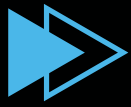


THE DISMAL STATE OF *Evangelism* IN THE CHURCH

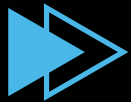
ADPOTED FROM THE CAREY NIEUWHOF LEADERSHIP PODCAST

EVANGELISM TODAY

Many church leaders admit their churches are not effective in outreach, with only 1% of pastors believing their churches are effective in evangelism.



Traditional evangelism methods might not be as effective today due to cultural shifts and increased skepticism about past beliefs.



A new approach to evangelism is needed, one that accepts ambiguity and doesn't pressure for immediate "deal closure".

Changing The Cultural Landscape

Churches must adjust to a society where people question their past experiences, including Christian schools, and revisit decisions made during emotional moments.

The process of conversion should involve a relational approach, recognizing the complexities of people's pasts, questions, and experiences, especially as the culture has shifted.

Ambiguity in Discipleship:



Discipleship shouldn't be about forcing a person to be sanctified before they can follow Jesus; rather, it should make it easy for people to come as they are.



Discipleship should focus on lifelong faith development, not just initial conversion.



Churches should be more supportive in helping individuals grow in their faith throughout different stages of life.



Jesus showed a high tolerance for ambiguity, and churches should follow suit, allowing people to grow and learn at their own pace without forcing immediate answers.

THE CHURCH'S CHALLENGE

The church is often not seen as a welcoming space for people who are curious or questioning their faith.

A shift is needed in how pastors and church leaders approach spiritual conversations, moving away from trying to "close the deal" with every interaction.

Adapting Church Services:

The weekend service should involve more real-life testimonies from laypeople to make faith relatable. It's important to engage spiritually curious people by offering thoughtful, respectful conversations rather than presenting a "right or wrong" narrative.

Many people are not "post-Christian" but "pre-Christian," having little to no concept of Jesus, making conversations about faith more exploratory than apologetic.

INCORPORATING LAY PEOPLE IN EVANGELISM

To overcome skepticism, church leaders should integrate the testimonies of regular churchgoers (laypeople), emphasizing that the story of Jesus is not just shared by paid professionals but by transformed believers from all walks of life.

- Embrace the "priesthood of all believers" by encouraging laypeople to **share their testimonies**, making their stories a central part of evangelism. Laypeople's **personal stories** are impactful and relatable for non-believers,
- helping to bridge the gap between the church and the spiritually curious. **Stories of transformation**, such as those of people experiencing healing or overcoming trauma, can make God's work more tangible for those outside
- the faith.

Encouraging Authenticity:

Leaders should share their own personal stories of faith and healing from trauma, as people are increasingly hungry for raw, authentic narratives that demonstrate God's active presence in the world.

SPIRITUAL CURIOSITY AND EVANGELISM

Spirituality Beyond Religion

There's an increasing trend of people seeking spirituality through things like meditation, tarot cards, or other non-Christian practices. Many are looking for fulfillment, purpose, and wholeness but are still open to spiritual growth.

Common Ground

Spiritual curiosity can also be sparked by seeing the fruitfulness and intimacy with Jesus in others' lives. The way people live out their faith—whether in relationships, marriages, or personal growth—can draw others to explore the deeper source of that transformation.

Spiritual curiosity can be a bridge for conversations about Jesus. People are seeking more compassion, justice, intimacy, and creativity. By connecting these desires with the gospel, Christians can point others toward the ultimate fulfillment found in Jesus.

CREATING A GENUINE SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

True evangelism involves building a relational, caring foundation, not just presenting information or theological arguments.

1

There is a growing mistrust of authority figures, including pastors, among some congregants, particularly the younger generation.

People are seeking authentic relationships with others who truly care about them, and this provides a basis for sharing the gospel and introducing them to Jesus.

2

3

Pastors and Christians should engage with others with genuine curiosity, not with a goal to convert but to understand their lives and experiences. When people sense this genuine interest, they often become more open to spiritual conversations and the gospel.

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS FOR LEADERS:

1.

For pastors and leaders, it's crucial to prioritize time and space to connect with others personally, especially outside of ministry roles, to foster genuine relationships and create opportunities to share faith naturally.

2.

People in ministry (and beyond) should find a personal hobby or interest that connects them to others outside of the church, where they can foster authentic relationships and engage meaningfully with those who might not be in their faith circles.

3.

Developing genuine curiosity about others' lives can lead to growth and new insights, especially for pastors who can use this to connect with their congregations.

Let others influence how you spend your time (like reading a book they recommend). This can lead to discovering new ideas and perspectives you wouldn't have otherwise encountered.

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