



5 LAWS

of Successful Outreach

BY VANESSA J. CHANDLER

The steady decline of church membership in the United States has prompted many to ask, “Is the church dying?” According to Newsweek, 68 percent of people believe “religion is losing influence in American society.” In addition, Pew Forum’s “Faith in Flux” published that 44 percent of Americans no longer belong to their childhood faith. The good news is that, contrary to what some may believe, the church is not dying. It is experiencing what we might call a rebirth. To remain relevant in this day and age, the walls of traditional ministry must come down. If people are no longer coming to church, the body of Christ must be willing to go to them.

A number of churches have already begun reconceptualizing ministry. Not only are they reaching beyond their four walls, but they are also thinking outside the traditional box.

The Five Laws

1. Know the specific demographic you are called to impact and serve.

2. Find a need in your community and meet it.
3. Teach a message that is biblically sound and culturally relevant.
4. Put together a team of intercessors who will fuel your outreach efforts with prayer.
5. Partner with other ministries to create a greater and lasting impact.

Churches Leading the Way with Innovation

HOPE CENTER

Pastors: Ty and Terri Schenzel

How many they reach: 300-400 weekly

Where: Omaha, Nebraska

Approach: Their center provides a family atmosphere for kids and young adults which includes after school and weekend programs, hot meals, tutoring, youth meetings, fun and games, and a roller rink night.

Core Value: Hope. “To the one that lives in hopelessness, consequences mean nothing” (neighborhood resident).

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MOSAIC

Pastor: Adrian Koehler

How many they reach: 3,000 weekly (approximately 30 percent are unsaved)

Where: Los Angeles, California

Approach: The Mayan, a night club, is rented one night per week for Mosaic's fellowship of artists, DJ's, original bands, hip-hop dancers, speakers, food, and more. Everything is original; drawing on the Holy Spirit, and believing that creativity is the natural result of spirituality.

Core Value: Missions. "[This] is why the church exists" (Mosaic's mantra).

INFINITY CHURCH

Pastor: Dimas Salaberrios

How many they reach: 200-400 monthly (approximately 40 percent are unsaved)

Where: South Bronx, New York

Approach: Friday Night Live. At each Friday Night Live event, the gospel is presented using comedy, hip-hop dancers, poetry slams, and by providing biblical answers to cultural issues.

Core Value: Relevance. "Preach the gospel true to text while still being relevant to the culture" (Pastor Dimas).

BETHEL CHURCH

Pastor: Chris Overstreet

How many they reach: 1,000+ weekly

Where: Redding, California

Approach: Treasure Hunts. After praying and asking God what He would like them to do, teams of various sizes are sent into the city. They create a list which includes where they should go, who they might see, and what they should do. For example, "Wal-Mart, a woman wearing a green hat; needs prayer for cancer."

Core Value: Love. "People are not projects, and God's love isn't religious. It transcends people's failures and mistakes and pulls out their greatness and destiny." (Chris Overstreet, Outreach Pastor).

After having a radical conversion to Christ, Chris sought God's "signs" versus His love. However, an experience while preaching at a crusade in South Africa changed his life. "God asked me," Chris recalls, "Are you going to pray for them to see another miracle, or because you love them?"

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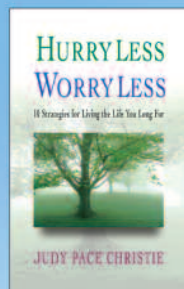
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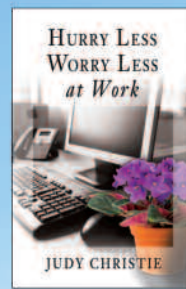
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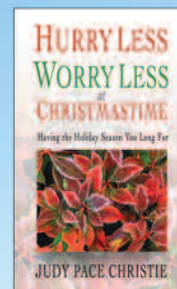
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