**The Big Switch: The Community Is Not Coming to Your Church**

Read Time: 3 Minutes



The Great Commission Says, “Go!” | **By Thom S. Rainer**

*Going to church takes on new meaning in today’s culture. By combining Christian evangelism with a heartfelt church invite, ministry leaders can build a community outreach program that brings transformation change.*

For decades, many church strategies have been built around getting people in the community to come to your church. Big events. Great signage. Social media marketing. The attractional church. You get the picture.

To be clear, there is nothing wrong with any of the “y’all come” approaches. Frankly, those are better than what most churches do to reach people: nothing.

**The Old Paradigm**

Most of the church growth tactics of the past half-century were built on the premise of expecting people from the community to attend our churches. But these strategies were built upon an assumption that most people in our communities were looking for a church home. Well, they are not looking anymore. And it is mainly futile to build a strategy upon a flawed premise.

The old paradigm meant that a few churches were at least seeking ways to get people to attend our churches. But the less healthy churches just expected people to show up because the church had a building and a sign. As one less-than-friendly church member told me during an interview I conducted for a church consultation: “I don’t even know why you are here. People in the community know where our church is located. They can come if they want to.”

I am glad I didn’t respond with the immediate thoughts on my mind.

**The Necessary Paradigm**

Though it sounds basic, the essence of the Great Commission is to go. The Great Commission does not say to develop the best events and build the best facilities so people will naturally come to your church. On the contrary, it says get out into the messy world and culture where we live, show the love of Christ to people in that culture, and tell them the good news of Christ.

This necessary paradigm means we must be intentional about pre-evangelism. We must invite people to church. We must develop relationships with people who are not followers of Christ. We must show people we care about them.

This necessary paradigm means we must be intentional about direct evangelism. We must provide evangelistic training and tools that our members will actually use. We must have prayer ministries that focus on evangelism and opportunities to share our faith. And we must share the gospel.

The necessary paradigm means we must make sure our members are biblically grounded. Our team at Church Answers surveys the church members in consultations to help us understand the attitudes and beliefs of the congregants. This survey, called [“Know Your Church™,”](https://churchanswers.com/solutions/tools/kych/know-your-church/) has been eye-opening. Around forty percent of the active members we’ve surveyed since the COVID quarantine do not believe that Jesus is the only way of salvation. These members have deleted John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 from their Bibles.

You will not have the motivation to tell people about Jesus if you think there are other options.

**It is Time**

Most of our congregations were structured to get people to come to our churches. But the Bible is clear that our mandate is to go to them.

Until we get that right, our churches will not grow. They will not be healthy.

It is time.

It is time to go into our communities instead of simply expecting them to come to us.
It is simple but radical for most churches.

But anything else is defiant disobedience to the Lord we serve.

*Learn more about*[*Thom S. Rainer*](https://churchanswers.com/about/)*and [ChurchAnswers](https://churchanswers.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).. You can find him on Twitter @ThonRainer and at*[*facebook.com/Thom.S.Rainer*](https://www.facebook.com/Thom.S.Rainer)*. This*[*article*](https://churchanswers.com/blog/the-community-is-not-coming-to-your-church/)*was originally published on June 13, 2022, at*[*ChurchAnswers.com*](https://churchanswers.com/)*.*