

The Billy Graham School

COMPASS

Navigating Ministry & Missions

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Reaching North America for Jesus

I love international missions. My fascination with the world started when I was a young pastor, and a women's missionary leader challenged me to look at what God was doing around the globe. More recently, though, I have grieved over the needs right around us – here in North America.

From the millions of people in New York City, to the increasing Hispanic population in Florida, to the French community in Quebec, to the sparse yet rugged population in Montana, to a growing number of Muslims in my own state, I have been challenged to pray more specifically and intentionally for the work of

God on our continent. In fact, it seems that God has brought the world to us. The goal of this edition of the *Compass* is to help you, too, to make a difference right where we live.

I fear that most church members do not



“I have been challenged to pray more specifically and intentionally for the work of God on our continent.”

have much of a burden for those around them. If you agree with me, may I suggest a simple strategy to start correcting this problem? Enlist a group of lay leaders to conduct a survey of your area, and trust God to burden them as they do their homework. Consider these questions as starters:

How many people live within a ten-mile radius of your church? Who are they?

What is the average age of your community? What percentage is under age 18? Over age 65?

What is the percentage of the church population in your state? How many non-believers are in your state?

How many followers of other world faiths are in your community?

How many children live in poverty in your community?

How many college students reside within two hours' drive of your church?

What plans do your community leaders have to promote growth in the area? How many families are projected to move to your area in the near future?

Challenge your church leaders to review this information, and then work to develop a responsive strategy based on the authority of the Word and solid missiological principles. Let us know if we might help you in any way.

Chuck Lawless
Dean, The Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth

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Recommended Resources

Topic of the Month:
North American Missions



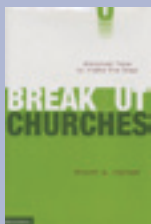
Philip and Candice Connor *Who is my Neighbor?*

Charles Brock
Indigenous Church Planting



David Hesselgrave
Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond

Ed Stetzer
Planting Missional Churches



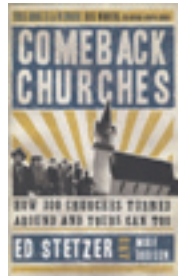
Thom Rainer
Breakout Churches

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger
Simple Church



Books can be found at:
Lifeway.com or Amazon.com

Comeback Churches



Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson
Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too

According to *Leadership Journal*, “85 percent of churches in the United States have plateaued or declining attendance.” That’s approximately 340,000 churches. Mine is one of them. But I’m not worried for two reasons. First, I know that God wants us to grow. Second, God has provided plenty of tools to help us to grow.

One of those tools is *Comeback Churches* by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson. It identifies five crucial issues in revitalizing your church: leadership, vibrant faith, lay ministry, intentional evangelism, and celebrative but orderly worship.

Church revitalization requires change-oriented leadership from pulpit and pew. Members of comeback churches must also have a faith that is characterized by personal commitment to Jesus and the church’s mission, a servant attitude, and strategic prayer. In revitalized churches, pastors invite the laity to exercise their God-given ministries. And the whole church is involved in intentional evangelism, gradually incorporating unbelievers into the community and then into the faith. Finally, comeback churches have celebrative (but orderly) worship services. More often than not, their musical style is contemporary, and they do everything with excellence.

If, like me, you’re the pastor of a church that’s seen better days, read *Comeback Churches*, and discover that your church’s best days are still in front of you.

By George P. Wood, Santa Barbara, California

Leading Your Church in North American Missions

By J. D. Payne, Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism, SBTS

Several years ago, my wife and I received a grandfather clock which was designed to chime every fifteen minutes and on the hour. After we moved it into our house, we were constantly aware of its presence every fifteen minutes--even when trying to sleep at night. Over time, however, we became so accustomed to the chime that we hardly ever heard it.

In a similar way, I believe that many of us in North America fail to understand the need for missionary work on this continent. We are so used to our context that we become numb to the realities around us. This article is written with some practical thoughts to assist you in leading your congregation to being on mission in your Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.

First, pastor, it begins with your leadership. If you are not passionate about leading your church to be engaged in missionary labors in

North America, it is unlikely that your church will ever be significantly involved in such ministry.

Second, healthy missionary practices come from a healthy missiology founded upon a solid biblical theology. Make sure what you are leading your church to “do” is rooted in missionary principles supported by the Scriptures.

Third, pray, pray, and then pray some more. Missionary work involves intensive spiritual warfare. Just because a church’s labors are located in this context instead of the backside of a Tibetan mountain does not mean that the evil one will lessen his attack. Pray for yourself, your church, and the people to whom you will minister.

Fourth, educate yourself on missionary principles and know the context in which you hope to serve. Know the people, their worldviews, and what is necessary to communicate the gospel to them and see churches birthed. Remember, biblical church planting is evangelism that results in new churches, not transfer growth church planting.

Fifth, make action plans for engagement in missionary activities in North America. Don’t just have good intentions. Here are a few ideas to help you lead your church toward missional engagement with the peoples of your Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria:

- Educate your people on the challenges to and opportunities for kingdom advancement in North America. Teach your people that missions is not something accomplished only “on the other side of the ocean” but also “on the other side of town.”

- Partner with North American Mission Board missionaries. Contact NAMB for the names of missionaries, and invite them to speak to your church and work with you in developing a strategy of engagement.

- Challenge your Sunday School classes or small groups to do a North American mission project over the next twelve months.

- Check out some of the websites listed in the “BGS Helps” section of this newsletter.



Welcome Visitor

Greeting Guests

If you've ever been a visitor who is embarrassed by a well-meaning church leader, you know that it is not always easy to be a "guest" in a church service. Our research shows:

- the fastest growing means to identify guests is a "Pew Pad" that is passed down the pew or row of chairs every Sunday, with everyone (including members) completing the form
- guests are often open to visiting with the pastor and staff in a designated area after the service, especially if a church member escorts them
- guests are less uncomfortable if *everyone* in the small group or worship service is wearing a name tag
- greeters in the parking lot are a great way to connect with guests quickly when they arrive at the church.

Purpose Six

You are probably aware that the Graham School teaches that prayer is one of the *six* purposes of the church (along with worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry). Almost all church leaders know that prayer matters, but few churches pray well. If you want your church to pray well, remember this basic rule of strong prayer ministries: **don't be afraid to start small.**

Prayer is a behind-the-scenes ministry that seldom gets recognition. Most church members have never been trained to pray well. The result is that few church members are readily interested in serving in a prayer ministry. But, a few genuinely praying church members can turn a church around.

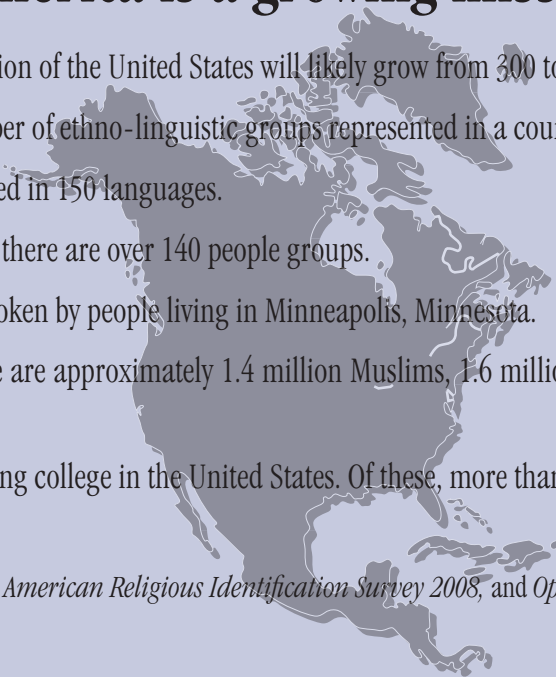
Pastor, enlist just one or two church members to start praying with you weekly. Encourage each small group to do the same. Ask each deacon or elder to enlist another two persons to pray. Don't overcomplicate this process—start small, build the prayer force, and see what God does!

RESEARCH SHOWS

North America is a growing mission field:

- In the next 35 years, the population of the United States will likely grow from 300 to 400 million.
- The U.S. is now #5 in the number of ethno-linguistic groups represented in a country.
- In Toronto, 911 calls are answered in 150 languages.
- In one community near Atlanta, there are over 140 people groups.
- More than 200 languages are spoken by people living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Though the estimates vary, there are approximately 1.4 million Muslims, 1.6 million Buddhists, and 1 million Hindus in the United States.
- 18.4 million students are attending college in the United States. Of these, more than 600,000 are international students.

Sources: North American Mission Board, *American Religious Identification Survey 2008*, and *Open Doors* published by the Institute of International Education (IIE)



Missions:

Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Appalachia

The Freeda Harris Baptist Center, located in the Appalachia region of Kentucky, is one of the many Baptist Centers throughout the country directed by North American Mission Board missionaries. The center began in the 1960s as an outreach to children. Today it reaches out to children and to the men and women of this poverty-stricken region.

The center's goal is that the people of Appalachia may come to know Christ. In order to reach this goal, the center offers a variety of ministries such as Backyard Bible Clubs, summer day camps, sports camps, G.E.D. classes, literacy classes, health fairs, a food pantry, a clothes closet, and a community Thanksgiving dinner. A gym located on the property has provided opportunities to share the gospel that have resulted in a weekly men's Bible study.



The center has mission groups coming each summer to do everything from Vacation Bible Schools to re-roofing houses. Center directors Greg and Alice Whitetree recognize that these outreach ministries provide opportunities to share the gospel with the families and neighbors who are helped through the ministries.

Knowing that there is still much to be done in the Appalachia region as well as all around the country, Greg encourages pastors to lead their churches to plan mission trips to centers like the

Freeda Harris Baptist Center. To find a Baptist Center near you, go to: http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.233814/k.A60B/Baptist_Centers.htm.

BGS HELPS

Biblical Church Growth: The Blog and Writings of Dr. Chuck Lawless

Blog, Articles, Books, MP3s, Recommended Resources, Book Reviews, Links

<http://www.biblicalchurchgrowth.com>

The Dehoney Center for Urban Ministry Training

We have started a center for training ministers to reach the cities. If you are interested in the center or our Certificate of Urban Ministry, please contact us at

UrbanTraining@sbts.edu

Need a good evangelistic tract?

<http://www.sbts.edu/pdf/GRACE.pdf>

Need resources related to reaching North America?

www.namb.org

www.anniearmstrong.com

<http://thebridge.namb.net>

www.northamericanmissions.org

www.churchplantingvillage.com

Planning a mission trip in North America? Need help?

<http://www.sbts.edu/missions/great-commission-center/>

HELP WANTED

Are you a new subscriber to the *Compass*? If you know someone who might also want to receive this resource, or if you would like to suggest a topic for future editions, send that information to bgsinfo@sbts.edu.

Contact Us:

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