



Renewing The Church

By Dan Schaffer

It has become increasingly clear that the church is losing its impact on the culture and its ability to reproduce committed believers in younger generations.

What has caused this? Does the Church understand its mission? What really is God's mission for the church? Have we altered the mission of the church to reaching "seekers"? If we have lost the mission for the church how has this affected the impact of the church on the culture?

I recently finished reading three books: [The Celtic Way of Evangelism](#) by George G. Hunter III, [Unchristian](#) by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, and [Reveal](#) by Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson

The [Celtic Way of Evangelism](#) describes how the believers maintained the cultural traditions of the community within the church. The villagers were so attracted by the relationships being built within the church that many of them would join the church before even hearing the Gospel message. The Gospel would then be presented via the culture.

[Unchristian](#) discusses the idea that our young people, ages 16 to 29, view the church as hypocritical, focused only on conversions, anti-homosexual, sheltered, too political, judgmental, and confusing. 40% of this age group view themselves as outsiders to the church, yet most feel that the Christian lifestyle offers them nothing. 82% have gone to a Christian church at some time in their life, most for at least 3 months. 65% have made a commitment to Christ, yet after they made this profession, they observed the other Christians to be immature and "worldly" while being told that they should have a much higher standard of behavior. Many of them rejected the Church and the Christian faith.

The Church has essentially inoculated them from mentors and a true transforming encounter with the gospel. Only 3% of this younger age group maintain a biblical world-view. This suggests we have essentially lost a whole generation.

The study in [Reveal](#) detailed how the "seeker" church environment guarantees immunization to maturity. Many of the more mature men and women were stalled in their growth and now seriously considering leaving the church altogether.

For a number of years I had this image of the American church – a church sanctuary filled with 200 pound spiritual babies to whom we are frantically trying to deliver warm milk and clean up their mess. We are judging our success by how many babies we have in the pews. But the critical question is, "Do babies ever reproduce?"

Young people in "seeker" churches are making a profession of faith that are primarily "fire" insurance. They are in contact with baby Christians (not significantly matured or transformed). This confirms for them that the church really has no spiritual transforming power. The church itself is keeping them from an encounter with the living Christ. So, how do we reach this generation that is thoroughly convinced that they have "been there" and tried that...and it doesn't work"?

First and foremost, it is essential that we go back and reconfirm God's mission for the church. Ephesians 4: 11-12, *"And He gave to some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the Body of Christ, until we all attain unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."*

Simply said, isn't God's primary mission for the church...to build up God's people until they become mature, serving, loving, which then will draw the outsiders into relationship with Christ and His Church? Even more simply...bring God's people to maturity...they will **reproduce their faith in others!**

Next, the mature believers must provide a pathway that leads God's people from spiritual childhood to spiritual mother and fatherhood. If this is true, then we should take a deeper look at the Celtic way of evangelism and build a community of mature Christians who are living in a Christ-like manner. We need to understand the culture, the language, and the stories of this generation. We should serve them well and invite them into our faith communities to experience true Christianity. We should help them, in their language (culture), understand their experiences and give them the opportunity to know Christ and to mature. This could be the only way that we can effectively reach this generation that is substantially inoculated from responding to the church.

The last question we must ask is...can this process be done without spiritually mature men (spiritual fathers)? The answer is...that it cannot. A recent survey by George Barna states emphatically that men are absent from the church. If we are to see the Church renewed and its impact restored, we must build men until they know Christ intimately and are reproducing subsequent generations as passionate followers of Christ. The church must build men who understand the importance of the mission and are living in community where Christ is "experienced."

For the Church to be reproductive (intergenerational and impacting society) it must refocus on God's mission and build men to restore the reproductive power of the church. This is the challenge, and the stakes are high!

The mission of Building Brothers is to serve the Church as she builds her men into spiritual fathers! Spiritual fathers are essential in meeting the crisis of the church. Our primary resource is "The Four Phase Process." This "process" leads the Pastor and key leaders in removing the barriers between other men and God, freeing the Spirit of God to work. Men gain a passion for God. They are relational to other men, drawing them into the faith community and they actively serve the church. They are spiritual fathers - reproducing spiritual children who mature and reproduce.

This community of mature spiritual men is one of the foundations of the Celtic method of evangelism, outreach to young adults, the restoration, and the revival of the church.



Financial Support

As Building Brothers continues to move forward "serving" the Church and helping it build Spiritual Fathers, we need your **financial help!**

This year we have had a couple unusual circumstances impact us:

- (1) We purchased \$10,000 (1/4 the retail cost) in Video Conferencing Equipment to help us more effectively train and "certify" field resources as Four Phase Trainers across the US. We feel the use of this technology will really save us significant \$ and time as we move forward.
- (2) Several Key Building Brothers Field Events scheduled in 2008 are now pushed into 2009. We performed over 14 Leadership Training and Phase Training Events in 2007 with about the same number expected in 2008. However, approximately 6 of these 2008 Events "moved" into 2009 and our cash income has not met Budget. We do expect 2009 to be more active than our exciting 2007 year. It must be in Gods timing!

Building Brothers is structured to generally fund itself through our Training Events, the sale of our materials and **gifts from donors** who believe in helping us support churches in building Spiritual Fathers.

Would you please consider a donation to Building Brothers this month...**we need your help!**

Thank you for your support!
 The Building Brothers Team

Current One Year Four-Phase Training Locations

Fort Collins, Colorado
 Alliance, Nebraska
 Littleton, Colorado
 Denver, Colorado
 Page, Arizona
 Prescott, Arizona
 Montrose, Colorado
 Colorado Springs, Colorado
 Albuquerque, New Mexico

United Methodist Church
 Wichita, Kansas
 Salina, Kansas
 Jackson, Tennessee
 Collierville, Tennessee

Church of God, 7th Day
 Spokane, Washington
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