

ANATOMY OF A REVIVED PASTOR

*Traits of Pastors Who Have
Gone from Discouraged to
Difference-Making*

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 **CHURCH ANSWERS**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

4 MOTIVATIONS OF REVIVED PASTORS

15 LESSONS FROM REVIVED PASTORS

CONCLUSION

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INTRODUCTION

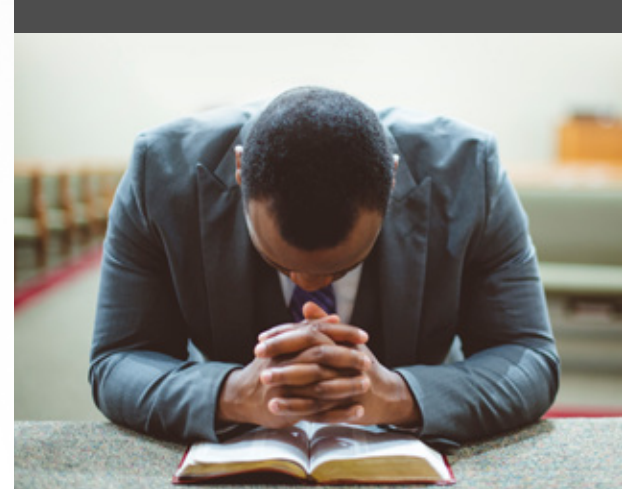
More than any time in my nearly forty years of vocational ministry, I see tired and discouraged pastors. Some of the weariness and discouragement came from the pandemic of 2020 and 2021. Some of it is just the life of a pastor. You see, pastors have big expectations placed upon them by their members. For many, the only way they can satisfy some members is to be omnipresent, omniscient, and omni-competent.

How do pastors move from days of doldrums to days of victories? The answer is profound in its simplicity. They focus much of their time on reaching outside the walls of the church. This outward focus is key.

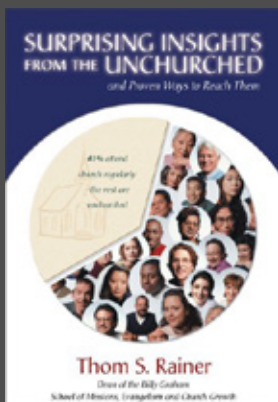
We took the previous research of a massive project about pastors who reached the unchurched and combined it with updated conversations with pastors. The research and its footnotes are in an older book called

Surprising Insights from the Unchurched if you want to see an expanded version of this information.

At times you will read the conversations we had with pastors. At other times you will read interviews with the formerly unchurched. This latter group is an incredible sampling of men and women who became Christians and active in the church after years of lostness and no church connection.



More than any time in my nearly forty years of vocational ministry, I see tired and discouraged pastors.



The blended perspective of pastors and the formerly unchurched paints a powerful picture. Simply stated, the key to moving from discouraged to difference-making was both a change in mindset and actions by these pastors. They started focusing more, significantly more, on sharing their faith and connecting with unchurched persons.

And here is the kicker: The pastors not only became revived, but their churches did as well. You will see that reality as you hear from the pastors and the unchurched they reached.

Let's move to their stories. But first, allow me to provide an introduction to my sons. I am sure you will understand the connection.

A TALE OF THREE SONS

I am the father of three great sons.

Of these three boys, Art is the quieter one. His relatively few comments are typically limited to funny one-liners unless he is focused on a new idea or creation. In the latter scenario he can become verbose.

When Art was a teenager, he developed a relationship over the course of two years with a young man I will call Alan. When Alan arrived as a new student in Art's school, Art took it upon himself to befriend this teenager who had no friends at the school. I cannot recall how many times Art would ask me questions about the Bible or the gospel, particularly if the questions arose in the context of his concern



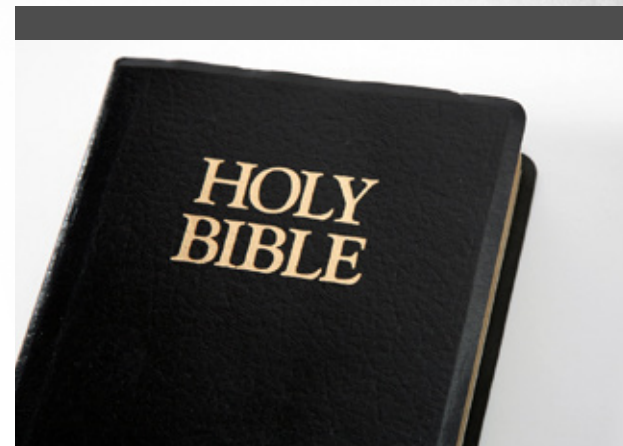
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for Alan. My son was intensely concerned about Alan's eternal destiny, for the young man readily admitted he was not a Christian.

Art was not alone in his concern for Alan's salvation. Some of Art's Christian friends joined in the attempts to witness to Alan. But, at least from a proud parent's perspective, it was Art to whom Alan was most drawn. And it was Art who provided the constant witness in lifestyle and words.

One early evening Art called me to come to his room, not a typical request for the then high school senior. My son pointed to a brand new, leather-bound study Bible on his bed. Alan had purchased the gift and left it in Art's car. Holding back tears, Art looked first at me, then at the Bible, then said quietly, "He's so close, Dad; he's so close." In a moment when I have rarely felt closer to my son, I prayed with him for Alan's salvation.

Art and his brothers, Sam and Jess, have a passion for lost persons. They have hearts to reach the unchurched. They believe that anyone who does not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is headed for an eternity in hell. Their theology drives their lives, and their hearts have a love for people that desires that none should perish.



Their theology drives their lives, and their hearts have a love for people that desires that none should perish.

A MODEL FOR DISCOURAGED PASTORS

It's tough serving as a pastor. For sure, there are many great moments for those who serve in this role, but the day-by-day work is filled with demands and, often, discouragement and criticism.

Our team wanted to learn from pastors who are fighting this discouragement well. We wanted to hear from these leaders who have moved from discouragement to difference-making. We found that most of these pastors have a passion for reaching the lost.

So, our interviews focused particularly on the role of pastors in reaching the unchurched. We also specifically interviewed formerly unchurched persons who were active in churches today. They left us with the clear message that pastors played a critical role in their accepting Christ and joining the church. Our focus is on the pastors' motivational drives. What makes these leaders tick?

After we have examined the four key motivational forces of the pastors for reaching the unchurched, we will have a fascinating look at the top fifteen lessons these pastors have learned in reaching the unchurched. For now, let us turn to the major driving force behind these pastors as they led their churches to reach the lost and unchurched.

Simply stated, these pastors were able to move from the doldrums of ministry to the victories of revival.

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THE THEOLOGY FACTOR

The church consultation was about to end in frustration. Not only was I, the consultant, frustrated, but so was the pastor whose church had retained me. I had been asked to come to the Texas church because of the church's twelve-year decline in attendance.

The demographics of the community were good. In the past ten years the population within a five-mile radius of the church had increased over 80 percent. The buildings were in good shape, and the visibility of the church on a major thoroughfare was the envy of other church leaders in town. But the church I was studying had declined from 1,300 in worship attendance to 700 in the past twelve years.

The consultation process includes a **church health inventory** devised by our consultation firm at Church Answers. We distributed the 160-question survey to at least 15 percent of the adult attendance. Several of the questions are theological in nature: Is Christ the only way of salvation? Can adherents of other religions go to heaven? Is hell a literal place?

When I received the results from this particular church, I knew I was in a precarious situation.



For a detailed, up-to-date demographic & psychographic report of your community, [click here.](#)

My clearly defined invitation was to discover the sociological problems with the church and offer a surefire prescription to remedy the dilemma. But this church had no major sociological barriers. And no quick-fix methodology would help their situation. But the surveys we had distributed were clear: the vast majority of the members did not believe that Christ was the only way of salvation, and almost 80 percent of the members did not believe in hell.

“Hal,” I said to the pastor, “the key issues I see in your church’s decline will not be corrected with new methods, buildings, or programs. The main problems are theological.” I then told the pastor of our survey results.

The frustration, even anger, that he expressed caught me off guard. Hal first talked about the “intolerant view” that held to one narrow way of salvation. He ridiculed the idea that a loving God would ever send someone to hell. “It’s a mythological place!” he exclaimed.

I tried to reason with Hal. “Look,” I said, “let’s put aside for the moment our theological differences. Can you really expect your members to evangelize if they believe in ways of salvation outside of Christ? Do you expect them to respond with passion and urgency if they believe in no eternal punishment?” My words were spoken in vain. Our discussion ended with Hal muttering something about not paying my consultation fee. That, I thought, was the least of my concerns.

“The key issues I see in your church’s decline will not be corrected with new methods, buildings, or programs. The main problems are theological.”

FOUR MOTIVATIONS OF REVIVED PASTORS

MOTIVATION #1

A THEOLOGY OF LOSTNESS

Revived pastors have a healthy theology of lostness.

With only one exception out of the 101 we interviewed, these leaders believed that John 14:6 is literally true: Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, and explicit faith in Him is imperative.

These leaders believed not only in the “salvation” emphasis; they also believed in the “lostness” factor. For most of these leaders, it is not enough to say that Jesus saves; they also believe that those who do not put their faith in Christ are eternally lost. Hell is a clear reality in this theology of lostness. The number one articulated motivational drive of these leaders was a theology that held that only Jesus saves, and anyone outside of Christ’s salvation is eternally damned.

This next story requires no fictitious names. With his reluctant permission, I tell the story of Al Jackson, the former pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church in Auburn, Alabama. Since Auburn University is the chief rival of my alma mater, the University of Alabama (mortal enemy may be a more accurate description of our true feelings), I am somewhat grieved to admit that anything good can come out of Auburn. But the heart of this pastor needs to be heard.

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A few years ago, I was having lunch with Pastor Jackson in an Auburn restaurant. Our conversation began with idle chatter until Al started talking about a man his church was trying to reach. The pastor's deep concern for this non-Christian was evident. Then the reality of the man's lostness seemed to hit Al, and tears welled in his eyes. Al spoke quietly with a broken voice, "I can't stand the thought of him dying without accepting Christ."

The clear and compelling motivational drive articulated by leaders like Al was a theology of lostness. No programs, methods, or approaches to ministry can substitute for a broken heart.

MOTIVATION #2

PASSION AND ENTHUSIASM

Revived pastors exude passion and enthusiasm.

The first motivation leads to the second. A broken heart for lost people engenders passion and enthusiasm for outreach. I do about 150 speaking engagements a year. Inevitably those who hear me speak learn something about my wife and three sons, because I am passionate and enthusiastic about my family. I have been told that my enthusiasm impacts others positively.

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Effective leaders are genuinely enthusiastic about reaching people for Christ. A Nazarene pastor in California shared with us: "I don't want to ever say that our evangelistic efforts depend on me. That would

take the focus off the author of salvation.” He paused for a moment, collecting his thoughts, then continued. “I have to say, though, when the congregation senses my enthusiasm to reach the unchurched, they tend to respond. And when I get distracted from focusing on the main things, the church tends to lose its focus as well.”

We asked all of these pastors to articulate the senior pastor’s role and responsibility in personal evangelism. Listen to the numerous comments related to modeling passion and enthusiasm:

“

“The senior pastor must model personal evangelism by being enthusiastic about developing relationships with the unchurched.”

“The senior pastor must always be passionate about reaching lost people. If he isn’t, who will be?”

“I am supposed to urge the people to be faithful and consistent to be bearers of the Good News. If I’m not excited about it, my congregation won’t be.”

“My key responsibility is to create an environment for evangelism by my enthusiasm for the task.”

“The lead pastor is first the inspirer, the exhorter, and the encourager for evangelism by his own enthusiasm.”

“The senior pastor must have a passion for the lost, be active in personal evangelism, and lead the staff and congregation by example.”

“If I’m not excited about [reaching the unreached], then most of the congregation will not give a rip about it.”

”

MOTIVATION #3

ACCOUNTABILITY IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Revived pastors hold themselves accountable in personal evangelism.

Many years ago, I served as dean of a seminary. As my fellow deans and the president of our seminary gathered for our weekly executive cabinet meeting on Wednesdays, Dr. Ted Cabal and I had a brief conversation before the meeting began. “How did you do this week?” Ted asked me. I responded by telling him about my gospel conversation with a server at a restaurant. “How about you, Ted?” I inquired next. He shared with me how he distributed tracts in an area of town and made himself available to anyone who had questions.

This weekly exercise, no more than five minutes in length, was a brief accountability session in which Ted and I shared with each other our endeavors in personal evangelism and reaching out to the unchurched. I must admit that there were a few times when I told Ted that I had not been faithful in sharing Christ. Just my articulation of such words was a sufficient rebuke to motivate me to get my priorities right for the upcoming week.

If there was a single characteristic that separated the revived pastors from the discouraged pastors, it was the issue of accountability in personal evangelism. Only two out of every hundred pastors in the comparison group (pastors that did not meet our criteria to be evan-



Revived pastors hold themselves accountable in personal evangelism.

gelistically revived) had established some type of accountability for their own personal evangelism. But 43 percent of the pastors of the effective churches had established such a relationship.

Leslie M., pastor of a fast-growing nondenominational church in Pennsylvania, emphasized the importance of an accountability relationship: “We have staff meetings every Monday morning. Before we even have prayer, all ministers share about their witnessing for the previous week. We do this before praying, because if a minister has not shared his or her faith during the week, he or she then has the opportunity to repent in prayer in front of the rest of us.”

MOTIVATION #4

EXCELLENCE IN ALL THINGS

The revived leaders will do whatever it takes, within the boundaries of Scripture, to reach the lost. And they realize that the unchurched have expectations of excellence if they make the bold step to visit a church.

Said an Assembly of God pastor: “We don’t want them to find mediocrity if they visit us. Besides, aren’t we supposed to be excellent in all things we attempt for God?”

Other leaders told us that an attitude of excellence engenders an atmosphere of excitement, which in turn encourages church members to invite their friends. A Southern Baptist deacon in Georgia told us. “For over twenty years we

“We don’t want them to find mediocrity if they visit us. Besides, aren’t we supposed to be excellent in all things we attempt for God?”

would never see more than two or three visitors a week, even though we held an average attendance of over three hundred during these years.” But those years, he said, preceded the arrival of Denzil T., the church’s current pastor. The deacon continued: “When Denzil came, he started emphasizing excellence in all things. In music, in our buildings, in our programs, in our grounds—you name it. He said that if we couldn’t do something excellent for God, then we shouldn’t do it at all.”

For several months, the attitude of excellence began to take hold in the church. The facilities started looking nicer. Someone volunteered to landscape the grounds. The musicians in the church became enthused about improving their ministries. This new attitude in turn excited the once struggling congregation. The deacon explained: “You know what I did for the first time in years? I invited my neighbor to church. I guess I was never really too excited about the church before now.”



For several months, the attitude of excellence began to take hold in the church.

FIFTEEN LESSONS FROM REVIVED PASTORS

What makes these leaders tick? What gives them a revived outlook? A theology of lostness. Passion and enthusiasm. Accountability in personal evangelism. Excellence in all things.

But what do these leaders do with their motivation? In the remainder of this book, we will look at fifteen lessons shared with us by these revived leaders.

LESSON 1: AUTHENTICITY

Over nine out of ten of the pastors interviewed told us that their own personal integrity was a major factor in reaching the unchurched “The unchurched look at leaders just like anybody else does,” said Sam P., A Methodist pastor from Texas. “if they don’t see authenticity in our own lives, how can they expect the church to be real?”

These revived leaders realize that they must demonstrate honesty and vulnerability from the pulpit and in conversations with the unchurched. Sam elaborated further: “On occasion, I let the people know of my own struggles and weaknesses. I don’t believe I should be confessional frequently, but it lets the unchurched know we’re humans just like they are.”



One related issue to authenticity that arose frequently was the appropriate use of humor by the pastor. “I tell you,” an opinionated pastor told us, “you find a church that’s reaching people, and you’ll find a church that laughs together. A preacher doesn’t have to be a clown, but he sure needs a sense of humor.”

LESSON 2: THE IMPERATIVE OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

A Southern Baptist pastor from Louisiana stated bluntly: “So you’re now doing a study on the unchurched? You probably won’t quote me on this, then, but I think most church leaders are basically stupid about reaching the unchurched. You know what they need to do? Tell lost people about Jesus. Witness to them. I mean, what kind of idiot expects to reach lost people without telling them about Jesus?”

Almost nine out of ten church leaders affirmed what 75 percent of the formerly unchurched told us. Without an intentional, organized effort to share the gospel with non-Christians, most lasting efforts to reach the unchurched are in vain. The comments of Earl B., a formerly unchurched man from Tampa, Florida, are instructive: “I thank God that my church sent people out to share Jesus with me. I thank God they were trained how to share the gospel with me. I thank God they loved me enough to be obedient to the Lord.”

You know what
they need to do?
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Witness to them.

LESSON 3: RELATIONSHIPS AGAIN

Much of what the leaders said confirms our earlier material from the unchurched. More than eight out of ten of the pastors we interviewed indicated their keen awareness of the impact of reaching the unchurched through relationships. The struggle articulated by many of these leaders, however, was the “how” of encouraging such relationships. Though no one simple response was given, there seems to be agreement that church members are hesitant to invite people to church, to develop relationships with the unchurched, if they are not excited about their own church and their own walk with God.

The development of relationships with the unchurched, it seems cannot be programmed. Such relationships are the result of the “overflow” of God’s presence in a Christian’s life.

LESSON 4: AN ATMOSPHERE OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

The revived leaders with whom we spoke were highly motivated to lead their churches to become havens of love and acceptance for the unchurched. A Nevada pastor told us: “The stories of hurting people who come to our church are incredible. We have no advertising budget, but people just keep coming. We do not compromise our beliefs whatsoever. But we do tell people over and over again that Jesus accepted them where they were, that He forgives sinners.”

A Wesleyan pastor shared the compelling story of a woman who simply showed up at their church with the unusual greeting, “Billy Graham sent me.” Upon further inquiry, the pastor heard an amazing story.

Gloria S. was ready to take her life. She had untold numbers of prescription drugs that she had saved for this moment. Her life was a heart-wrenching story of drug abuse, failed relationships, and multiple rejections. Gloria turned on the television lest any apartment neighbors hear her make any noises as the drugs did their deadly work.

In the sovereignty of God, the television turned on to a Billy Graham crusade. A telephone number was on the bottom of the screen for anyone needing help. Gloria called the number before she took the pills.

The wise counselor for the Graham organization recognized that Gloria was suicidal. She told Gloria to find help immediately, then connect with a church. The Wesleyan church was on the list of churches the Graham organization had that were near Gloria.

Gloria decided to put off her suicide and try the church the next day; after all the next day was Sunday. Again, in God's perfect timing, Gloria ran into the pastor just before the worship service began. "Billy Graham sent me," she told him.

"Billy Graham saved me from killing myself," Gloria told us, "but my church showed me how to be saved from my sins." What was it about the church that made Gloria want to listen to them? "The love of the people was incredible. I never knew someone as dirty as me could ever receive love again. The people accepted me just as I was." She paused for a moment, then continued. "I have seen Jesus. He is in the faces of all these people who love me."

"I have seen Jesus.
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LESSON 5: THE PASTOR MUST MODEL

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Some pastors learned the hard way, they told us. They tried the latest church-growth model, attended conferences, and bought books on the church, but they still had anemic results in reaching the unchurched.

Over seven out of ten of the revived pastors we interviewed shared with us the critical importance of their modeling personal evangelism. Said Wesley, a nondenominational pastor from Michigan: “I used to beat up the people pretty badly from the pulpit. Then God convicted me that we would never reach the unchurched unless I myself was obedient to the Great Commission. It seems like we reach people for Christ when I’m obedient; and it seems like the church is dead when I’m disobedient.”

LESSON 6: ENTHUSIASM AND JOY ARE PRESENT IN

CHURCHES THAT REACH THE UNCHURCHED

“You’ll never go into a church that’s reaching people,” the Evangelical Free Church pastor told us, “unless there’s a lot of joy and enthusiasm present. It feeds on itself. A joyous church motivates people to invite the unchurched. And when the unchurched are reached, the joy grows. It’s a great cycle!”



The obvious question, of course, is how the cycle ever begins. Different revived leaders offered different insights.

“

“It begins when the pastor becomes personally evangelistic.”

“In our church the right atmosphere was created after we got serious about prayer.”

“When I [the pastor] spend enough time in sermon preparation, God seems to honor the worship services with His presence.”

“If you provide ways for people to grow as Christians, they will be more joyous.”

”

LESSON 7: DO NOT COMPROMISE THE ESSENTIALS

“Yeah, I went through a phase in ministry that I called ‘Bible-lite’ years. I dumbed down my preaching and didn’t ask much of the people out of fear that I’d offend them. Big mistake! Our back door opened wide,” a pastor from Oklahoma exclaimed.

We heard similar stories from over 60 percent of the pastors we interviewed. Not only does an unchallenging message fail to attract the unchurched, but we learned from the formerly unchurched that

such an approach actually deters them from returning. The formerly unchurched are attracted to churches with a strong belief system.

“It seems like there are two groups out there arguing how to reach lost people,” an Indiana pastor told us. “On the one hand, you’ve got the seeker-movement people who devise a bunch of methods to reach the unchurched. Then you’ve got the strong doctrinal group that says preach the Word faithfully and God will reach these people.”

But this pastor had come to his own conclusion: “I’ll tell you what I do. I won’t compromise a lick of doctrine to reach the unchurched, but I’ll also do everything we can with methods, programs, and ideas to reach them. As I see the Bible, it doesn’t teach either/or; it teaches both/and.”

LESSON 8: HAVE SMALL-GROUP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

While some church leaders debate the best type of small group, most of them agree that some type of small-group organization must be in place both to reach and to assimilate the unchurched. A number of church leaders viewed their small-group organization as indispensable in reaching the unchurched.

Some of the leaders in our study favored Sunday school as their primary expression of small groups, but most of them saw the outreach potential of numerous types of groups.



Greg M., a pastor from Kentucky, probably the most loquacious interviewee we encountered, insisted that all small-group leaders in his church report to a team captain every other week. “Accountability is the key,” Greg spoke before we asked the question. “When we tell our small-group leaders that their groups are responsible for reaching out, they nod and say okay. But when we tell them they will have a report session every two weeks, they really get moving!”

LESSON 9: REACHING PEOPLE IN CRISIS

A significant number of the formerly unchurched told us that their first reason for visiting a church was a crisis in their lives. Donna C. was dealing with the tragedies of her divorce and subsequent financial struggles. It was Donna’s mother who influenced her daughter to visit a certain church, but it was Donna’s crisis that gave her a desire to seek to fill a void in her life.

One factor is certain about the leaders of these churches that reach the unchurched: They are highly creative in their attempts to reach the unchurched. A Baptist church in West Virginia has a hospital ministry to new mothers, an attempt to reach these young families in their “positive crisis.”

A West Coast Evangelical Free Church has reached more unchurched through its crisis pregnancy ministry than any other approach.



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are more likely to
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And a Wesleyan church in the Midwest offers its beautiful sanctuary to prospective newlyweds at a very modest fee – but only if they agree to four sessions of premarital counseling.

The lesson is clear: the unchurched are more likely to seek a church at a point of crisis. Innovative churches have discovered ways to have a presence in these crisis moments.

LESSON 10: REACHING THE UNCHURCHED THROUGH QUALITY CHILDCARE

In my role as a church consultant, I tell church leaders that quality preschool and children’s facilities are imperative. Bright and safe modern rooms with new furniture, equipment, and toys, along with unquestionable security features, are demanded by discerning parents today, including unchurched parents.

Well over half of the revived leaders we interviewed indicated their strategy to reach the unchurched through quality childcare. “Parents today want the best for their children,” indicated an independent Baptist pastor from Louisiana. “It is amazing how much they care for the spiritual well-being of their children but neglect themselves in this area,” he said. “We decided to allocate heavy dollar resources into updating our preschool and children’s wing. Boy, has it paid off! We’re now reaching many of these young families who have no church background,” he exclaimed.



We received mixed opinions from the church leaders about the effectiveness of a “mom’s day out,” a daycare, or a five-day preschool as an evangelistic tool.

Some leaders indicated that these ministries typically lose their evangelistic focus and cater to Christians only. Others said the ministries tend to become a tail wagging the dog. But still some said that, with highly intentional efforts, these weekday ministries can be evangelistically effective.

LESSON 11: FOCUS EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Our research team’s studies indicate that 81 percent of those who accept Christ do so before the age of twenty. Whether this number is an indicator of receptivity to the gospel at a young age or the ineffectiveness of the church to reach adults, the case for focusing evangelistic resources on young people is compelling.

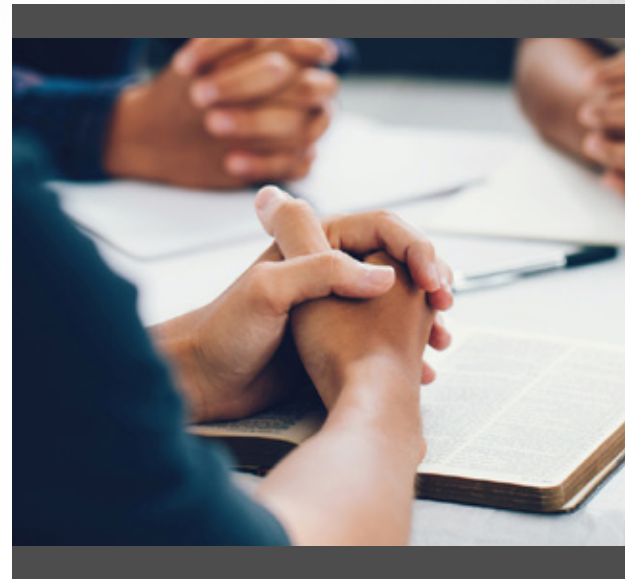
Noted a nondenominational church pastor from Minnesota, “We don’t neglect the adults, but we have seven specific ministries a year designed to reach teens and children.” Over one-half of the pastors indicated that their churches had specific strategies to reach children and youth, the largest unchurched group in America.



LESSON 12: UTILIZE A DISCOVERY CLASS TO REACH THE UNCHURCHED

In a previous study, our research team found that new member's classes were highly effective tools in closing the back door. Many leaders of the effective churches told us that they use these classes for dual purposes: entry into membership and an inquiry class for prospective members including the unchurched.

Such an approach makes sense in light of the strong desire of the formerly unchurched to learn doctrine, to know more about the church, and to learn biblical issues. While some leaders of churches created two separate classes, almost all of those we interviewed indicated the ease by which one class can be used for two purposes.



LESSON 13: FIND AN EVANGELISTIC LEADER

“I have been the senior pastor of four churches in thirty-two years,” the Southern Baptist pastor from Texas told us. “In every church, I’ve looked for and prayed for someone who is passionate about evangelism. God has answered my prayers. And when you turn that person loose, the gates of hell begin to fall.”

Four out of ten revived pastors we interviewed indicated that through an intentional process or by an unsought blessing, an evangelistic

leader has emerged. “You wouldn’t believe the difference it makes in the church,” the pastor told us, “when you have both the pastor and a key layperson being evangelistic champions.”

Yes, we would believe it.

LESSON 14: MARKETING TOOLS ALONE ARE INEFFECTIVE

I frequently come in contact with people whose primary vocation is to sell marketing tools to churches. Their products are quality products: direct-mail pieces, visitor cards, and response letters to name a few. And every marketing person whom I have met tells prospective purchasers that such tools are to be used in conjunction with a comprehensive evangelistic strategy.

But some of the revived leaders confessed their own mistakes of depending on marketing tools alone. “I went four years in ministry trying to find a quick fix,” a North Carolina pastor told us. “I’ve learned my lesson. There is no substitute for concerted prayer, godly obedience, and a lot of hard work!”

“I’ve learned my lesson. There is no substitute for concerted prayer, godly obedience, and a lot of hard work!”

LESSON 15: PATIENCE IS REQUIRED

We rarely met or interviewed church leaders who said that becoming a revived pastor was easy. Many expressed to us their seasons of dryness, growth plateau or decline, and frustration. We heard stories of how a number of these leaders felt like they could not continue in their place of ministry.

Yet those who remained faithful and persistent in their places of ministry told us about breakthroughs on some occasions and slow but steady growth at other times.

Becoming a revived pastor who reaches the unchurched world, they said, is hard work. It requires a life of prayer and an evangelistic spirit. It also requires leadership skills, and many of the church leaders shared with us that they found themselves ill-equipped to lead their churches. Leadership is vital, they said, but many were not prepared. So these leaders not only sought to be more outwardly focused; they also sought to become better leaders.



Becoming a revived pastor who reaches the unchurched world, they said, is hard work.

THE REVIVED PASTOR: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A revived pastor is an outwardly focused pastor. Revived pastors are doing the messy work of intentionally reaching the lost and unchurched. Revived pastors focus on others rather than themselves.

In this post-COVID world, there is a lot of frustration and discouragement. Pastors are clearly among those who are frustrated and discouraged.

But take a look again at these pastors who moved from discouragement to difference-making. The key characteristic was their outward focus. They shared their faith with intentionality. They developed relationships with the unchurched. They kept the focus on evangelism in their churches.

There was no magic formula these pastors used to have a different outlook and a renewed focus. They simply and obediently focused more on reaching others. The key word in all they did was *intentionality*.

And since there was no magic formula, you too can make the move from discouragement to difference-making. Remember how Jesus responded when He saw the masses of people without hope: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the



A revived pastor
is an outwardly
focused pastor.

Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields” (Matthew 9:36-38).

That’s it. That’s the “secret.” Get into the harvest fields. Focus outwardly. Do so with intentionality.

You will influence lives eternally for good.

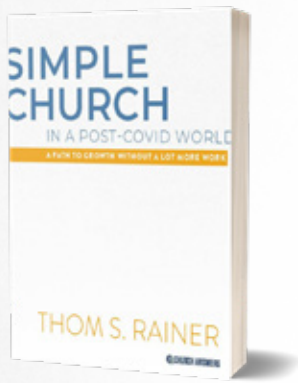
And if you are discouraged, your attitude will change.

You will become a difference-maker.

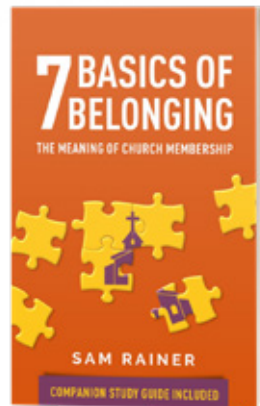


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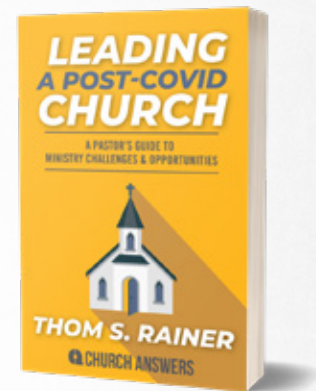
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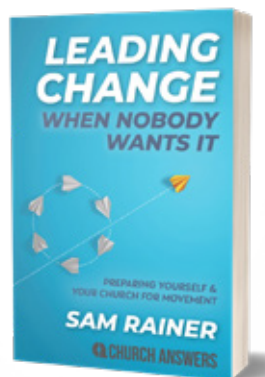
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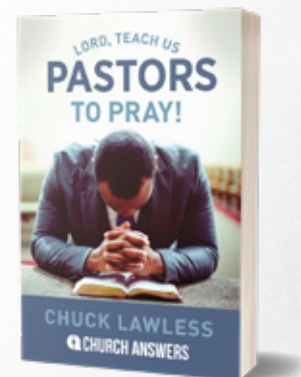
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