

# 10 Ways to Reach More People Without Investing a Dime

So you want your church to accomplish its mission and reach people.

But so often in church leadership, it's easy to believe growth can't really happen unless you spend money on some new initiatives.

And that leaves a lot of church leaders stuck. Why? Because the vast majority of churches are underfunded, not over-funded.

Faced with a lack of resources, too many church leaders throw in the towel and believe growth isn't possible.

But that's a fallacy.

Vision always precedes resources. If you're waiting for people and money to show up so you can get on with your mission, you'll wait forever.

So how do you start growing now, even with zero dollars?

Here are 10 ways.

## 1. Exude more passion

It's amazing to me how little passion many church leaders exude.

We have the most *amazing* mission on planet earth. And we have a generation of young adults in front of us who want to give their lives to a cause that's bigger than themselves.

Yet it's easy to believe that the only way to reach the next generation is by spending money on lights, gear and sound. As I outlined [in this post](#), that's just not true.

You don't need a polished church to reach the next generation nearly as much as you need a passionate church. Because when it comes to reaching the next generation, passion beats polish.

## 2. Cut the weird

Christians can be socially weird.

Too often, we use unnecessarily weird language—like this:

“This is good coffee, brother.”

“Amen. Hallelujah.”

Why not just talk at church the way you talk at the office or at a football game or on a Saturday by the pool? (Actually, if you talk like *that* normally, you probably don't get invited out too often.)

Here's what's actually at stake: if someone has to learn code to join your church, you likely won't have many people joining your church.

Our challenge is to *reduce* the human barriers that keep people from Jesus, not to erect new ones.

And, no, being weird does not mean you're being faithful. It just means you're being weird.

### **3. Expand your vision**

Vision is a leader's best friend, and it's free.

After two decades of leading and communicating in the local church, I am convinced it is impossible to overstate or overestimate the vision of the church. As Bill Hybels has said, the local church really is the hope of the world.

If you don't dream big dreams for your church, who will?

If you don't communicate big vision for your church, who will?

### **4. Encourage people to fall in love with your mission, not your methods**

The reason change is so difficult in many churches is because members fall in love with methods, not with mission.

A method is a way of doing things: programs the church runs, the style of music, the architecture of a building or facility, a staffing or governance model.

Those are all simply methods that can and should change with every generation or even more frequently.

The mission is what you're doing (like reaching people with the love and hope of Jesus), and it never changes.

The more you focus on the mission, the easier it is to change the methods.

### **5. Smile more**

I know 'smile more' sounds trivial. But just look around you. Hardly anyone smiles.

If the Gospel is good news, you would never know it from looking at many Christians.

I have to remind myself when I communicate to smile more. It's not my natural facial expression.

A smile can make a huge difference in almost any relationship.

So smile more and remind your people to smile more. Honestly, this makes a huge difference in how people perceive you.

## **6. Stop fighting**

I have no statistics on this, but my guess is in-fighting has killed more churches than moral failure has.

Christians, it's hard to convince the world that God loves it when we constantly fight with each other.

If your church is fighting, there should be zero mystery as to why it isn't growing.

## **7. Pay much better attention to first- time guests**

I've never heard of a church whose members claimed they were unfriendly.

In fact, most church members are stumped as to why people don't like their church because they're so 'friendly.'

But being a 'friendly' church can often mean you're friendly to each other, not to guests.

Change that.

Make sure guests feel genuinely appreciated, welcomed and that their questions are answered. This does NOT mean making them stand up in the service or other socially awkward things like that (see point 2 above).

It does mean treating guests the way they want to be treated.

## **8. Treat your volunteers better**

Many leaders fall into the trap of thinking that great leadership comes only when you can hire a great staff.

Nonsense.

You have a great team—they're called your volunteers. And as [I outlined in this post](#), you can

pay your volunteers in [non-financial currencies](#).

If you create a healthy volunteer culture, you'll be amazed at how well your volunteers serve.

No matter how big you get as a church, you will never have enough money to hire all the staff you want. And you will always need a growing group of passionate, committed, aligned volunteers.

I write an entire chapter on creating a great volunteer culture in my book and video series, [Lasting Impact: 7 Powerful Conversations That Will Help Your Church Grow](#).

The bottom line? Passionate volunteers create a passionate church.

## 9. Invite someone

So there's this thing out there called *personally inviting a friend*. Ever heard of it?

Okay, maybe that was a little sarcastic. But I am amazed by how often most of us neglect personally inviting our unchurched friends to church.

Many actually say yes when asked.

If everyone invited one person next weekend, think of what might happen.

Church leaders, encourage people to invite friends and start by inviting someone yourself.

## 10. Become friends with people who aren't Christians

Last time I checked, friendship was free too. That's a good thing.

The sad reality is the reason #9 is impossible for some people is because many Christians don't actually know any non-Christians.

Change that.

Be a friend.

Hang out with that guy at work. Throw a party for the neighbours in your back yard. Talk to the other parents at your child's school.

Get out of the Christian bubble and into the world Jesus died for.

If you're at church 7 nights a week, you can't be friends with non-Christians. So cut a few nights and go live the mission.

That's why our church has almost no programming on weeknights other than small groups. We want our people to love the community.

The only way you can love a community is to actually be in the community.

You can't love people you don't know.

**What have you done in your church that's helped you reach more people?**

> [Read more from Carey.](#)