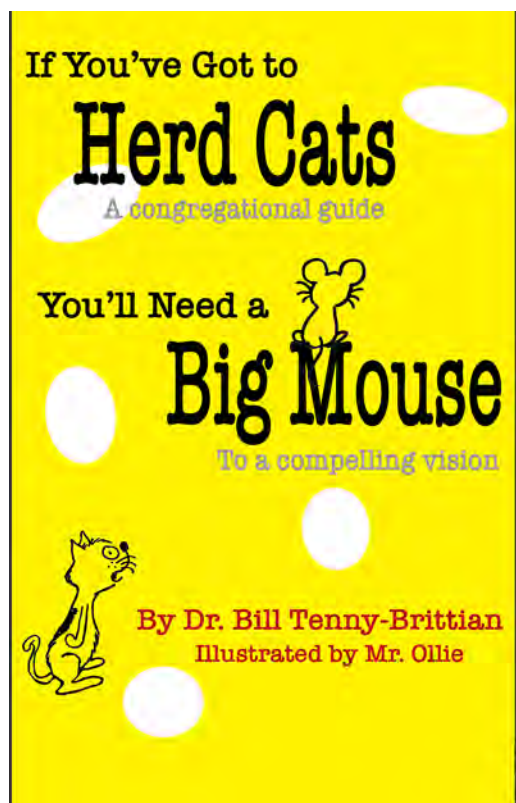
As people, especially those under fifty-four (Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z), become more aware of the economic and social challenges within their communities, they increasingly want to see evidence their church is committed to being part of the solution. These donors are reflecting an impact-centric view of giving. In Horizons' work with a wide variety of churches each year, we have observed a strong correlation between churches who are consistently experiencing growth in giving and those who embrace the idea that their givers want to see a constant stream of evidence demonstrating the impact of their giving. This does not mean these churches do not also communicate to those donors who hold an organization-centric view, but rather they understand the need to communicate effectively with both perspectives.

The Rise of Nonprofits as Philanthropic Options for Believers

There are more than 1.5 million nonprofits that exist today. That is exponentially more than in the past and the number grows each year. Even during the pandemic, there were over 35,000 new 501(c)(3) organizations formed in 2020 alone.

This means that every year, there are more people and causes competing for the attention and wallets of every Christian. While the United States remains among the most generous nations in giving our time and financial resources, the percent of our income and National Gross Domestic Product we give to charity has not grown but remained at about 2 percent for the past forty years. Church and nonprofit giving doesn't need to be a zero-sum game. Church leaders who recognize this reality will rise to the challenge and clearly communicate why their local church is the best option for donors wanting to see lives changed.

Churches that fail to effectively communicate ministry impact are seeing a steady shift in the pattern of their donors giving a higher percentage of their financial resources to nonprofits. Sadly, this trend is often led by those who are most financially generous in their congregations. Like a ball rolling downhill, with each year this goes unaddressed in a church, the more momentum this trend gains. The days are gone when leadership can assume Christians will just give freely and sacrificially to its budget, missions, and ministry without a clearly defined and effectively executed strategy to grow disciples, impact lives, and fund ministry.



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With each passing generation, Christians are increasingly expecting church leaders to clearly communicate a plan for how the church is addressing the challenges, obstacles, and opportunities in the community and beyond. It does not stop with a plan, they are also requiring measurable evidence of the impact their investment of time, giftedness, and financial resources. Even if church leaders are not hearing this expectation verbally articulated, donors are sending this message loud and clear in how and where they are choosing to give.

Local Churches Must Take Church Giving to the Next Level

It's no longer enough to hope that the weekend experience, the church bulletin, or the announcement time will reach and motivate your congregation to higher levels of giving to your ministries. You must use a variety of communication channels and speak to a variety of motivations and perspectives to grow members' confidence that your ministries are providing an excellent return on their investment.

Evidence of failing to address these shifting giving patterns is far too often found in the concentration of giving in the builder generation, the youngest of which is turning seventy-seven. Over time, unless new givers emerge and existing givers grow, a church cannot survive.

The good news is this challenge can be addressed. It takes planning, intentional leadership, and a disciplined approach to grow a culture of generous giving. When church leaders see this shift take place, they will recognize the difference is much more far-reaching than simply increasing giving to the budget. Church members will be invested in the outcome. That's why rethinking church giving and adopting a focus on growing generous givers can transform your congregation into a force for change in the world.

There is no institution better positioned to meet the needs of local communities than the local church. At our

best, we provide help to the hurting, love to the suffering, and hope to those who have lost their way. We are an instrument in the hand of our Creator and with this empowerment, there is no nonprofit ministry that has the same connection to people, families, and communities.

The Next Big Thing

The next big thing in church giving is learning how to build a culture of generosity. It is a process of helping God's people to understand how to best use their time, giftedness, financial resources, and their voice to bring about the world that God desires. It is one in which church leaders prioritize and embrace discipleship and spiritual formation as the means by which all people are invited to experience a journey of spiritual growth that shifts focus from themselves to how they can leverage all the resources God has entrusted to them in a powerful way.

Creating a culture of generous disciples will require a new way of thinking and operating. Churches of all shapes and sizes are making these changes and seeing the results. The best and most exciting days of local church ministry are certainly ahead, but the future will look very different from the past.

If there is one word that can sum up what the future of church stewardship, church giving, and generosity will look like, I believe is integration. Being generous is not something Christians do. It's part of who we are, and in turn, it must become part of the culture of every local church.

It's time to take your church ministry and giving to the next level. The world is waiting and watching to see if we will live into our divine design to be instruments of change in the world.

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Parting Shot

With Scott Musselman

MORE THAN MARKETING

IT'S REALLY TOUGH to find the balance between language of the world and language of church. Take marketing, for instance.

It might make one cringe a bit to say we're marketing the church. We don't really see language like that in the Bible. Marketing is very worldly. It also might include some manipulation. "Is your life messy? Is there a chance that God may be upset with you? Concerned about going to hell? Well, our church is ready to help you find your eternal path of security!" Uh, no.

On the other hand, Jesus felt rather keenly about that Great Commission imperative to "Go make disciples." How can we make disciples if I'm not connecting to any new people? Alright, the more palatable term is branding. It backs off of the making money implication associated with marketing. But it still does end up being essentially the same thing. What is the right balance?

It begins with each of us and our intentions. Why do I want to make more disciples? Is it so I get more notches in my Jesus belt? Is it so that I get more people in my church?

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「 The Practical Art
of Ministry Leadership 」

Bill Easum
Scott Musselman

Is it so that I can feel better about my ministry? If any of these are true, stop here and go pray.

Jesus loved his enemies. He forgave the people who executed him. This is a radical departure from normal human behavior. Our marketing or branding must be also.

We make disciples because we believe our lives are better from being connected to Jesus and we want the same for others. Does the online political discord keep you up at night? Does your stomach get upset when people's lives are messy? Now we're ready to start marketing. But how?

Whatever we do, however we brand things, it's all about creating opportunity for relationship development. It's not because we want to make Christians out of somebody. It's because we really care about someone. And to care about someone means to enter into their messy world with no agenda and no expectations.

I encounter this every Sunday morning in the new AD (after distancing) reality as opposed to who I was in the BC (before COVID) days. A sizable part of our congregation is now online. They aren't sitting in the room where I am. I can't go up to them after worship and introduce myself. How will I encourage the online folks to give me contact information without sounding like I'm selling church?

This conundrum helped me to further identify my passion and role as a pastor. Here's what my job is. Here's what I find meaningful. I want to come alongside people and equip them for taking the next step of faith, whatever that is, meeting them wherever they are. I state that ev-

ery Sunday to the online people. And I frankly say that I can't do that unless they give me some way to contact them.

Do we use the ways of the world for the sake of the gospel? Absolutely. It would be foolish not to do so. But we always have to analyze our motives. The culture around us doesn't trust the church with good reason.

I was ordering new glasses the other day. The person at the desk obviously doesn't go to church. She didn't know what I meant when I said I was a clergy. "Oh, you mean preacher?" Yep. Here's her experience with church.

Her dad was Roman Catholic. He said, "The nuns beat me up. Whatever you do, don't become a Roman Catholic." Then she got married in a Protestant church. She didn't know she shouldn't drink a beer in their building. A woman indicated she was a bad person for doing so. Then the pastor came and told her he wouldn't allow her uncle to walk her down the aisle if he didn't quit taking shots in the parking lot.

I told the woman that the door to our church is always open for her, that I'd like to show her that church can and should be more loving than has been her experience. And I hope I can continue the conversation when I go in to pick up my glasses.

For me, that is more than marketing. It's going into the world to do our best to love like Jesus loves.

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