

Matthew 28:16-20

16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated to them. 17 And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

Matthew 28:16-20

19 Go, therefore, and [make] disciples of all the nations [people groups/ethnos], baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to follow [obey] all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:16-20

Summary

“I am authorizing YOU (all) and giving you the commission and commandment to partner with Me to disciple all people groups.”

Mark 16:14-20

14 Later He appeared to the eleven disciples themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reprimanded them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen from the dead. 15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Mark 16:14-20

16 The one who has believed and has been baptized will be saved; but the one who has not believed will be condemned. 17 These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:14-20

18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Mark 16:14-20

20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed. And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself also sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

Mark 16:14-20

Summary

Proclaim the truth and I will back you (and all those who believe you and do likewise) supernaturally.

Luke 24:44-49

44 Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things that are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

Luke 24:44-49

46 and He said to them, “So it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:44-49

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Luke 24:44-49

49 And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Luke 24:44-49/Acts 1:8

Summary

“Tell the Gospel to all people groups – you are My witnesses. Do it in the power of the Holy Spirit just like I did.”

John 21:8-17

Snapshot

- *V. 15 – Tend my lambs*
- *V. 16 – Shepherd my sheep*
- *V. 17 – Tend my sheep*

John 21:8-17

Summary

If you love me, as a response to confirm you do, shepherd and feed my sheep. I will provide for you. The way you did things before now changes.

Data is a Mirror

There's who we *think* we are...
who we say we are... who we
hope we are... then there's who
we *actually* are. #themirrordontlie



The Facts: American Christianity

350,000 churches – less than 1% is growing by conversion growth

Reid, Alvin L., *Radically Unchurched: Who They Are & How to Reach Them*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, (2002), 23

Dickerson, John S, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, p. 99



The Facts: American Christianity

9 out of 10 churches are declining or growing at a pace slower than the rate of their communities

"Status of Global Mission, 2014, in the Context of AD 1800-2025,"
www.gordonconwell.edu/resources/documents/StatusOfGlobalMission.pdf
Dickerson, John S, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, p. 99



The Facts: American Christianity

The average established church declines by 2% per year

Sanchez, Daniel, *Church Planting Movements in North America*, 2007, 18

Dickerson, John S, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, p. 99



How Many 18-29 year olds leave Evangelical Churches?

712 will quit the faith today, another 712 tomorrow, and so forth. That's 2.6 million who will leave the faith at some point between 18th and 29th birthdays.



The Facts: American Christianity

Quote: “The percentage of evangelicals decreases with each younger generation, while the percentage of agnostics and atheists increases in younger generations. The net effect over time will be a tsunami-like culture shift, as the older generations pass away. The Pew’s age-by-religion findings reveal that the evangelical church is top-heavy that is, 45% of evangelicals will die with the next 29 years – meaning that evangelicals in the population could drop from about 7% of Americans now to about 4% or less – unless new disciples generated.”

The Facts: American Christianity

Quote: “Evangelical Christianity is dying. The great evangelical movements of today are not vanguard. They are a remnant unraveling at every edge. Look at it any way you like: Conversions. Baptisms. Membership. Participation. Giving. Attendance. Religious Literacy. Effect on culture. All are down and dropping. It’s no secret.”

Globally there are 19 million conversions annually and 19 million defections from Christianity.

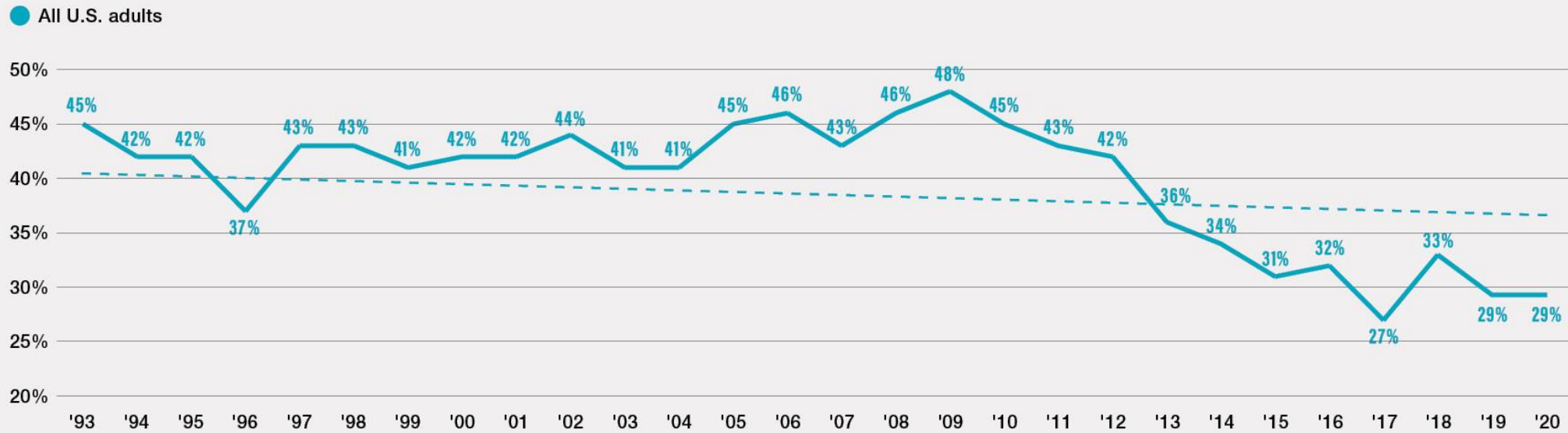
Wicker, Christine, The Fall of the Evangelical Nation: The Surprising Crisis inside the Church



The Facts: American Christianity

- The Percentage of Theo-centric Evangelicals in America today
 - Less than 10%

WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE: 1993-2020



n = 103,603 U.S. adults | 1993-2020

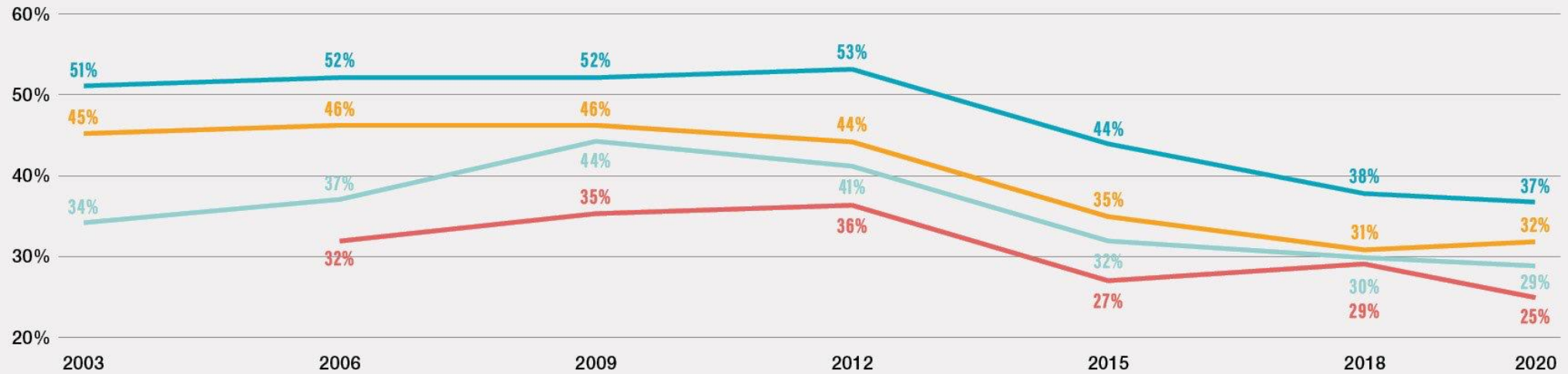
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1/3 less people than in 1993



WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE, BY GENERATION: 2003-2020

● Millennials* ● Gen X ● Boomers ● Elders



n = 96,171 U.S. adults | 2000-2020

*Due to low sample size, the 2003 attendance rate for Millennials was not included in this chart.

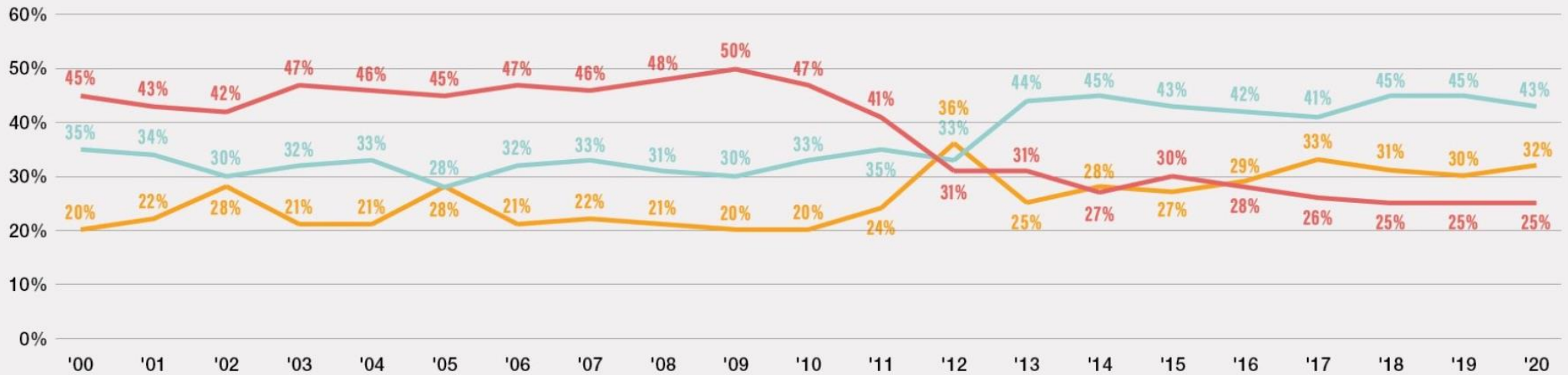
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Gen Z... even less!



HOW AMERICANS RELATE TO CHRISTIANITY IS CHANGING: 2000-2020

● Practicing Christian ● Non-Practicing Christian ● Non-Christian



n = 96,171 U.S. adults | 2000-2020

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Christians find Christianity less relatable, but the other two groups are trending UP!



An Unprecedented Shift

About 40 million people have stopped attending church. More people have left the church in the last twenty-five years than all the new people who became Christians from the First Great Awakening, Second Great Awakening, and Billy Graham crusades combined.

- Davis, Jim; Graham, Michael; Burge, Ryan P.. The Great Dechurching



Matthew 9:35-10:1

Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:35-10:1

37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.”

Matthew 9:35-10:1

Jesus called his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits so they could cast them out and heal every kind of disease and sickness.

THE FACT:

We do not have a harvest problem, we have a laborer problem

RECAP

- The Last Words of Jesus: [All of you] Make Disciples and do the ministry the same way I did it.
- The Data Mirror: we are *not* doing it in a way that remotely looks like what He said we should do.
- Now – the Prophetic Word

Prophetic Utterances

1. We believe in them!
2. “Push the ministry down into homes”
3. We know in part and we prophesy in part
 1. RHS
 2. 2016: “the next great move of God...”
 3. 2017: Shift
 4. Teaching through John (again) 2021

The Theology of the Gospel of John

- Jesus replaced all the institutions of the Jewish faith with Himself!
- For about 100-200 years after the Ascension, it was all house churches – exclusively! But... we went back to the old methodologies.

The Early Church

- There were no church “buildings” in the New Testament nor in the Early Church
- The church was the people, assembled believers, they gathered in homes.
- In many cities, a network of house churches

If the method isn't working...

- My personal struggle for fulfillment
- The new wine is only for new wineskins
- We taste the old wine and say, "Ach! It's good enough."

Billy Graham

”... I would get a small group of eight or ten ,or twelve men around me that would meet a few hours a week and pay the price! It would cost them something in time and effort. I would share with them everything I have, over a period of years. Then I would actually have twelve ministers among the laymen who in turn could take eight or ten or twelve more and teach them. I know one or two churches that are doing that, and it is revolutionizing the church.

Billy Graham

Christ, I think, set the pattern. He spent most of His time with twelve men. He didn't spend it with a great crowd. In fact, every time He had a great crowd it seems to me that there weren't too many results. The great results, it seems to me, came in His personal interview and in the time He spent with His twelve."

Coleman, Robert Emerson, and Roy J. Fish. The Master Plan of Evangelism. Fleming H Revell Company, 1986.



The Great

Dechurching

Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take To Bring Them Back?



Jim Davis and
Michael Graham
with Ryan Burge

QUESTION:

Is the Gospel still effective?

Is it THE tool that Jesus gave us, the Apostles wrote about, and the Early Church practiced?

CONCLUSION

Then perhaps it's our METHOD that is
(largely) ineffective.

A Trustworthy Axiom

Marry the MISSION
not
the METHOD



Jesus did not say to “go plant churches.”

He said, “Go make disciples.”



Consider

One big apple tree... or orchards

About you, go big. To reach all, go small.

A Dr. J.P. Moreland Classic tale



Jesus Disciple

We married the mission (making disciples that make disciples) with a new methodology

(actually, it's a really old, even ancient method found in a series of books called the "New Testament" in the Bible)



Jesus Disciple

Studies have shown that people are MUCH more likely to come to a home than to anything resembling the institutional church.



Just ONE
Story of
Success



Conclusions

The Word from Scripture is clear

The Data Mirror tells us the truth

Words of Contemporary Prophecy confirmed

We're on the right track with the historically verified method
which is bearing fruit around the world

