



(Note: Though this research was done in America, it has application to churches everywhere)

We just released some new evangelism research. Here are some excerpts from the article.

Unchurched adults interested in finding a congregation aren't nearly as likely to visit one in person as a church member who is shopping for a new congregation. That means effective evangelism must begin outside the sanctuary in relationships between Christians and unbelievers, according to research from several recent studies from LifeWay Research...

"The location of our evangelism needs to shift if we want to reach the unchurched and not just move sheep around," said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. "At LifeWay Research we want to encourage churches to grow through conversion. To do that, they must not rely only on the unchurched visiting our churches. Church switchers are primarily the ones who visit churches. The unchurched stay home..."

"So, if you build your outreach on recruiting and reaching church visitors you will often build a church on church switchers," he said.

Stetzer continued, "For several decades we have focused on come and see, invest and invite, bring your friends to church by attracting them with a great program. We call that attractional ministry. Now we are facing the reality that fewer unchurched people are willing to visit a

Christian church.

"This will compel us to embrace a go and tell – or incarnational – approach," he said. "Should we invite our friends to church? Sure. But should we be, do, and tell the Gospel to people in culture? You bet. It is not only biblical, but it is even more essential today as our culture grows increasingly resistant to the church."

While unchurched people are open to relationships, few church members are intentionally investing time developing relationships with non-Christians. A soon-to-be published 2007 survey of more than 2,500 adult church members found only 25 percent agreed they "spend time building friendships with non-Christians for the purpose of sharing Christ with them." A full 38 percent actually disagreed with the statement and 36 percent were noncommittal about it.

"Too often the way our churches measure success revolves around what happens at church when we ought to be focusing on what happens in building intentional relationships with those far from Christ," McConnell said. "Some of the activities on our church calendars may actually be preventing effective evangelism by keeping believers away from the people they need to reach."

"Believers must resolve to step into their world to share the Good News with them," Stetzer explained. "If we are waiting for them to someday walk into our churches, that someday may never come."

"We have tried that approach for decades – many church buildings/services are looking great. They have new looks, new music and new strategies," he added. "We have gone to great length to fix up the barn, but the wheat is still not harvesting itself. I believe we must move from attractional 'come and see' ministry to incarnational 'go and tell' and join Jesus in the harvest fields all around us."

From edstetzer.com