

Facts & Trends

SPRING 2013

8 signs of
spiritual growth

Create a **disciple-making culture** in your church

LifeWay launches Ministry Grid
new digital training source



Demystifying
DISCIPLE-MAKING

Growing biblical leaders
for mission in today's world

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As if having six kids isn't enough, Pastor Dhati Lewis and his wife, Angie, once a year invite eight singles to live with them for three weeks, taking **discipleship** to a whole new level. Lewis said if you read Scripture, Jesus made disciples by having people with Him.

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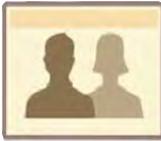
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Facts&Trends

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Facts&Trends is designed to help pastors, church staff and denominational leaders navigate the issues and trends impacting the church by providing information, insight and resources for effective ministry.

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INSIDE F&T



Before and After

I don't know about you, but I'm drawn to TV shows that feature amazing makeovers. Whether it is a simple kitchen redesign, restoring a '65 Corvette, or an entire community razing a house, rebuilding and refurbishing it for a deserving family, I'm hooked. My favorite part is when they show the before pictures and then cut to the big reveal. Cue the oohs and aahs.

I think most people are fascinated by extreme makeovers. But what can be more amazing than the transformation that takes place when a person chooses to follow Christ? In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul says anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. Spiritual transformation is more than a surface-level alteration; it's becoming something else entirely.

The Christian life isn't a self-improvement program; it's about God transforming us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. And that only comes through discipleship that is centered on Jesus.

So how do we know whether or not transformational discipleship is occurring? In one of the largest studies of its kind, the LifeWay Research team discovered certain factors at work in the lives of believers who are growing in spiritual maturity. In this issue of *Facts&Trends*, author Philip Nation will unpack eight signs of inner transformation in his article "Recognizing Spiritual Transformation" (page 16).

We'll also discover how three pastors are leading their churches to disciple believers. In "Essentials for Creating a Disciple-Making Culture" (page 18), pastors Steve Murrell and John Ferguson define discipleship and describe the models they use in their churches. Dhari Lewis, pastor of Blueprint Church in Atlanta, shares how he and his wife do life-on-life discipleship in an urban context (page 22).

We'll also look at the latest Transformational Church Discipleship research (page 24) and see where churchgoers stand in their knowledge and belief of basic truths considered fundamental to the Christian faith.

We are encouraged that so many churches are focusing on discipleship that truly transforms. We want to serve as a resource for you and your church in your journey toward spiritual transformation. You'll find more Transformational Discipleship research articles on our website LifeWay.com/FactsandTrends.

Carol Pipes
Editor

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P.S. We'd love to hear from you and receive any feedback you have about the magazine. For a free subscription to *Facts&Trends*, send your name, address, phone number and email address to factsandtrends@lifeway.com.



WOW ME

KIDS

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE**

WHEN THE BIBLE MEETS *HER* LIFE

She is wowed with something that lasts—the God of the Bible—and she'll see from an early age a God that is better and bigger than anything else she may face.



SHOW ME

STUDENTS

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE**

WHEN THE BIBLE MEETS *HIS* LIFE

He will see that Jesus isn't a Sunday activity. His faith isn't just for the future but impacts his today, his school, his friends, and his choices.



CHALLENGE ME

ADULTS

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE**

WHEN THE BIBLE MEETS *HER* LIFE

She will learn to understand how faith impacts her family, her career, and her struggles. She will move from being a consumer to being consumed with God and His mission for her.

WHEN THE BIBLE MEETS



In chapter 4 of John's Gospel, Jesus encountered a lonely, outcast woman at a well. Through a series of questions, Jesus connected with her right where she was and helped her see how He was the answer to her greatest need. That brief conversation inevitably resulted in a life, and even a community, redirected in pursuit of Him.

Your people—all of them—need Jesus to meet them right where they are. They need to see how the Bible meets their lives, and they need a community of Christ followers surrounding them. Bible Studies for Life is uniquely designed to do just that, while helping your church use Bible study as an effective way to connect unconnected people to your groups, strengthen the families in your church, and disciple people with wisdom over time.

Find out more and preview three sessions for free at biblestudiesforlife.com.

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE**

COMING FALL 2013!

Preview three sessions
for all age groups *free* at
biblestudiesforlife.com



I Am a Church Member

LifeWay President Thom S. Rainer drew an exceptional response when he posted a 500-word declaration about church membership to his daily blog. “I Am a Church Member” started a conversation about the attitudes and responsibilities of church members that previous new member primers all but ignored.

Thoughtfully expanded to book form, *I Am a Church Member* begins to remedy the outbreak of inactive or barely committed church members, addressing without apology what is expected of those who join a body of believers. When a person’s attitude is consistently biblical and healthy, matters of giving, serving and so forth will fall into place more naturally.

Six intentional chapters with study questions guide this rising discussion:

1. I Will Be a Unifying Church Member
2. I Will Not Let the Church Be About My Preferences and Desires
3. I Will Pray for My Church Leaders
4. I Will Lead My Family to Be Healthy Church Members
5. I Will Be a Functioning Member
6. I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift

For more information:
BHPublishingGroup.com

The Main Event

Your faith, your family and your freedom are on the line. Are you willing to fight? Assemble your men. Bring your teenage son. Invite your neighbor. Come see a legendary group of pastors, coaches, soldiers and leaders who are ready to share their stories and strategies for success. You can get the victory, but you’re going to have to fight for it.

Speakers: Bobby Bowden, Willie Robertson, Tony Evans, Derrick Boles, Bryan Carter, Tierce Green, John Bryson, Tommy Bowden, John Croyle, Mark Merrill, Alex and Stephen Kendrick, Kenny Luck, Eric Mason and David Hampton.

For more information:
LifeWay.com/TheMainEvent

Follow Me Bible Study

by David Platt

When Jesus says, “Follow Me,” it’s not an invitation to say a prayer; it’s a summons to lose our lives. In this much-anticipated follow-up to *Radical*, pastor David Platt challenges the traditions of cultural Christianity and reintroduces us to Jesus and His most simple request: Follow Me.

For more information:
LifeWay.com/FollowMe

Will God Heal Me?

by Ron Dunn, foreword by Michael Catt

The Bible clearly teaches no one is immune from suffering. Late pastor and author Ron Dunn wades through the misconceptions about human suffering to illuminate the unequivocal love, sovereignty and goodness of God.

Available at LifeWay.com and at LifeWay Christian Stores

Gideon: Your Weakness. God’s Strength.

by Priscilla Shirer

From a state of fear, weakness and insecurity, Gideon emerged as Israel’s hero, filled with God’s presence and His passion for deliverance. This study will encourage you to recognize your weakness as the key the Lord gives you to unlock the full experience of His strength in your life. In what ways do you feel insufficient? Those places create the greatest opportunity to experience the sufficiency of God. Instead of ignoring, neglecting or trying to escape your weaknesses, see them as the gifts they are, given specifically and strategically by God to unlock the door of His strength.

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Leading the church to spiritual transformation

At LifeWay, we love the church, and we want to see every member become a growing disciple engaged in the mission of God. Unfortunately, it has become acceptable for churchgoers to sit in church week after week and do nothing but call themselves followers of Christ.

If the local church is going to be healthy and growing, it must be filled with people who are growing in and toward Christ. The LifeWay Research team discovered certain factors at work in the lives of believers who are progressing in spiritual maturity. You can read about them on page 16. But how, as church leaders, do we facilitate that kind of growth? Here are six steps to help your church move forward on a path toward spiritual transformation.

1. Help those in your church assess where they are in the discipleship journey. Before you can plan an individual or church-wide discipleship growth plan, you need to know where people are in their development toward spiritual maturity. To help pastors, churches and individuals measure spiritual growth, LifeWay developed a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). This online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on spiritual maturity using the eight attributes of biblical discipleship. The TDA also provides helpful and practical suggestions on appropriate next steps for spiritual development. You can learn more at LifeWayResearch.com.

2. Discern your context. Before you can develop a plan for your church, you must understand your church is a unique expression of the Body of Christ in the host culture where God has placed

you. Once you identify and understand those unique traits, you can develop and implement a discipleship model unique to your congregation.

“Believers need leaders who will walk alongside them and serve as a guide on the path to spiritual maturity.”

Thom S. Rainer

3. Encourage Bible engagement. Time spent in God’s Word is a necessity for our spiritual growth. Transformational living comes from daily standing in the presence of God. As leaders we need to encourage those we’re discipling to spend time with God in His Word. Consider starting a Bible reading plan for the entire congregation.

4. Undergird everything with prayer. In our Transformational Church research, we discovered that 73 percent of transformational churches (i.e., churches that are helping people become more like Christ and communities that reflect the kingdom of God) agreed with the statement, “Seeing people praying together is a normal sight in our church.” God gave us prayer so believers—both individually and collectively—remain in close communication with Him. Prayer

is our link to receive understanding about God’s Word and move forward in obedience to His mission.

5. Be intentional. Some leaders are passive in their approach to discipleship. They believe God is the one who transforms, and rightly so. But they wrongly assume zero responsibility for the maturation of those sitting in their pews. Consider the Apostle Paul. He trusted God to do the transforming while taking an active approach to discipleship. If your church doesn’t already have a plan for discipleship, get a plan together. Churches that are intentional with their discipleship process are intentional about moving Christians to a deeper walk with Christ with deeper teachings of Christ.

6. Be in it for the long haul. Discipleship that truly transforms takes time and can often be messy. In a world of texts and tweets, fast food and microwaves, we’ve grown accustomed to immediate gratification. When was the last time you chose the long way? Discipleship is never quick and concise. If we want to be engaged in transformational discipleship, we must accept the long road. Believers need leaders who will walk alongside them and serve as a guide on the path to spiritual maturity.

As church leaders, we must guide believers into a robust relationship with Jesus Christ and then unleash them to join the mission they’ve been called by God to accomplish. ■

In His Service,



Who do you trust?

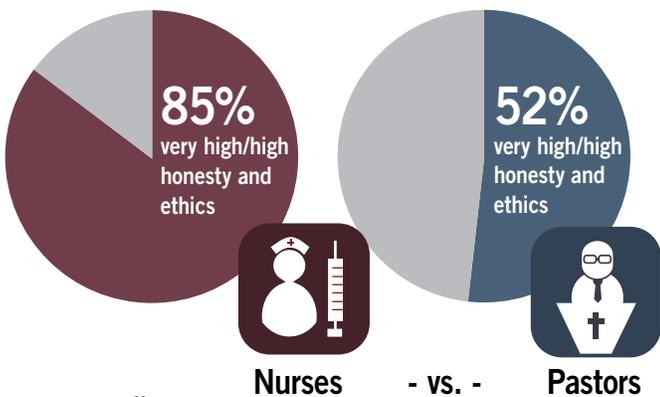
More people trust their dentist than their pastor, according to a Gallup poll. The survey rated the “honesty and ethical standards” of 22 professions.

Nurses ranked No. 1 with 85 percent giving them “very high/high” marks on honesty and ethics. Pharmacists ranked second at 75 percent. Clergy came in 8th with 52 percent of Americans saying they were highly honest.

Other professions ranked higher than pastors for honesty/ethics: medical doctors, engineers, police officers and college teachers. Professions ranked lower than clergy included bankers, journalists and lawyers.

Who came in last? Car salesmen beat members of Congress for the honor of least trusted.

Perceived honesty



Source: Gallup.com

Generation Shift

The Census Bureau is projecting by 2018 the number of people over 60 will outnumber children 5 and under for the first time. Is your church ready for this shift?



Just Ask

Eighty-two percent of the unchurched are likely to attend church if a friend, co-worker, neighbor or family member invites them. Perhaps we need to pause on this response. Perhaps we need to restate it. More than eight out of 10 of the unchurched said they would come to church if they were invited.

Gallup estimates 43 percent of Americans—135 million people—are unchurched. If our research is close to accurate, the implications are staggering. More than 110 million people would attend church if they were invited!

What constitutes an invitation? For many of the unchurched, it was a simple invitation to come to one’s church. For others, it was an invitation that included an offer to meet someone at church to show them around or walk them into the building. In either case, the process was pretty basic. If we invite them, they will come.

The next obvious question is: Are Christians inviting non-Christians to church? The heartbreaking answer is “no.” Only 2 percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church. Perhaps the evangelistic apathy so evident in many of our churches can be explained by a simple laziness on the part of church members in inviting others to church.

Walk with me through one more calculation. Let us suppose, instead of 82 percent, only half of the unchurched in America would come to church if invited. That means, out of 135 million unchurched persons, almost 68 million would be willing to come to church. Can you imagine how many people would be reached for Christ if that happened?

We who are leaders in the church must challenge our church members. When was the last time they invited an unchurched person to church? When was the last time they offered to meet someone and show him or her around the church? The answers they give could make the difference in the eternal destiny of a person. Perhaps it is time we sounded the clarion call to invite people church. It may be that simple, and it may be that profound.

Source: LifeWay President, Thom S. Rainer, ThomRainer.com



8 out of 10 of the unchurched would come to church if invited.

The Daniel Plan

You may have heard the news. Everyone from Rock Center's Chelsea Clinton to Oprah Winfrey is talking about it. It's the Daniel Plan, a diet created by Saddleback Pastor Rick Warren with a team of doctors.

The plan, based on a diet of 70 percent fruits and vegetables and 30 percent lean proteins, grains and starches, has allowed the congregation to lose 270,000 pounds in less than two years. "If it grows on a plant, eat it. If it's made in a plant don't eat it," jokes Warren.

Seriously, though, Warren sees physical health as a spiritual issue. Warren presented the plan to his congregation in 2011. Today more than 15,000 people have participated.

Learn more at DanielPlan.com.

Source: NBC's Rock Center

Smart Church



Tech Check: As individuals become more tech-savvy, it may be time for your church to ask some questions to find out if your church is tech friendly. Is your church website mobile friendly? Is the info legible on a tiny screen? Do you need to move to a different platform? Should you consider online giving? How might your church use a church app?

Source: Pew Research Center

Exercising Faith

92%

An overwhelming majority of Protestant churchgoers (92%) say they believe,

"God has a purpose for all events in my life, regardless of whether I perceive each event as being good or bad."

Source: LifeWay Research



The Global Religion Landscape

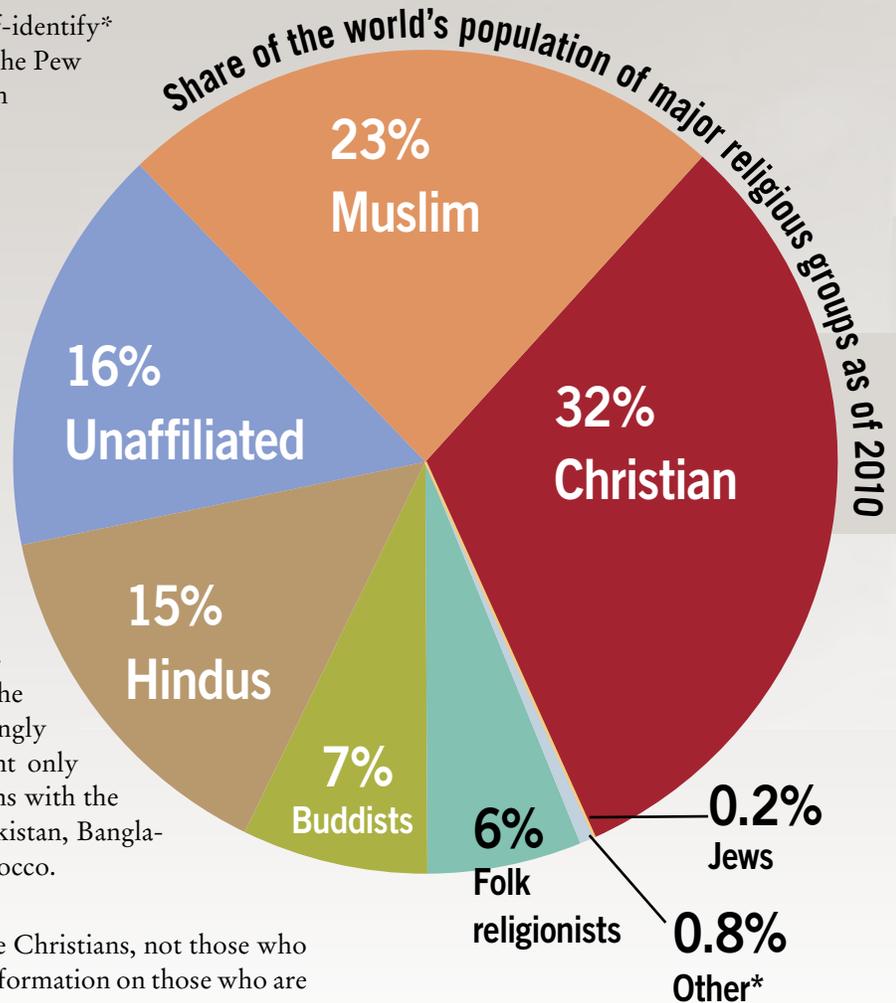
One-in-three (32 percent) people worldwide self-identify* as Christians, according to a recent report by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. That's 2.2 billion people in the world. About half of all Christians are Catholic, and 37 percent are Protestant.

The greatest share of the global Christian population is in Europe (26 percent), followed closely by Latin America/Caribbean (24 percent) and sub-Saharan Africa (24 percent). Significant numbers of Christians also live in Asia and the Pacific (13 percent) and North America (12 percent). Less than 1 percent of the world's Christians are found in the Middle East and North Africa.

Most self-identified Christians (87 percent) live in nations where Christians are in the majority. Of the 232 countries and territories included in this study, 157 have Christian majorities.

The study also found although a majority of the world's Muslims live in Asia and the Pacific, only 24 percent in that region are Muslims. By contrast, the Middle East-North Africa region has an overwhelmingly Muslim population (93 percent), but they represent only about 20 percent of the world's Muslims. The nations with the largest number of Muslims are Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Algeria and Morocco.

* This report is talking about those who say they are Christians, not those who would necessarily meet the biblical definition. For information on those who are born again Christians, we recommend worldmap.org.



Keep it rolling

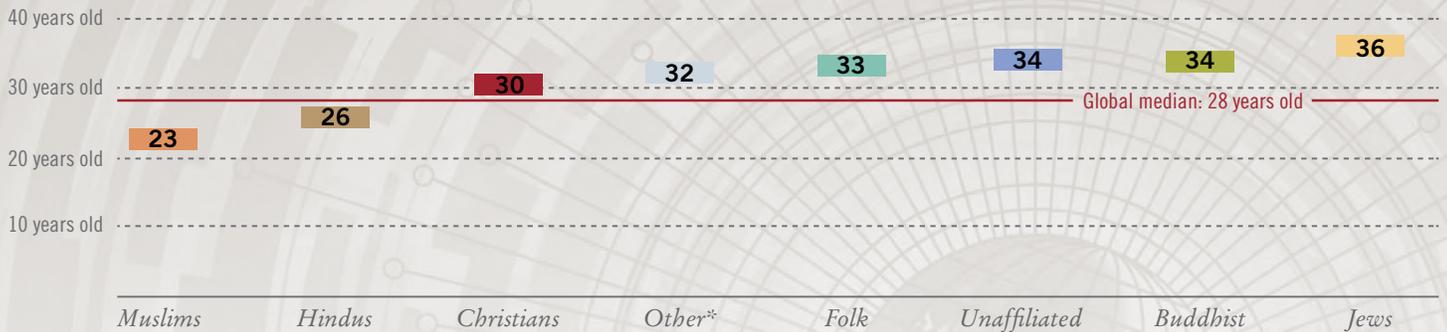
Increased physical activity after age 40 can increase life expectancy by up to seven years, according to a study conducted by the National Cancer Institute.



Where are the millennials?

A survey released last fall by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found 32 percent of those under age 30 claim no religious identity. Among young believers, those who actually attend worship services weekly or at least once a month are even scarcer. Fewer than 10 percent of young adults regularly attend worship services. Read our article on engaging millennials on page 32.

Median age of major religious groups as of 2010

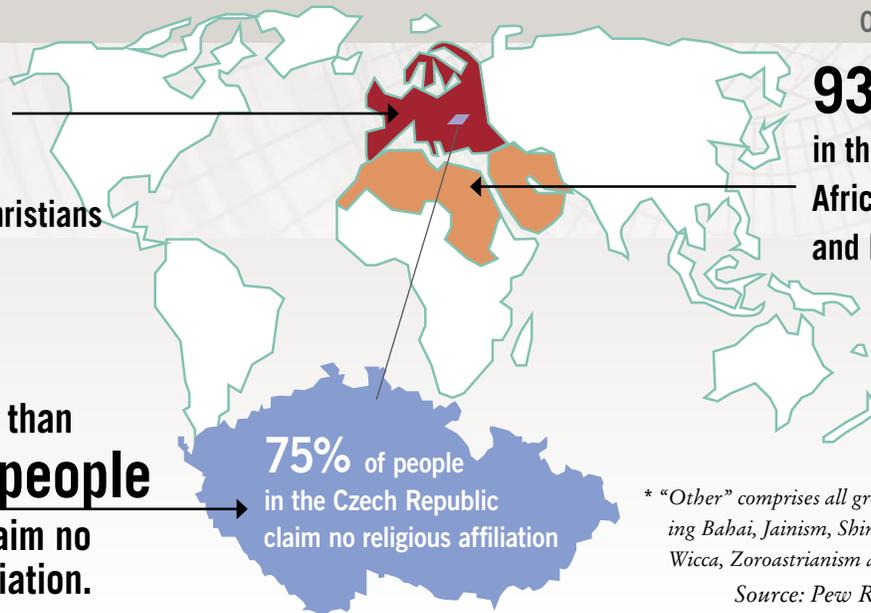


Percentage of world Christian population in each region as of 2010



Europe has the greatest global population of Christians with **26%**.

Slightly more than **1 billion people** worldwide claim no religious affiliation.



93% of the population in the Middle East/North Africa region is Muslim, and less than 4% of that population is Christian.

75% of people in the Czech Republic claim no religious affiliation

* "Other" comprises all groups not classified elsewhere including Bahai, Jainism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Taoism, Tenrikyo, Wicca, Zoroastrianism and others.

Source: Pew Research Center, December 2012

QUOTABLES

“Disciple-making takes time. You can’t microwave a disciple. The process won’t be hurried. A real disciple is always becoming more like Jesus. It’s what gives the disciple-maker the opportunity to say, ‘Here’s what the Lord is showing me right now.’”

– Mark Howell, pastor of communities at Canyon Ridge Christian Church in Las Vegas and LifeWay’s small group specialist, on discipleship.

Caring

28% of older Americans serve as a caregiver for someone.

Source: AARP.org



The Recession

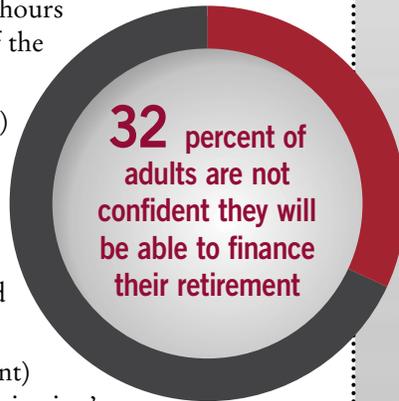
Nearly seven in 10 (68 percent) employed Americans report their employers have taken steps such as putting a freeze on hiring or wages, laying off staff, reducing work hours, benefits or pay, requiring unpaid days off or increasing work hours in the past year as a result of the weak economy.

Almost a third (32 percent) of adults now say they are not confident they will have enough income and assets to finance their retirement, up from 25 percent who said the same in February 2009.

Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of employers rate their organization's employee morale as low.

Churches can make an impact in the lives of their members by offering financial classes and a safe place for people to talk about difficulties related to work and finances.

Sources: American Psychological Association Practice Organization, Pew Research Center, CareerBuilder Inc.

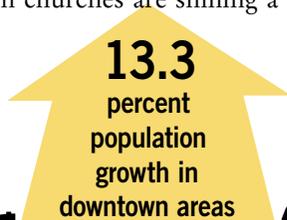


Urban Church

City centers are seeing a rise in population, part of a nationwide trend resulting in a 13.3 percent population growth in downtown areas, according to the U.S. Census. Chicago saw the largest increase, followed by New York, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City and Washington.

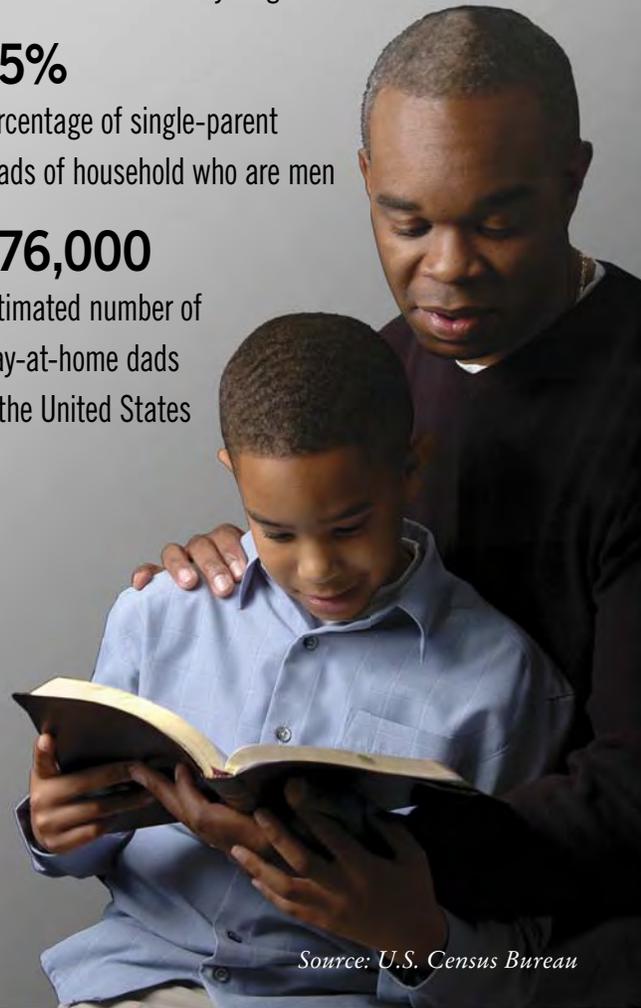
Census data measures "downtown" as the area within two miles of City Hall. Downtown residents are mostly young professionals and empty-nester Baby Boomers.

Downtown churches are beginning to see the effects of the population growth with more opportunities to serve their communities. From high-rise Bible studies to feeding the homeless to after-school tutoring for neighborhood kids, downtown churches are shining a light in their communities.



Father's Day: Sunday, June 16

- **70.1 million**
Estimated number of fathers across the nation
- **24.7 million**
Number of fathers who were part of married-couple families with children younger than 18
- **15%**
Percentage of single-parent heads of household who are men
- **176,000**
Estimated number of stay-at-home dads in the United States



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Where are the books?

The nation's first public book-free library is set to open this fall in San Antonio. All material will be available via computer. Serving residents of Bexar County, the new book-less library, called BiblioTech, will also lend e-readers for two weeks at a time.

Mother's Day church attendance third among holidays, Father's Day last



In a national poll of 1,000 Protestant pastors by LifeWay Research, results showed Mother's Day was the third most attended Sunday in the year, ranking behind the standard religious powerhouse holidays of Easter and Christmas.

"Clearly, mothers want to be present for the affirmation that is typically offered in most churches, but families also are present knowing their attendance will honor their mother," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research.

Among the seven specific days tested, Father's Day was mentioned the least.

"The attendance difference between Mother's Day and Father's Day is tell-

ing," said McConnell. "Either churches are less effective in affirming fathers, or families believe Christian fathers don't value their participation in worship services."

In an interview with *USA Today*, David Murrow, author of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, offered an explanation for the imbalance of attendance on those two days. "Pastors tend to gush over women in their [Mother's Day] sermons," Murrow said. "But on Father's day, men get a 'straighten up' lecture: 'Dad, get right with God, reconcile with your kids,' etc. You would never hear any suggestion on Mother's Day that women could improve on

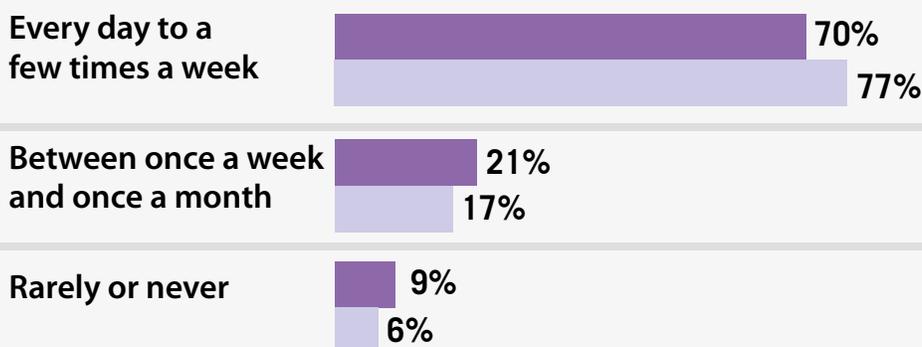
their relationships."

Holidays and special days, regardless of which ones, offer an opportunity for churches to host guests who might not otherwise attend church. So, go ahead. Make a big deal out of these two days and encourage members to invite family and friends for services.

Sources: LifeWay Research and USA Today

Transformational Discipleship
SEEKING GOD
Survey of 2,930 American Protestant churchgoers

How often do you set aside time for prayer of any kind, outside of a church worship service?



Men
Women

See Transformational Discipleship Assessment at tda.lifeway.com

Source: LifeWay Research

Older adults online

As of April 2012, 53 percent of American adults age 65 and older use the Internet or email. Though these adults are still less likely than other age groups to use the Internet, the latest data represent the first time half of seniors are going online. After several years of very little growth among this group, these gains are significant.

Overall, 82 percent of all American adults ages 18 and older say they use the Internet or email at least occasionally, and 67 percent do so on a typical day.

Source: Pew Research





Recognizing SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Eight signs of an inner reality

by Philip Nation

An assignment without a means of measuring success normally ends in frustration or abandonment. In the church, our work is to make disciples. But can you really measure discipleship?

A strong case can be made that it is ludicrous to attempt to measure transformation in a person's life. Nevertheless, there are biblical injunctions that halt our progress into sin and prescriptions that lead us toward spiritual maturity.

In the Transformational Discipleship project led by LifeWay Research, we did not set out to randomly create objective measurements against which a person's life would be deemed infantile, growing or mature. However, we did uncover attributes that indicate spiritual growth and/or the desire that growth is occurring.

The research revealed eight factors at work in the lives of believers who are progressing in spiritual maturity. We refer to them as the at-



tributes of discipleship. They are not necessarily new ideas, but they stand out as key ideas in the lives of North American Protestants.

1. Bible engagement

It should go without saying believers will be engaged in studying the Scriptures. However, leadership must often begin restating the obvious. Transformation can be recognized in people when their minds are sharpened by the Bible, their perspectives are shaped by the Bible and their actions are directed by the Bible.

2. Obeying God and denying self

Discipleship is the process of obedience to one who is in authority over you. In our study, we found people progressing in their faith prioritize God's desires over self-will. Transformation can be seen in them, because they progressively set aside earthly delights for Kingdom priorities.

3. Serving God and others

Just as Jesus said He had come to serve and not be served, so must believers. The choice to serve others is just that—a choice. It highlights a maturity of soul that we allow the needs of others to trump our own. Transformation is evident when personal needs, and even life goals, are set aside for the needs we see in others.

4. Sharing Christ

Inherent in being a disciple of Christ is the making of other disciple makers

for Christ. Even with the need to live out the effects of the gospel, maturing believers know speaking about the message is a necessity. Transformation is evident when we talk about the source of it.

5. Exercising faith

Can you measure a person's faith? Probably not. But you can see it when it is put into action. Believers participating in the research noted they knew the importance of living by faith as opposed to living by personal strength. Transformation is seen in believers when risk aversion is set aside and lives are characterized by faithful obedience to God's will.

6. Seeking God

People become disciples of Christ because they intend to follow Him and become like Him. A continuous hunger should arise from this life. It is referred to in Scripture as our "first love" and believers are commanded to return to it. Transformation is seen when our desire is to know God more deeply and experience His work more fully.

7. Building relationships

Our faith is personal, but it is not intended to be private. Jesus established

the church for our collective good and our collective growth. After all, humans are naturally relational. Spiritually, we are no different. As believers, our horizontal relationships with others should develop just as our vertical relationship with God does. Transformation is occurring when relational maturity is evident in our lives.

8. Unashamed

The research noted believers felt it appropriate and even necessary for others to know them as Christians and be held accountable for a life exemplary of that name. Transformation is evident when a believer is unashamed in presenting his own life as being aligned with Christ.

The adage is "if you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time." At the very heart of Christianity is the work of making disciples for Christ. It should never sit at the fringe of our lives or the church. Through work like that of Transformational Discipleship, we are able to better recognize when we are effectively reaching toward that goal. ■

Philip Nation is director of adult ministry publishing at LifeWay and co-author of Transformational Discipleship (B&H Publishing Group) with Eric Geiger and Michael Kelley.

Transformational Discipleship Assessment

The Transformational Discipleship Assessment crafted from LifeWay's discipleship study is being used by churches in urban, suburban, rural, domestic and international locations to discover how their church is doing in the realm of discipling believers. To learn more, visit LifeWay.com/tda. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

Essentials for creating a disciple-making culture in your church

Interview by Philip Nation

“Go and make disciples of all nations.” Jesus’ familiar charge in Matthew 28:19 is reinforced throughout the New Testament by scriptures exhorting believers to build up one another in the faith. Our entire mission as believers and churches is to “make disciples.” The fundamental reason the Church exists is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

As part of LifeWay Research’s Transformational Church and Transformational Discipleship study, we interviewed several thousand pastors and church members about the spiritual growth of believers. One of the conclusions of the project: transformational discipleship doesn’t happen without intentional effort on the part of both church leaders and church members.

As church leaders, we long to see transformation in the lives of people, our church, our city and our world. Alton Garrison, assistant general superintendent of the Assemblies of God says, “Our mission is not complete until we have seen people have life change.”

Discipleship within the local church takes many forms. But the purpose is the same: Christ-centered discipleship that brings about true transformation.

Pastors Steve Murrell and Jon Ferguson describe how their churches foster spiritual transformation in others.



Victory Fellowship, Manila, Philippines

PHOTOS OF VICTORY FELLOWSHIP BY ENRICO GUTIERREZ

18 • Spring 2013



Steve Murrell is founding pastor of Victory Fellowship in Manila, Philippines. Victory Manila is a 70,000 person, multi-site church with more than 7,500 small groups. Murrell and his wife, Deborah, first went to the Philippines in 1984 for a one-month summer mission trip that never ended. After living in Manila for 24 years, they now split their time between Manila and Nashville, Tenn. Steve also serves as president of Every Nation Churches and Ministries.



Church:

Victory Fellowship, Manila, Philippines

Discipleship method: Small groups

Approach: Small groups use sermon-based material that is posted on their website by Sunday night.



A small group from Victory Manila discusses their sermon-based material in a coffee house.

How would you define discipleship?

A disciple is simply someone who follows Jesus and fishes for people. Discipleship is the process of helping someone find and follow Jesus.

When does discipleship begin?

I think the discipleship process begins long before someone starts following Jesus. When Jesus issued the Great Commission, he said, “Go into all the world and make disciples.” None of the people who initially heard “go make disciples” thought Jesus meant to go find people who were already following Him and help them do it better. For Peter and John and James and Andrew, making disciples meant finding lost people, helping them connect with Jesus, helping them pick up a cross and follow Him. One of the biggest mistakes in the modern church is the separation of evangelism and discipleship.

How would you describe the process by which disciples are made at Victory?

We built a discipleship process around the four Es—engage, establish, equip and empower. So for us, the discipleship process starts with learning how to **engage** your culture and community with the goal of preaching the gospel. As soon as someone responds to the gospel, we **establish** biblical foundations—the Word, repentance, faith, baptism, the Holy Spirit, church community. Then we **equip** every disciple to minister. The last part of the process is to **empower** all believers to make disciples.

Are discipleship principles or models transferable from culture to culture?

Principles are universal and timeless. Whether I’m training believers in China, the Philippines, Nigeria or

Nashville, the principles are the same. But the models change. There’s not one model that will reach all of Nashville. Models change. Principles don’t.

What are the healthiest approaches to discipleship?

There are a couple of the things about the way Jesus disciplined that have marked what we’ve done. One is the small group concept. Jesus did small group discipleship. If you asked Him who He was discipling, He could list 12 men. I think the small group concept, not that 12 is the magic number, but the concept of the smaller community is key. The other one was that it only lasted a few years. From the very beginning Jesus would engage and establish, equip and empower. They would go out. They would succeed or fail. And He would have a debriefing with them. We also learn from Paul that God can use brand new believers in amazing ways.



A small group from Victory Manila prays.

At Victory, small groups are our front door. I don't know the exact stats now, but at one point about 80 percent of those we baptized first encountered our church through a small group. Typically they were in a small group for four weeks before they ever showed up at a worship service.

What kind of actions are you expecting out of someone who's maturing as a disciple?

Obviously, one would be that they're reading and studying the Bible consistently. But another important catalyst for maturity is when a believer starts making disciples by engaging the un-churched, de-churched and anti-church people in their community. ■

Jon Ferguson is one of the founding pastors at Community Christian Church, a multi-site church in Chicago. He serves as network leader for their Chicago Campuses, teaching pastor and provides leadership for all community ministries (small groups for children through adults). The church has grown to a congregation of more than 8,000 attenders with more than 400 small groups meeting throughout Chicagoland.



Church: Community Christian Church, Chicago

Discipleship Method: Small groups on mission and apprentice relationships

Small group approach: Groups of 8-16 connect weekly for encouragement and interaction. These groups reflect the mission of community—helping people find their way back to God. The mission is accomplished as we reach people who are far from God, restore God's dream for the world and reproduce the mission in others.

Apprentice approach: One-on-one discipleship/leadership training

How would you describe your process of discipleship at Community Christian Church?

We place a high value on leadership development, and we don't distinguish much between what most people would probably refer to as discipleship and what we refer to as apprentice development or even leadership development. Part of that comes from a bias that being a Christ follower or a disciple or an apprentice of Jesus means that you are sent—you are on mission. We recognize the apprenticeship process is one of the best places for a person to be discipled.

We have three key experiences that help us grow in our relationship with Jesus, and that's celebrating, connecting and contributing. Each one of those experiences is focused on a particular relationship. So when we talk about celebrating, that's the relationship between us and God. Connecting is the relationship between us and the church. And contributing is the relationship between us and the world.

We believe in a strong relational view of the gospel, a relational view of discipleship and a relational view of leadership development. We try to focus on how you can grow and develop in all three of those relationships. The growing apprentice will experience greater depths of those experiences as he or she continues to grow as a Christ follower.

The 3C's of Community Christian Church

Celebrate:
Our Relationship with God

Connect:
Our Relationship with the Church

Contribute:
Our Relationship with the World



Chicago's Community Christian Church small groups live on mission together, serving the community around them.

If a pastor had a limited amount of time, what is the most basic step you would tell him to take to start the discipleship process in the congregation?

I would say start a small group, identify an apprentice and set the expectation that everyone is hearing from God daily through prayer and Bible reading, as well as living a life on mission seeking to bless the people who cross his path every day.

Is discipleship something that should happen through one-on-one relationships, in small groups or both?

Definitely both. Most of the devel-

opment of a person's spiritual journey occurs in the context of community, in the context of a small group on mission. We also encourage people to seek out relationships in the context of their small group where they can get together one-on-one or form a sort of subgroup where you're asking more of the tough questions of each other and holding one another accountable at a deeper level.

What do you think are the most effective common practices of discipleship?

I don't want to sound like a broken record, but if we can help people build meaningful relationships with other Christ-followers and recognize that the mission of helping people find their way back to God is something we are all to

be about every day, then we are well on our way to practicing effective discipleship.

How are you teaching believers to be disciple-makers?

It's everyone's responsibility to be on mission, and that includes disciple-making. Our goal is not for someone to simply be fed or even to learn to feed himself, which is the correct next step. But eventually, the real maturing Christ follower is someone who has learned to feed others—reaching, restoring and reproducing. That's what mission looks like! ■



Intersecting lives in Atlanta

Church offers blueprint for discipleship

by Carol Pipes

For Dhati Lewis and his wife, Angie, eight apparently is not enough. With six kids at home, the couple doubles their household once a year by inviting eight singles to live with them for three weeks. Lewis, the lead pastor of Blueprint Church in Atlanta, takes disciple-making to a whole new level.

Nine out of the 11 years they've been married, Dhati and Angie have had someone live in their home for the purpose of discipleship.

"We wrestled with the principle of discipleship," Dhati says. "In all the books I read about how Jesus discipled, one thing was always left out and that was Jesus was *with* them. Somehow we have

to figure out how to be with people. This once-a-week meeting at Starbucks doesn't seem to be cutting it."

So Dhati's solution is what he calls life-on-life discipleship. It's one of the core principles of Blueprint Church, a multi-ethnic church located in downtown Atlanta.

"We've built our discipleship strat-

egy to develop healthy people who are growing in the gospel in the context of family while living on mission," says Dhati. "Our underlying philosophy at Blueprint is the gospel changes people and people change the world."

Gospel, family and mission are the disciple-making DNA for the 3-year-old church. More than 400 people gather on Sunday mornings for worship and in missional communities around the Atlanta metro area during the week. That's quite a growth spurt for a church that started with only a few dozen people.

The church grew from a core group of 35 who moved with Dhati from North Texas in 2009 to launch Blue-





Members of Blueprint Church gather in missional communities around the Atlanta metro area during the week.

print Church in 2010. Of those 35 who helped plant the church, more than 25 of them lived in the Lewis' home and were personally discipled by Dhati and Angie.

Dhati says 40 percent of the members at Blueprint now have someone living in their homes. "It's become contagious—discipleship is caught, not taught," he says. "They see what the leaders are doing and start doing it."

"We've never said from the pulpit you have to have people live in your house," Dhati continues. "But we do say you have to figure out how to intersect your life with others."

During the three-week Saints in Motion (SIM) class, Angie and Dhati invite four single men and four single women to live with them. This gives them to opportunity to do daily discipleship.

"We show them how to study the Bible, how to manage a checkbook, how to have dinner as a family at the dinner table," Dhati explains. "When you're raised in an urban context, you don't always learn basic life skills. We do life with them."

"Our mission at Blueprint is to unleash healthy people to do ministry where life exists. Life-on-life discipleship is essential to making healthy followers of Christ." ■

Carol Pipes is editor of Facts & Trends.

Dhati Lewis

Church: Blueprint Church, Atlanta

Discipleship Method:

Life-on-life discipleship

Rebuild Network

In 2011 Lewis formed an organization called the Rebuild Network (RebuildNetwork.org) as a church planting network geared to teach other urban leaders to do what Blueprint is doing—multiplying urban leaders with the gospel.

Spiritual maturity leads to stronger doctrinal beliefs

by Russ Rankin

Disciplined believers progressing toward spiritual maturity will have a firmer grasp on important doctrinal positions, according to findings from LifeWay Research. However, plenty of Christians still struggle with basic truths about God, the Bible and salvation.

During the Transformational Discipleship study, LifeWay Research measured where Protestant churchgoers stand in their knowledge of basic truths considered to be foundational to the Christian faith.

The study shows that while 81 percent of churchgoers say, “When you die, you will go to heaven because you have confessed your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior,” 26 percent agree (strongly or somewhat) “If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity.” Fifty-eight percent disagree.

“Consumers in America are accustomed to having endless combinations of choices for every want in life,” said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. “Biblical truth is radical because it teaches that eternal life is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ alone.”

Other responses given regarding beliefs about life after death include:

- When you die, you will go to heaven because you have tried your best to be a good person and live a good life (selected by 7 percent of churchgoers).
- You have no way of knowing what will happen when you die (5 percent of churchgoers).

- When you die, you will go to heaven because God loves everyone and we will all be in heaven with Him (4 percent).
- When you die, you will go to heaven because you have read the Bible, been involved in church, and tried to live as God wants you to live (2 percent).
- There is no life after death (1 percent).

The doctrinal study went on to reveal churchgoers’ beliefs about Bible accuracy, the uniqueness of God and punishment for sin.

Churchgoers strongly hold to the accuracy of the Scriptures, the survey reveals. Eighty-two percent agree with the statement: “The Bible is the written word of God and is totally accurate in all that it teaches.” Ten percent disagree and 8 percent neither agree nor disagree.

While the majority of churchgoers (75 percent) strongly hold the God of the Bible is not the same god worshiped in other world religions, 13 percent say the God of the Bible is no different from the gods or spiritual beings depicted by world religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. Another 12 percent neither agree nor disagree with the uniqueness of the God of the Bible.

The study also shows more than two-thirds (71 percent) agree with the

“Biblical truth is radical because it teaches that eternal life is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ alone.”

— Ed Stetzer

See column on page 50.

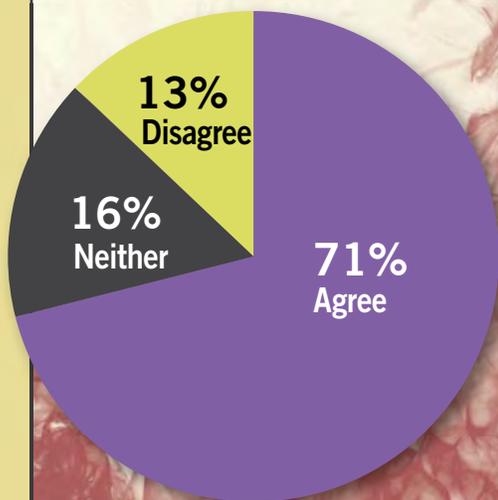


Doctrine

Survey of 2,930 American Protestant churchgoers

Participants were asked if they agreed with the following statements:

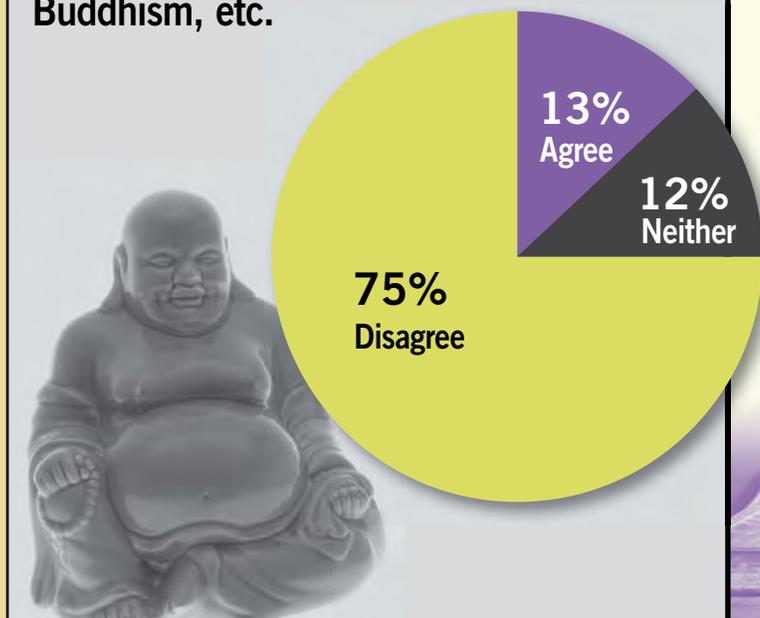
God is just and sin has to be punished.



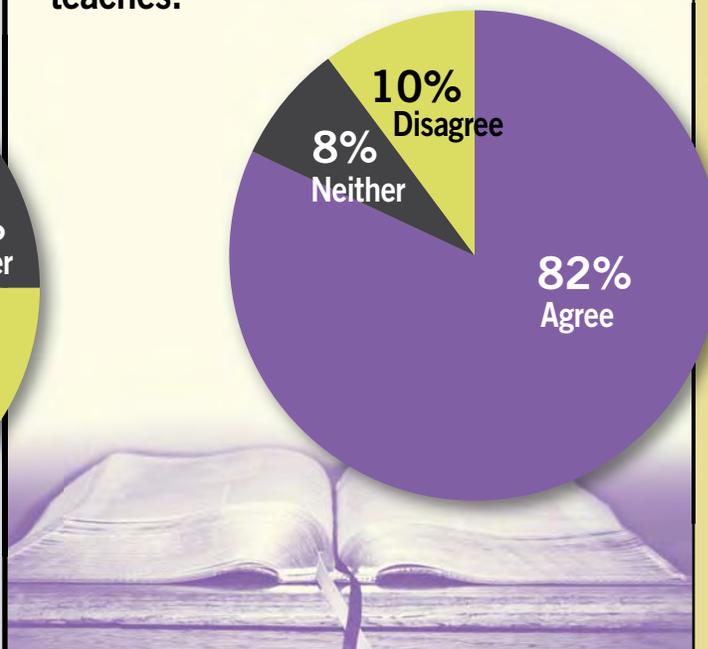
If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity.



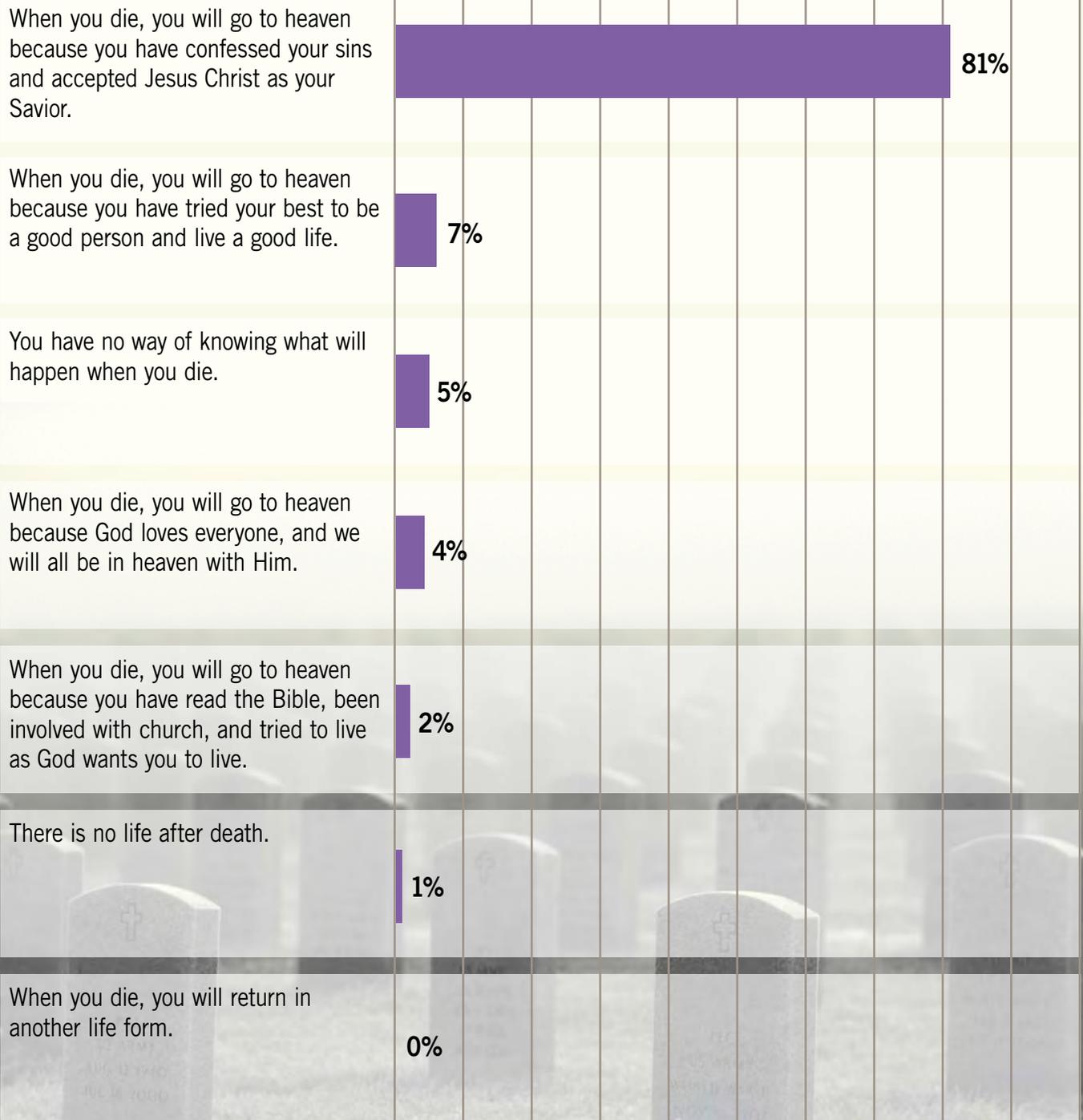
The God of the Bible is no different from the gods or spiritual beings depicted by world religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.



The Bible is the written word of God and is totally accurate in all that it teaches.



Which of the following best describes your beliefs about life after death?



statement: “God is just and sin has to be punished.” However, 13 percent of churchgoers disagree and 16 percent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The research found churchgoers responded better to the questions when engaged in activities including reading the Bible, participating in small groups or classes such as Sunday school, reading a book about what’s in the Bible, confessing sins to God and asking for forgiveness, or going through a class or training group for new believers.

“If churches stopped to assess their congregation on these biblical truths, many would be surprised to find out

how many are struggling with basic doctrinal issues,” Stetzer said. “Every church has a different mix of mature disciples and spiritual infants who still need a diet of the basic gospel message. A discipleship process must help every person take the next step in his or her spiritual journey. Too many churchgoers are stuck on square one.”

To help pastors, churches and individuals measure spiritual development, LifeWay Research used the study’s data to develop a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). This online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on spiritual maturity using the eight factors of biblical disci-

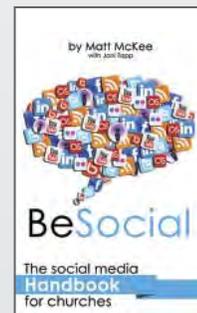
pleship. The TDA also provides helpful and practical suggestions on appropriate next steps for spiritual development.

These findings on doctrinal position are part of the largest discipleship study of its kind. To learn more about the transformational discipleship research visit LifeWayResearch.com. The TDA is available at TDA.LifeWay.com. ■

Methodology: The survey of 2,930 American adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more was conducted Oct. 14-22, 2011. A demographically balanced online panel was used for the interviewing. Respondents could respond in English, Spanish or French. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±1.8 percent. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.

Where is the
conversation
happening?

Many of your members are using a Facebook or Twitter account. Why not allow them to share your church activities and ministries with their friends instantly right from their mobile phones. When you free the conversation, you allow it to get into people’s everyday lives where it can do the most good and make the most impact. Anyone that already has a Web site can sign up and have a mobile app in no time. A free download available at <http://roarapp.com/besocial> will tell you how. Just click “download here” below the book’s cover.



ROAR
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Ministry Grid offers online training for churches

by Kailey Black

L leading a church requires wearing many hats and meeting various expectations, which can be a demanding task. While most pastors love the ministry God has called them to, church leadership is not an easy task.

“The oversight of a church is more difficult than the oversight of a business,” says Bob Russell, retired senior pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Ky.

Pastoral development remains important in navigating the various issues a church leader encounters. From weekly

sermon preparation and balancing ministry with family life to avoiding burnout and addressing moral issues, leadership can take its toll on pastors. After serving four decades as a senior pastor, Russell understands these sticky areas. “It takes an extra measure of grace for the minister to cope with the pressure put on him.”

To equip pastors to deal with pressures of ministry, LifeWay has developed an online tool that offers customizable training in pastoral development. Ministry Grid is a collection of video training including real life experiences and insights from pastors and ministry leaders like Russell who understand the blessings and difficulties of leading a church. Pastors can access Ministry Grid’s videos from a computer, tablet or smartphone, making it convenient for them to train anytime, anywhere.

“Technology has changed the way we do commerce, educate and entertain ourselves, but up to now it hasn’t affected the way pastors train and develop themselves, their staff and their leaders,” says Todd

Adkins, LifeWay’s director of leadership. “Many churches are finding it increasingly difficult to schedule time to attend or host training. Getting a group of people together for multiple training sessions is even more difficult.

“We wanted to develop a tool that would address the desire of a pastor’s heart to fully equip his staff and leaders for the work of ministry,” Adkins says. “Knowing this, we created full suites of development for staff and lay leaders, because the church is a community of gifted people and not merely a community with a gifted pastor.”

Being prepared for ministry is critically important. As Russell says, “The stakes are extremely high. We’re dealing with vital issues in people’s lives. As tough as it is, we’re still influencing people for the cause of Christ.”

In addition to pastoral training, Ministry Grid provides a platform for training in all areas of the church from parking ministry to children’s ministry to church polity. Church leaders can also upload their own content, turn off unwanted content and put their church’s logo and skin on the site.

“LifeWay’s Ministry Grid is one of the most practical helps to come out since Bible study software,” Russell says. “It provides pastors, staff members and lay leaders a library of directives about how to handle all kinds of contemporary leadership challenges. This learned, functional counsel is instantly available at the church leader’s fingertips when needed.”

Well-equipped leaders are essential to churches that want to grow and reach the world around them, but research



Ministry Grid will launch in May 2013. Visit MinistryGrid.com to learn more.



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

shows few churches have a plan to develop leaders.

“Almost all pastors we surveyed affirmed their critical role in training others to do ministry. But almost three fourths of these pastors had no plans to do so,” says LifeWay President Thom Rainer. “For most pastors, the reasons behind this gap were simple: they either didn’t know how to take the next steps, or they didn’t feel like they had the time to do so.

“At LifeWay, we began to make this issue a major priority,” explains Rainer. “We saw a great opportunity to provide almost unlimited training in this digital age that could not be done in earlier years. We’ve created something that will be convenient for church leaders and those being equipped at an affordable cost for all churches.”

So, how does it work? Say there is a new volunteer working in the children’s ministry. We’ll call her Amy. She needs training, but doesn’t have time to attend a weekend seminar. On her own time, Amy logs in from her own computer or mobile device and sees a list of training videos created for her. Or she can take a skills assessment and receive training suggestions based on the results. She picks a course, watches a video and she’s done.

Church leaders will find the functionality of Ministry Grid allows them to meet the diverse needs of their volunteers. Leaders can easily organize and assign training courses to different individuals and also track their progress. Pastors can be confident their staff, leaders and volunteers receive the training they need to better prepare them to make disciples.

“We have made the Ministry Grid easy to use,” Adkins says. “This isn’t a cookie cutter solution we are simply plugging in to our system. We conducted panels and talked with pastors from hundreds of churches, looked at existing online education and existing training platforms then started from scratch. The result is Ministry Grid is actually built from the ground up to serve churches in their mission of making disciples.” ■

Kailey Black is editor of Ministry Grid. Whit Stiles and Polly House contributed to this article.

What is Ministry Grid?

Ministry Grid is a subscription-based, online leadership development platform for pastors, staff and volunteers. Ministry Grid will launch in May 2013 with 1,000-plus video sessions on topics ranging from church polity to parking. New content will be added continually.

How does Ministry Grid work?

Ministry Grid’s learning management system enables your church to customize training to fit the needs and goals of your people. You can select built-in tracks or choose the provided video sessions. You can even add your own content to create your own customized training. With tracking and administrative tools, Ministry Grid allows leaders to assess an individual or group’s skill level, assign training and view progress. Ministry Grid is accessible from computers, tablets and smartphones with an app that allows offline training.

Who can use Ministry Grid?

Ministry Grid is for the entire church, with pricing based on your church’s average weekly attendance. Content is organized into four areas of development: pastoral, church staff, lay leader/volunteer and personal development. It offers a wide range of topics and average video length of 15 minutes. Ministry Grid is also perfect for organizations and non-profits that are developing Christian leaders and workers on matters relevant to their ministry.

What makes the Ministry Grid platform so significant?

Every aspect is customizable according to your church’s needs, including the ability to skin the site with your own colors, drop in your logo and church branding and upload your own content. You may also choose from Ministry Grid’s video sessions or disable access to content not relevant to your assigned users.

How do I learn more?

Ministry Grid launches May 2013, but you can see the latest updates, exclusive pre-release content and pricing at MinistryGrid.com. You may also direct questions to Todd.Adkins@lifeway.com.



Options are key for training and development

by Bruce Raley

In a society marked by consumerism, individualism and ever-changing technology, providing options is a necessity. People not only want, but often, need the ability to choose between options. Training and leadership development are certainly no exceptions.

Every church needs training. New leaders need to be equipped for effectiveness in ministry, and experienced leaders need on-going development. However, many church leaders have become discouraged at the lack of participation in the traditional training settings.

Options can be our friend. While the provision of options may bring challenges, it can also provide distinct advantages. Think through some of the suggested training options below.

1. Articles

LifeWay.com has hundreds of articles ready for training. New articles are posted regularly. For easy access, go to the specific ministry area and search for topics. For example, if you want articles related to Bible study teachers, go to Lifeway.com and search “Bible study leader” and then click the “Learn” tab. Dozens of articles will be available. Print the chosen article and distribute to every Bible study teacher in your church. Or, why not email a training article to Bible study leaders each week?

2. Online training

The Web can be a tremendous source for training helps. On-line learning is the growing wave today and will be growing even greater in the days ahead. Online learning allows leaders to train at convenient times and locations.

Soon LifeWay will provide churches the opportunity to train and learn through the launch of Ministry Grid. This online learning site will house thousands of training videos for pastors, church staff, church leaders and personal growth. Ministry Grid also will allow churches to upload their own training videos to a personalized site, as well as track assignments and participation. Be looking for the launch in May 2013, but you can check it out now at MinistryGrid.com.

A number of online training videos are presently available at LifeWay.com. In addition, The Exchange is a weekly Web show hosted by LifeWay Research President Ed Stetzer addressing issues related to church and culture. Mike Harland, director of LifeWay Worship hosts The Choir



Elizabeth Luter, Franklin Ave.
Baptist Church, New Orleans

Room, a monthly webcast for worship leaders. They are available at LifeWay.com/TheExchange and LifeWay.com/TheChoirRoom, respectively.

3. Bible study leader guides

The leader guides for *Explore The Bible*, *The Gospel Project* and *Bible Studies for Life* curriculum lines have articles each month that help leaders grow. These articles can be used as topics of discussion in leadership meetings or online forums.

4. Book study

An effective option for leader training is a book study. Choose a particular book, ask leaders to purchase the book

and lead group discussions in leadership gatherings.

5. Nashville and Ridgecrest Conference Center

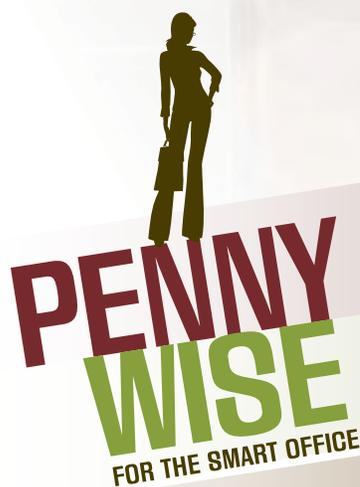
For many years, LifeWay has provided leadership training at the LifeWay home office in Nashville, Tenn., and Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C. These events provide high quality concentrated training led by recognized ministry leaders. They also allow for a setting of relaxation and inspiration. It's not too late to register for these events.

The training events include Sunday School Weekend, Worship Week, Black

Church and Family Week, BETA conferences for education ministers, student ministers, childhood education and women's ministry, plus many more. Information can be found at LifeWay.com/Events.

Certainly a number of other viable options exist. These include newsletters and podcasts, along with denominational and local training events. The key to training is intentionality. Consider the culture of your church and community. Then, devise a 9- to 12-month leadership development plan. ■

Bruce Raley is director of church education ministry.



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We are one of the most philanthropic generations in
American history. Ninety-five percent of our generation
believes we will do something great in our lifetime.

We are the least Christian generation in American
history. Only an estimated 15 percent of us are
Christians, far less than previous generations.

Who are we?

We are the Millennials.

Meet



*Kairos, young adult worship, at
Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church.*

the Millennials

What church leaders need to know to engage the next generation

by Jess Rainer

I love my generation. As a Millennial, I am seeing my generation make a tremendous impact across the globe. Have you ever heard of Facebook? The founder and CEO is a Millennial. And we all aspire to make the kind of impact Facebook has made.

The church is at a crucial point in engaging and reaching Millennials. The oldest Millennial is reaching a defined point in adulthood where habits and opinions are not easily changed. The youngest Millennial is now entering most churches' student ministries.

What do church leaders need to know in order to engage Millennials? There are four key elements in connecting Millennials with the church.

Community-driven

Millennials are focused on our individual communities. Churches that desire to reach this generation should be focused on their communities as well.

"Church as usual" will not attract or retain Millennials. Rather, we want church activities, the church budget and the people in the church making an impact on the community.

Bible-rich teaching

As mentioned earlier, Millennials are the most educated generation in American history. And we're not just educated, we're smart. If we do not know something, we know where to find the answer. In other words, as Christians, we have to "know our stuff." Millennial Christians are constantly being challenged for our beliefs. We often have to prove being Christian means we can be intelligent as well.

For the church, Millennials want Bible-rich teaching. We want to be articulate in our beliefs. We want to be ready to defend Scripture. We want to be ready to answer our peers' questions about Christianity.

Additionally, we want Bible-rich teaching because we want to grow as people. If 9/11 taught us anything, it taught us life is brief and death is inevitable. The desire to grow in knowledge in order to make the most of this life is very important to us. And this is true for Millennial non-Christians as well.

4 key elements in connecting Millennials to the church:

- Community-driven
- Bible-rich teaching
- Connected
- Committed

If Millennials are going to commit to a belief system, we want to know as much as possible.

Connected

Relationships are a major driving force for Millennials. Sixty-one percent of Millennials say family is the most important thing in their life. Friends come in as the second most important thing. We are connected to each other and our families.

And staying connected is easy. It's a rare moment to see a Millennial without any technology. In fact, 73 percent of Millennials say their cell phone is vital to their lives. Why? Because we are connected to each other through technology and media.

Churches that use relationships as a primary means to reach Millennials will be most successful.

Committed

Millennials are committed to the causes we are passionate about. A Millennial non-Christian who begins a relationship with Christ will become one of the most passionate members of the church. Millennial Christians will become one of the most effective evangelistic tools of the church if we are given the chance to succeed.

Millennials want to commit to something bigger than themselves. Why not Christ and the Church? ■

*Jess Rainer is missions and administration pastor at Grace Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., and co-author of *The Millennials* (B&H).*

Dig Deeper

For more about ministering to Millennials check out these two resources.

The Millennials by Jess Rainer and Thom S. Rainer (B&H Publishing Group)

In Real Time by Mike Glenn (B&H Publishing Group)

Available from LifeWay.com and LifeWay Christian Stores.



Mike Glenn, pastor of Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church, performs a baptism during the weekly Kairos service.

Hard questions need answers

Churches today can no more ignore the Millennials than churches 40 years ago could ignore the Boomers. There are just too many of them!

Since you can't ignore them, what do you do? You listen to them. You teach them the Bible without any sugar-coating. You love them.

Kairos is the young adult worship service of Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church. Pastor Mike Glenn and some of his staff recognized the need for something that would appeal to the college, young adult and young professional crowd who lived in the Nashville area. Church as usual wasn't doing it.

In 2004, they had their first Kairos service.

At first, Kairos (a Greek word meaning "right time") had trouble finding any traction. They were doing all the stuff books said would attract these postmoderns: cool clothes, cool lighting, cool staging, cool speakers, etc. It wasn't working.

Finally, a young man spoke up for the group about what they really wanted: the Bible. He told Glenn: "Read it to me; tell me what it means; and tell me how to do it."

But Glenn protested, "That's not creative."

But he said again, "Read it to me; tell me what it means; and tell me how to do it."

Then he added what Glenn called a heartbreaking truth: "We've never heard this before."

They didn't know the Bible. Many of them had grown up in church, albeit in churches where youth groups had majored on entertainment or just sat in a circle and talked about things going on in their lives.

These young adults wanted truth. Hardcore, in your face, unvarnished truth. Biblical truth.

They spoke the truths from their own lives too.

Once when Glenn was talking about loving and honoring parents, he could tell the crowd was tuning him out. So, he stopped. He got up from the stool, walked out and asked them why they weren't engaged.

The proverbial can of worms opened.

One spoke of a father who had abandoned him, his mother and his siblings. Another spoke of abuse she suffered at the hands of her father from an early age. Another spoke of

seeing a church ordain as a deacon the father who had left his family for another woman.

They had a lot of stored-up hate toward their fathers, so why would they ever, ever honor men like that?

They had a real problem with God as "father." Father was not a good word in their vocabulary.

Glenn knew this truth was not going to be easy to work through. But it had to be done.

Kairos is a new kind of church for Millennials, one with round tables instead of pews, conversations instead of sermons and answers to very hard questions. It just might be closer to the church of 2,000 years ago than most today.

—Polly House

Family topped list

I expected to see a generation that is nominally Christian. I expected to see a generation that is financially confused. I expected to see a generation heavily involved in technology. But I did not expect to see a generation that is dedicated to family. When asked the open-ended question, "What is most important to you in life?" 61 percent of Millennials stated their family is most important.

Friends and education followed the number one response, but neither of these answers came close to representing a majority of the generation. Millennials desire to be connected to their family. The use of technology has brought families together in a way previous generations never had the ability to connect. Millennials are seeking the advice and counsel of our parents. Almost 9 out of 10 Millennials receive regular advice and counsel from parents.

Millennials also are thinking about our own future families. Eighty-six percent of Millennials believe they will marry once or not at all. My generation desires to have children. There appears to be a return to strong traditional family values. I believe Millennials desire to break the trend of broken families.

—Jess Rainer

Trying to measure up?

How to stop comparing yourself to others and find success in fulfilling God's ministry

by Shawn Lovejoy

There's just something about the weight of vocational ministry that tends to cause us to doubt who we are and how God made us. I think we all know Satan is out to derail us, but I'm not sure we recognize his schemes. If Satan can cause us to feel insecure about who we are, our leadership and calling, he's got us headed down a slippery slope to ineffectiveness, insecurity, discouragement and defeat.

When we become insecure in our own ministry and calling, we will also inevitably begin to measure ourselves by the success of others. When this happens we often begin to exhibit what I call the three Cs of insecurity: comparing, copying and condemning.

Two years after launching Mountain Lake, we were averaging 200 people in weekly attendance. Twitter and Facebook didn't exist, and blogs had not yet become the way we kept up with the world. Without these outside sources of social media, I thought our church was the fastest-growing church in America. Zero to 200 in two years! We felt like kings of the world. However, with today's technology, we can always find a church that's building bigger, better and faster than we are.

We read the articles online, the status updates and the blog posts, and suddenly, what is happening at our church isn't good enough. We realize our creativity is anything but. Our growth is not quite as impressive. Our facilities are lacking. We aren't staffed as well. We're not baptizing as many people as they are. Simply put, our church pales in comparison. We have to do something.

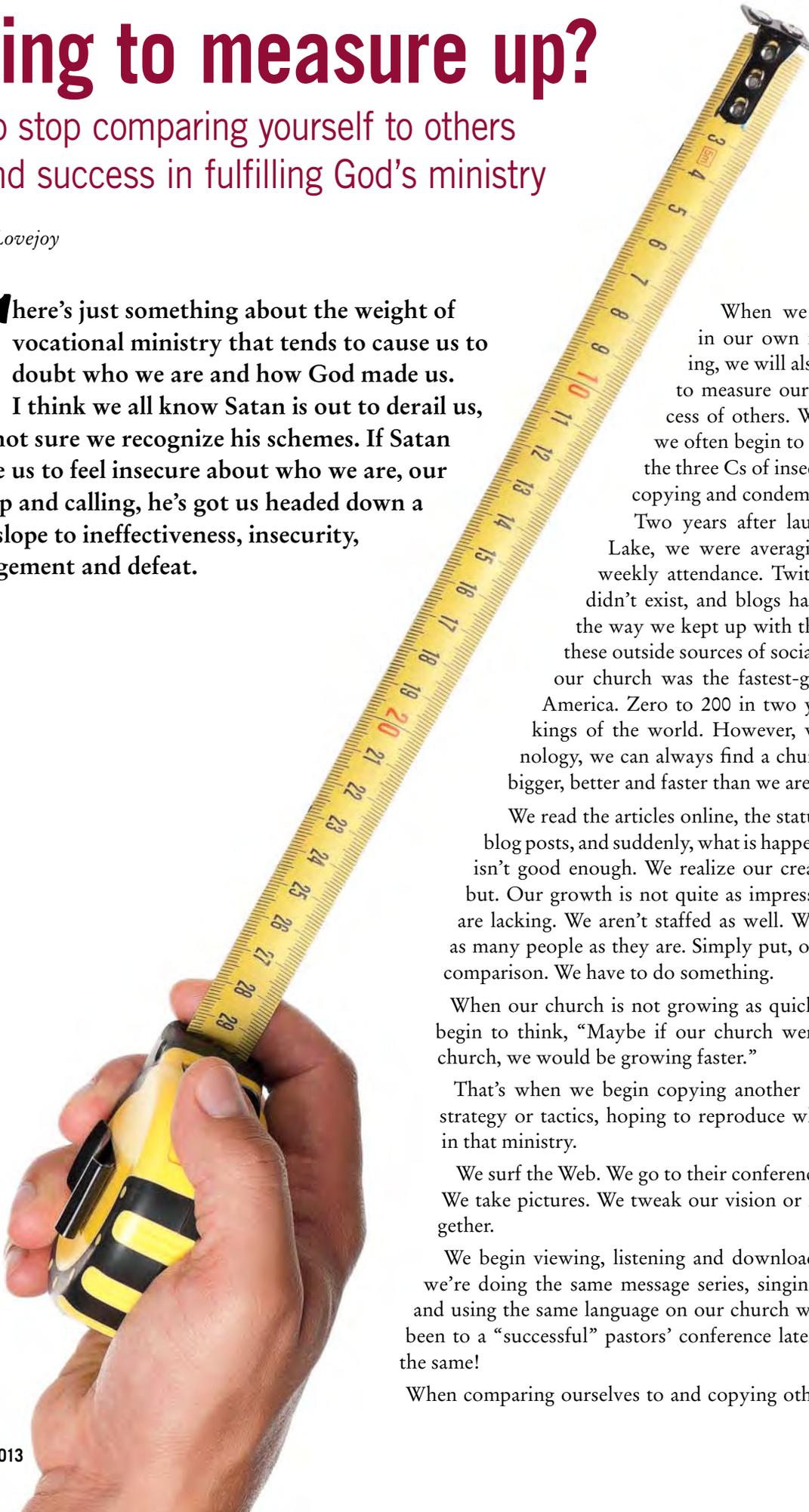
When our church is not growing as quickly as another, we begin to think, "Maybe if our church were more like their church, we would be growing faster."

That's when we begin copying another successful leader's strategy or tactics, hoping to reproduce what God has done in that ministry.

We surf the Web. We go to their conferences. We take notes. We take pictures. We tweak our vision or rip off theirs altogether.

We begin viewing, listening and downloading. Pretty soon, we're doing the same message series, singing the same songs, and using the same language on our church websites. Have you been to a "successful" pastors' conference lately? We even dress the same!

When comparing ourselves to and copying other pastors doesn't



produce the growth in our ministry it has in theirs, we get discouraged. We're tempted to believe God isn't blessing us or He has forgotten us. We might even become bitter, since this whole ministry thing isn't quite turning out the way we dreamed it would. Often our first instinct is not to look inward. Instead, we choose to look outward.

We begin to rationalize, "Well, for their ministry to be growing like that, they must be watering down the gospel." It's usually not the case, but it makes us feel better (at least we think it does). We catch ourselves saying negative things about other pastors whose churches are bigger than ours or too close geographically.

We question motives, intentions and methods. Often, it's our jealousy driving us, not our zeal for holiness.

All three of the dangerous Cs—comparing, copying and condemning—are symptoms of a larger problem many pastors face: they are not measuring themselves or their ministries the way God does.

Too many of us are trying to fulfill someone else's ministry. Because of this, there are too many cookie-cutter pastors, churches and ministries, and not enough pastors fulfilling their unique callings. The most troubling part of all of this is that without a true change of heart, we'll repeat this vicious cycle over and over again.

Maybe all of this is why Paul said what he did to his young mentee, Timothy: "But for you, be serious about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, *fulfill* your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:5, emphasis added). After studying this passage of Scripture in six translations and in the original language, do you know what I've discovered? I could not find one translation that reads, "Fulfill Rick Warren's ministry," or "the ministry of X Community Church."

The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said: "Fulfill your ministry." Wow!

This means I don't have to be like anyone else. I don't have to do ministry like anyone else. I don't have to preach as well as he does. My church doesn't have to grow as fast as their church. I don't have to fulfill anyone else's ministry. I just need to be what

God has called me to be and do what He has called me to do, and I will be successful in His eyes. That is all that matters, isn't it?

I don't have to put a yoke on myself Jesus doesn't place on me. If I do, I'm going to weigh myself down, and my life and ministry will be more difficult than Jesus intends. However, an amazing sense of freedom comes into our lives and ministries when we become secure in our own skin: secure in who we are, and secure in what God has called us to be and do. ■

Shawn Lovejoy is lead pastor of Mountain Lake Church in Cumming, Ga., and directional leader for Churchplanters.com. This article is based on his book: The Measure of our Success: An Impassioned Plea to Pastors. It is available at LifeWay.com and at LifeWay Christian Stores.

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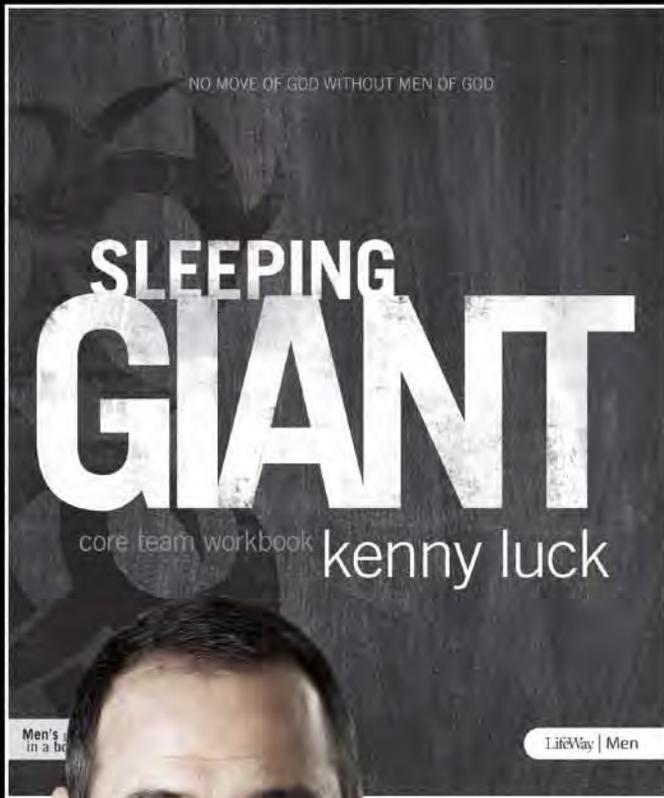
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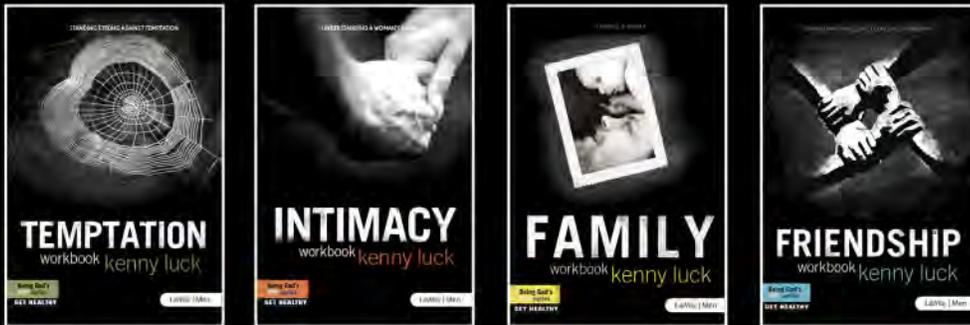
Sleeping Giant is an intentional men's strategy—based on the pastor's vision—that moves men from merely “affiliated” to “activated” in the church. It includes four steps: Get In, Get Healthy, Get Strong, and Get Going.

The first step in the spiritual pathway—Get In—is the catalytic funnel that (1) motivates men, (2) shares a vision, and (3) gets men into groups. The final stage is Get Going, in which healthy, strong, trained men are deployed to serve the church and carry out their mission in the world to aggressively share the gospel. The two middle steps are highlighted on the next page, with a few recommended resources for each stage.

Kenny Luck is men's pastor at Saddleback Church and founder and president of Every Man Ministries, which helps churches worldwide develop and grow healthy men's communities.

requires a big vision and a little **luck.**

GET HEALTHY



The Get Healthy stage involves defining and meeting a man's felt needs and helping him get a "win" that is meaningful to him. In a group context and with group safety and support, men need to go after core health in their own character and relationships first. This involves an open discussion of temptation and compromise (moral health), their views of women and marriage (marital health), their leadership in the home (family health), and how masculine friendship and accountability work (relational health).

GET STRONG



Once a church has defined and met the felt needs of a man, the transformational capital earned by the church in that man's life needs to be spent on leadership development and the call for that man to Get Strong. Throughout the Get Strong courses, men will feel themselves going to the next level of commitment personally, spiritually, and practically in ministry. Strong spiritual formation leads to strong spiritual expression of the Great Commandment and Great Commission.

It's time to wake the sleeping giant in your church. Learn more at lifeway.com/kennyluck



Ministry Makeover

Refresh a plateaued women's ministry

by Rhonda Kelley

At various times in life, people need a makeover. Makeovers are also needed in the life of any ministry program. Leaders step back and assess the ministry to see what type of refreshing will make the ministry more relevant and appealing. A ministry can be like a house—even though nothing drastic happens, it still loses its freshness over time. It may need a thorough cleaning, or it may need to be spruced up with some fresh paint.



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Plateaued ministries needing refreshment can follow the same principles impacting church growth. Whether the ministry needs to be revitalized or restarted all together, here are some tips on how to give your ministry a makeover if it is stagnant, declining or dead:

Refocus the ministry. If evangelism and outreach are not the ultimate goal of your women's ministry, it is stagnant. Sometimes internal issues need to be addressed before a ministry can adequately shift attention back to reaching lost people in the community.

Reenergize the ministry. Sometimes this can be done through simple rebranding. Consider changing the title, the name or even the logo of your ministry to draw the focus back to what is important.

Restructure the ministry. A ministry leadership team may need to be changed. At our church, we reassessed the women's ministry committee and started with a blank piece of paper. It was a huge step of faith! While some long-time members continued serving, new members were added to the team.

Restructuring the leadership team instilled fresh energy into our ministry and allowed us to reach a new demographic because of the interests, ages and stages of the new team members.

Restart the ministry. Churches that are dwindling and near death often restart or relaunch. Just as a church will relaunch through a partnership with another church, perhaps a women's ministry can relaunch in partnership with another ministry from within the church or with a sister church. Don't be afraid to take a big step of faith.

Refreshing a plateaued ministry can be hard. It takes time and energy and can even be scary. But on the other side of the process is a refreshed and renewed ministry more focused and impactful than before. ■

Rhonda Kelley is adjunct professor of women's ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

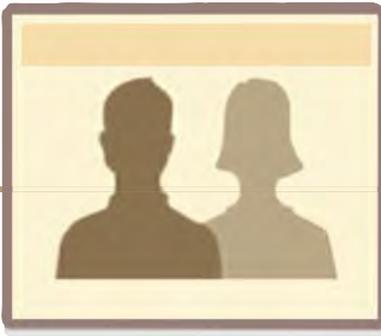
10 ways to makeover a ministry

Rhonda Kelley offered these suggestions for a ministry makeover:

1. **Examine your ministry.** Honestly identify strengths and weaknesses.
2. **Cleanse your heart.** Resolve any tension that needs to be dealt with personally or among your team.
3. **Revitalize your purpose.** Your ministry's purpose should flow out of the purpose of your church.
4. **Declutter your calendar.** Cancel events necessary to take the pressure off the women and their families.
5. **Care for your leadership.** Provide personal encouragement, ministry training and prayer support for the ladies working on the team.
6. **Strengthen ongoing programs.** Make sure there is a gospel focus in your Bible studies and prayer groups throughout the year.
7. **Refresh special events.** Some repeat events need a new look or need to be redefined. Build on the past with a fresh look for the present and future.
8. **Debut the ministry again.** Host a kickoff event or ministry fair to reintroduce the ministry to the church.
9. **Improve communication.** Involve people with communication strengths to spread the word and be advocates for the ministry.
10. **Connect women with other women.** Help the ladies get to know other ladies in the church and community. Connect across the generations as well as across the aisles.



Rhonda Kelley answered questions as a part of a women's panel at the LifeWay Women's Ministry Forum in Nashville.



Making Connections

Facebook groups give churches choices

by Marty Duren

Do you want another free tool to connect people in your church? Consider a Facebook group — an often-overlooked tool for helping maintain community for churches, ministries or small groups. With more than a billion Facebook users worldwide — and a large number of those are in our churches — Facebook Groups can be a great way to stay in touch.

As I was typing this article, a notification came through from my church life group leader confirming our meeting tonight and who was responsible for bringing food. I did not have to answer the phone or do anything out of the ordinary to get the information. And he only had to type his message once for everyone to see the announcement.

First choose a name. It is fine to be creative, but it is also fine to be simple. “The Duren Life Group” or “Shirley’s Sunday School Class” are as effective as “Fierce Freddy’s Fighting Men of Faith.” Enter the name in the proper field.

Second, invite members. They must have a Facebook account to be invited and included in the group. If anyone you want to include in your group doesn’t have a Facebook account, you (or someone else) can help them create one. Assure them they do not have to embrace all Facebook has to offer if they only want to relate to your group. The amount of information they share about themselves or how much they involve themselves on Facebook is completely their choice.

After people have accepted your invitation to join, they may invite others to join. Assuming you are the administrator, however, you have the authority to approve everyone who wants to join the group. No one can join without your OK.

Third, select the type of group you are creating. “Type” refers to privacy settings: Open, Closed or Secret.

The posts, members and description of an “Open” group can be seen by anyone on Facebook who finds it. A “Closed” group allows for the group and its members to be seen by non-members, but



Assuming you already have your own account on Facebook, it’s easy to create a Facebook group. Go to your Home Page. In the left column you will see a section for “Groups.” At the bottom of the list you will see a “Create Group” icon. (If not, hover over the section and the word “More” will appear. Click that.) You will be taken to the Groups Page where you will see the rectangular button that reads “+ Create Group.” Click this to create your group.

only members can see the content. A “Secret” group is completely unknown except to the members who can see membership and content. Its very existence is concealed from anyone outside of your group.

An “Open” group is not recommended for any group that involves students or children. These might include VBS, camps, youth activities or Sunday school. Remember, any Facebook user can view all of the content on an Open Group page. Give serious thought to even a “Closed” group for students or children since only the posting of comments is restricted to members; all pictures and posts can be seen. How-



ever, a “Secret” group protects pictures, members and comments completely from outside viewing. I recommended you choose this type of group for children and students.

The best thing about Facebook groups is they are free to use and can be expanded to any size. If members move or change groups, membership can be

changed as desired.

Once you’ve created the group and invited members, begin using your Facebook group to share prayer requests, make announcements, plan a fellowship, provide discussion questions for an upcoming Bible study or share photos from your group’s mission trip. ■

This caution must be noted: Anything posted online can never truly be considered absolutely, without a doubt, private. Always use discretion when posting.

Marty Duren is LifeWay’s social media strategist. Contact him at Marty.Duren@LifeWay.com or follow him on Twitter @MartyDuren.

I had very little food, and sometimes I wouldn't even eat. ☹️

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A look inside

The Art of Neighboring

Baker Books

A Q&A with co-authors Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon

In the first chapter of the book you talk about a moment when you realized the churches in your community weren't living out the second part of the Great Commandment—loving our neighbors. Tell us about that.

We invited our assistant city manager to speak with us as a group of pastors, and one of the things she said stopped us in our tracks:

“From the city’s perspective there’s not a noticeable difference in how Christians and non-Christians relate to their actual neighbors.”

We had been looking for an initiative to take on as pastors, and that’s when we knew we had it. We needed to take the Great Commandment seriously and literally, starting with our actual geographic neighbors.

What can Christians do to start being good neighbors?

Many of us use our backyards as our primary outdoor space and as a result we have less interaction with our neighbors. We can start with the small step by moving to the front yard so we can be visible to our neighbors who surround us.

What are some of the obstacles to overcome when moving from stranger to an acquaintance to a relationship?

One obstacle is learning and retaining the names of our neighbors. It makes a big difference if you can say “Hey, Joe” instead of “Hey, Bro.”

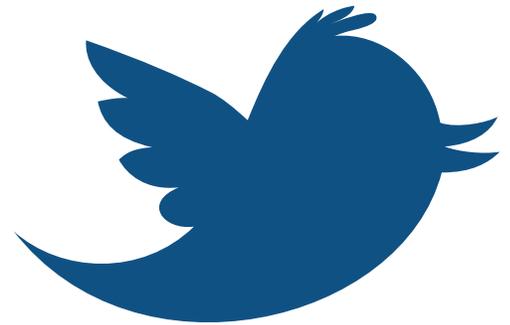
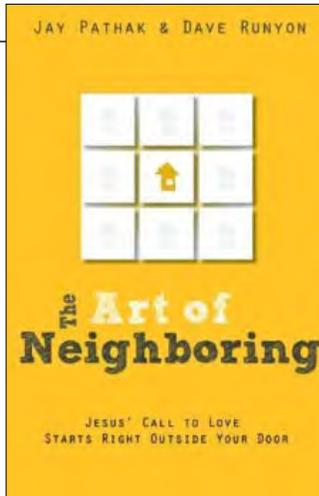
In what way are our motives in neighboring important?

To truly love people we need to stop believing we’re only to be kind to people in order to share our faith. We’re called to be kind to people because we are converted, not in order to convert them.

If you truly love Jesus and you seek to love your neighbors, you will end up talking about Jesus. If you don’t talk about Jesus, you might want to ask yourself why that is the case. Either you don’t have a relationship with Jesus that naturally flows out into your life, or you don’t love those around you enough to share the deepest parts of your life.

Let’s be clear: *The Art of Neighboring* isn’t an evangelism strategy. However, when Christians do this, people begin to follow Jesus all around them.

Excerpted from an interview at EdStetzer.com.



Folks we're following

“Discipleship is guiding people toward the relationship they want rather than keeping the religion thrust upon them.”

[@PhilipNation](#)

LifeWay’s director of adult ministry publishing and teaching pastor at The Fellowship at Mt. Juliet, Tenn.

“5 fundamentals of inspiring #leadership: clear vision, courage, a learning posture, humility and the ability to empower others. ”

[@angelabesignano](#)

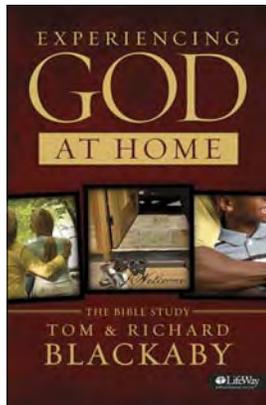
Leadership and life consultant, author of *Beautifully Gifted*

“All but over: A court loss by Hobby Lobby would deal a lasting blow to #freedom of #religion ow.ly/gN6PV @hobbylobbystore”

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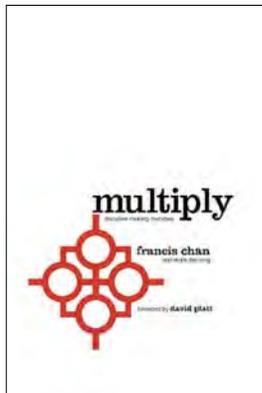
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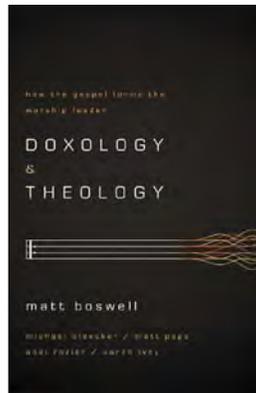
Experiencing God at Home

By Tom and Richard Blackaby
B&H Publishing Group (May 1)
 Henry Blackaby's sons Tom and Richard Blackaby establish the biblical case for the idea of experiencing God at home and show how the clear foundation for God's work around the world is His work in families. The Blackabys illustrate that concept through real-life stories of families that have found ways to experience God in marriage, in choosing life's direction, in rescuing broken relationships, in forgiveness, and in the salvation of loved ones.



Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples

by Francis Chan
David C. Cook
 “Why is it that we see so little disciple-making taking place in the church today?” asks Francis Chan. “Somehow we have created a church culture where the paid ministers do the ‘ministry,’ and the rest of us show up, put some money in the plate and leave feeling inspired or ‘fed.’ We have moved so far away from Jesus’ command that many Christians don’t have a frame of reference for what disciple-making looks like.”



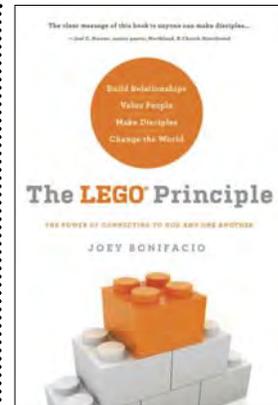
Doxology & Theology

by Matt Boswell
B&H Publishing Group (May 1)
Doxology and Theology is a resource by worship leaders for worship leaders that articulates how theology and worship inform one another. Contributors are worship leaders around the country including Matt Papa (Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, N.C.), Aaron Keyes (Grace Church, Atlanta), Michael Bleecker (The Village Church, Dallas), and Zac Hicks (Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church, Denver). This book is a must have for every worship pastor in your church.



I Am a Church Member

by Thom S. Rainer
B&H Publishing Group (May 1)
 LifeWay President Thom S. Rainer posted a 500-word declaration about church membership on his daily blog. “I Am a Church Member” started a conversation about the attitudes and responsibilities of church members. Expanded to book form, *I Am a Church Member* begins to remedy the outbreak of inactive or barely committed church members. When a person’s attitude is consistently biblical and healthy, matters of giving, serving, and so forth will fall into place more naturally.



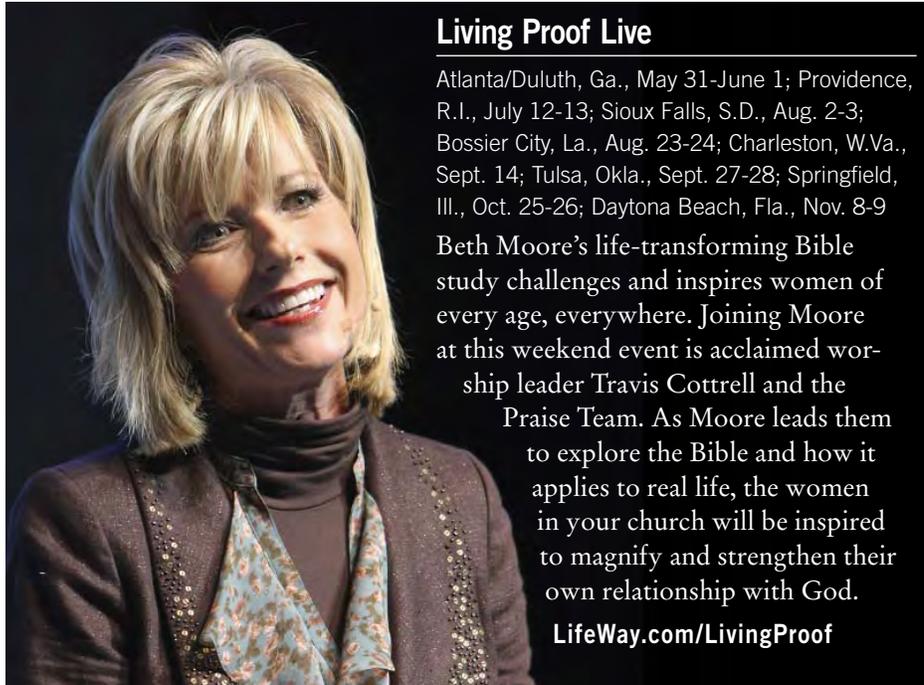
The LEGO Principle

by Joey Bonifacio
Charisma House
 The LEGO Principle by Joey Bonifacio draws parallels between the famous toy-maker and core discipleship elements. Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love your neighbor. Just as a LEGO piece was designed to do one thing—connect regardless of shape, size or color—we were made to connect with God and others, says Bonifacio. “If you can connect to the top with God and to the bottom with others, you can pretty much shape the world you live in.”

For more new releases visit LifeWay.com.



Conferences & Events



Living Proof Live

Atlanta/Duluth, Ga., May 31-June 1; Providence, R.I., July 12-13; Sioux Falls, S.D., Aug. 2-3; Bossier City, La., Aug. 23-24; Charleston, W.Va., Sept. 14; Tulsa, Okla., Sept. 27-28; Springfield, Ill., Oct. 25-26; Daytona Beach, Fla., Nov. 8-9

Beth Moore's life-transforming Bible study challenges and inspires women of every age, everywhere. Joining Moore at this weekend event is acclaimed worship leader Travis Cottrell and the Praise Team. As Moore leads them to explore the Bible and how it applies to real life, the women in your church will be inspired to magnify and strengthen their own relationship with God.

LifeWay.com/LivingProof



Echo

July 24-26, 2013

Dallas

Speakers: Matt Chandler, Jon Acuff and others

Echo is a three-day gathering of artists, geeks and storytellers who serve the Church. Most Echo attendees work for churches or ministries, but they're not senior pastors. Instead of a pulpit, their platforms include film, graphic design, motion design, Web design, blogging, social media, photography, visual worship and worship service programming.

EchoHub.com



worshipweek

Worship Week

July 15-19, 2013

Ridgecrest Conference Center, N.C.

Leaders: Paul Baloche, Mike Harland, Randy Vader, Eric Geiger, Celeste Clydesdale, Tommy Walker, Grant Norstworthy, Jay Rouse, Brian Brown, Dave Clark, Gary Mathena

Worship Week is designed to equip the music leaders in your church with essential tools and information from some of the most inspiring leaders in church music. Anyone who plays a role in the music ministry at your church will benefit from the training offered during Worship Week.

LifeWay.com/Events



The Main Event Conference for Men

July 26-27, 2013

Nashville, Tenn.

Speakers: Duck Dynasty's Willie Robertson, Coach Bobby Bowden, Tony Evans, NFL Pro-Bowler Lorenzo Neal, Kenny Luck and more
Assemble your men: Bring your teenage son. Invite your neighbor. Get a group together from your church. Come see a legendary group of pastors, coaches, soldiers, and leaders who are ready to share their stories, lessons learned and strategies for success. You can get the victory, but you're going to have to fight for it.

LifeWay.com/TheMainEvent



Festivals of Marriage

Oct. 11-13 and 18-20, 2013

Ridgecrest Conference Center, N.C.

Speakers: Steve and Debbie Wilson, Jon Acuff, Justin and Trisha Davis, Michael O'Brien (musical guest)

The Festivals of Marriage conference will focus on ways to strengthen marriages so family members in every home will have a better ability to connect with God and each other, grow in wisdom and stature, serve each other and their community and go share their faith with the world around them.

LifeWay.com/Events

Digital



Auxano's Vision Room

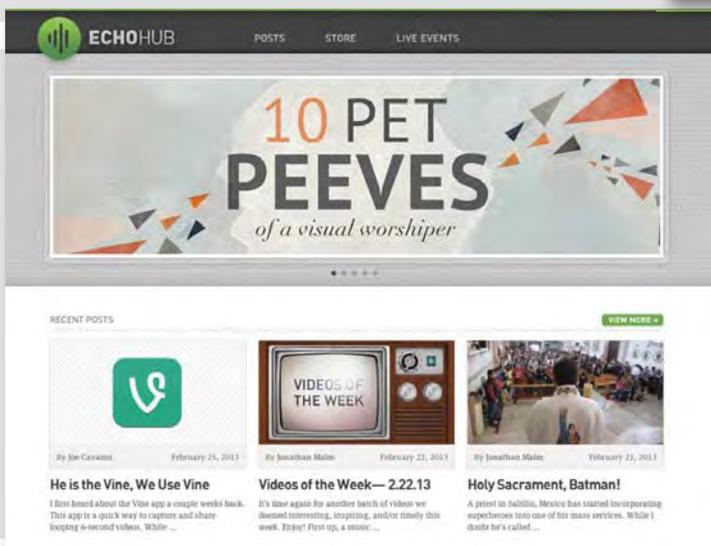
The Vision Room, powered by Auxano, is designed to be the best online gathering of leaders and resources on vision clarity. You'll find articles on developing vision for your church, best communications practices, developing leaders in your church, discipleship and multiplication, and much more practical ministry help.

VisionRoom.com

Just-in-Time Coaching for Small Group Ministries

This twice-monthly e-newsletter from Mark Howell is for small group pastors and directors. It features the most popular articles each month from Howell's blog—MarkHowellLive.com. The blog focuses on how to launch, build and sustain an effective small group ministry. Howell is pastor of communities at Canyon Ridge Christian Church in Las Vegas and LifeWay's small group specialist.

MarkHowellLive.com



Echo Hub

If you're a church communicator, this site is for you. From the folks who brought you *Collide* magazine, the goal here is to inspire, challenge and equip you as you navigate the intersection of media, technology and the Church.

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Get your students ready for camp

11 tips to make an impact

by Ben Trueblood

Summer camp can be an important event in the lives of students each year. Attending camp gives them the opportunity to get away from the normal day-to-day issues of life and focus for an extended period of time, with other believers, on what God has for them. Often, this starvation from the world and feeding on the Word results in spiritually impacting moments students remember for a lifetime.

Here are some tips to help you prepare your students for what we pray will be an impacting week of camp.

1. Offer a discounted price at the beginning of your sign up time to encourage early sign ups.

2. Create a hashtag using the camp theme (for example: #FugeRidgecrest-BigPicture) so you can begin to create a buzz in social media about the upcoming event. This is a good way for students to invite their friends and for other students to hear about the event.

3. Create a Facebook event page to promote the event. You can also use this page to keep parents updated during the week of camp.

4. Ask your pastor to send a letter to the parents of the church before the sign up process begins, encouraging them to sign up their students and explaining the importance of summer camp.

5. Have at least two parent meetings to keep them in the loop for planning and getting the necessary paperwork completed. Have plenty of copies of medical release forms, permission forms, etc. Make sure you also have sign up forms available so families can continue to sign up their students for camp!

6. After your registration deadline has passed, continue to allow students to

sign up, especially if they are visitors. You never know what God has planned for those students.

7. Spend some time in worship services or small groups spiritually preparing them before you leave for camp.

8. Meet with your adult leaders prior to leaving for camp. Let them know the expectations you have for them and spend time in prayer for the students as a camp leadership team.

9. Involve the pastor in the process by asking him to pray over the students in the worship service the week before you leave, somewhat like a commissioning event.

10. Pray for the students daily. Involve the rest of your church in praying for the students at camp by giving out armbands or bracelets with a student's name on each one.

11. If your church is close enough to the camp think about having a "parent night" where parents can come experience a night of camp. ■

Ben Trueblood is LifeWay's director of student ministry. Learn more about LifeWay's student opportunities at LifeWay.com/Students.



A family prepares their girls for drop-off at Camp Crestridge in North Carolina.



Church leadership in a digital age

Today's Christian leaders have an unprecedented number of tools, platforms and opportunities to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be a light in a dark world. As the digital revolution brings clear implications for the church, we asked three Christian leaders to answer questions about preaching and leading a church in the digital age.



What technology have you found helpful for sermon preparation?

John Shepherd: I use an iPad for sermon preparation and delivery. I also love Accordance, Dropbox and Evernote. Dropbox is how my production team and graphic designer share information, videos, sermon graphics, etc. Anything that is too big to email or text goes in Dropbox. It has become essential for our team. Evernote is my filing system for sermons, notes, illustrations and everything else. Then, I use it for delivering sermons. It really has changed how I organize my thoughts and life.

Micah Fries: I've found Google Docs to be extremely helpful. I use it to store messages, so they're always available. As long as I have an Internet connection, I can grab my message to work on preparation, or even to preach. I also use it for my message calendar so it can be shared with church leadership, the worship pastor, etc. I've also found Evernote to be a great option to take notes on the go and to keep those notes synced with my various devices. Finally, I love my iPad. I have Bible study software apps that allow me to study wherever I am.

What technology has your church found most helpful for communication?

Shepherd: We use Twitter and Facebook to communicate with our folks.

We also post sermon videos and special messages on Vimeo.

Freddy Wyatt: We are considering using The City, but haven't yet implemented it. We've had pretty good success in using Google Groups to post ads. We use email, Twitter, Facebook and the church's website for general communication, and we podcast all of our sermons. In January we used Facebook and Twitter to promote our 40 Days of Prayer with the hashtag #ReturntoMe. We also posted the prayer and fasting guide on our website.

Fries: I think Facebook and Twitter are clearly the most important options. While I served as a pastor, Facebook was by far the most often used means of communication church members used to contact me. Twitter is helpful in getting out a message, particularly when used in companion with Facebook. I also found an email newsletter to be important. One of our first decisions at the last church I pastored was to eliminate the paper newsletter and replace it with a digital option.

Why do you think Christian leaders should have their own Web presence apart from their church's Web presence?

Fries: I think it is incredibly important for pastors and leaders to have, at least, a social media presence that allows their

members to see them as real people. Social media can help a pastor to pull back the curtain a bit on who they are as a husband, daddy and friend. Beyond that, the ability to continue the sermon all week long is invaluable. Finally, social media allows the pastor to be accessible to their people, but on the pastor's timetable. Instead of being on-demand whenever you are requested, social media allows people to contact you whenever they want, but you have the freedom to reply when you have the opportunity to reply.

What encouragement and cautions would you give church leaders who are still debating whether or not to be active in social media?

Fries: There should be no question about using it. It is absolutely the language of our culture. To refuse to use it would be to refuse to speak the language of our people. With that said, go into it with eyes wide open. You have to manage your social media, before it manages you. ■

Micah Fries is director of ministry development at LifeWay Christian Resources.

John Shepherd is pastor of River Oaks Community Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Freddy T. Wyatt is pastor of The Gallery Church of New York.



Understanding doctrine is bedrock to a believer's spiritual maturity

Doctrine. What images are conjured in your mind when you say that word? Dogmatic? Restrictive? Guarding? Defining?

Undoubtedly there are those who cringe at the word. I have personally talked with many believers who have felt burned by Christian leaders incessantly demanding conformity to doctrine.

On the other hand, there are those who have walked into a greater freedom and understanding of God's mission and His call on their life as they embraced the fundamental doctrines of faith.

While some data from the doctrine research (see p. 24 in this issue of *Facts & Trends*) may jump out as affirming—such as that the majority of churchgoers (75 percent) strongly hold the God of the Bible is not the same god worshiped in other world religions—the overall doctrine scores in the Transformational Discipleship research show that as many as 1 in 3 churchgoers have not embraced basic truths that are considered fundamental to the Christian faith.

Some may say they are most comfortable articulating the gospel by sharing grace, but I contend that understanding doctrine should be bedrock for a believer's ongoing process of maturation. The core definition of "doctrine," after all, simply means "teaching," or "that which is taught."

If we are to grow in our devotion to King Jesus and share the gospel from neighbor to nation, it is essential we are able to grasp and articulate the doctrinal truths of the gospel.

My friend David Hesselgrave, who spent 12 years as a missionary in Japan and is professor emeritus of mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., contributed an essay titled "The Authority of Scripture and the Christian Mission" for the Mission of God Study Bible that Philip Nation and I served as co-editors.

Why is it important to believe Jesus is the only way to heaven; that the Bible is inspired by God and completely trustworthy, and that not all roads lead to heaven? David communicates this so clearly in his essay: "...[T]he Bible is profitable for the man of God because when God's messenger employs Scripture in the foregoing ways he himself is made 'complete' or 'competent' and 'equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:17)."

He also writes: "The Apostle Paul says, 'All Scripture is inspired by God' (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek word *theopneustos* literally means 'breathed out' by God. Because that is so, God intends Scripture to be carefully expounded, faithfully obeyed and fervently defended."

For all of us, whether pastor or member, security of calling and understanding is found in one place—delving into the God-breathed pages of Scripture, whose teaching (or doctrine)—equips and completes us for every good work. ■

As many as **1 in 3** churchgoers have not embraced basic truths that are considered fundamental to the Christian faith.

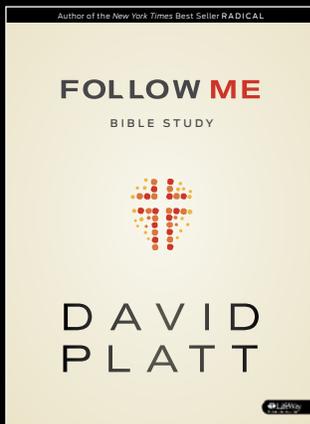
- Transformational Discipleship Research

Ed Stetzer is president of LifeWay Research.

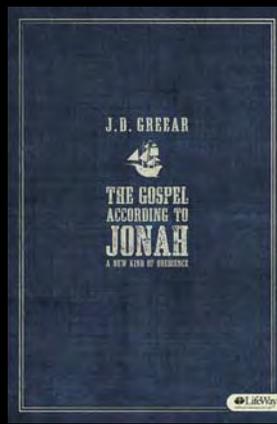


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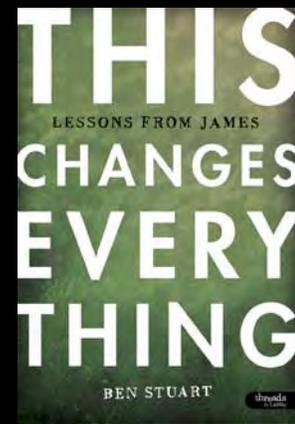
Want help finding your group's next study? Bible Study Insider gives you that and more—VIP access to our newest resources, tips and advice for improving your groups, and other ways to connect to the best from LifeWay.



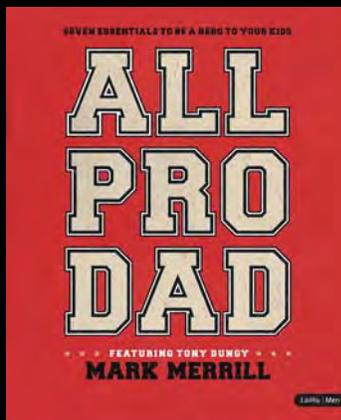
Lead your group or entire church to fuel their affection for God, to share His love, to spread His glory, and to make other disciple makers.



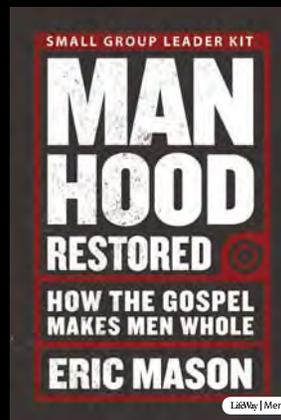
See how God pursues us, despite our missteps and disobedience, and channel this revelation into a greater passion for evangelism.



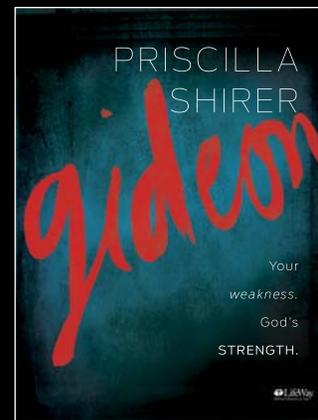
Examine the teachings of James, the half-brother of Jesus, and see how a total change in identity leads to a natural change in activity.



Discover the seven fundamentals to help you expand your capacity to love and, in turn, to lead in your most important job—being a dad.



Explore the concept of biblical masculinity and get practical steps to walk in gospel-centered manhood in key areas of life.



Learn to recognize your weakness as the key that the Lord gives you to unlock the full experience of His strength in your life.



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