

## **The Second Coming of the Church**

*By George Barna*

### **Chapter One: The Challenge: Healing a Dying Body**

- The typical church, as we know it today has a rapidly expiring shelf life.
- The church in America is losing influence and adherents faster than any other major institution in the nation.
- Within the next few years America will experience one of two outcomes: either massive spiritual revival or total moral anarchy.
- Churches are placing excessive demands upon pastors.
- The average career span of pastors these days is just half of what it was in 1950.
- A growing majority of people have dismissed the Christian faith as weak, outdated, and irrelevant.
- The stumbling block for the church is not its theology but its failure to apply what it believes in compelling ways.
- The downfall of the Church has not been the content of its message but its failure to practice those truths.
- Christians think and behave no differently from anyone else.
- The Church in America has no more than five years – perhaps even less – to turn itself around.

### **PART ONE: CHECK OUT THE "SHIP"**

#### **Chapter Two: Christianity Gets a Makeover**

- The elders of the nation's small churches are just that: elderly, longtime members
- Change of any type comes slowly. The pastor's constant challenge is to encourage his slowly dissipating flock. Such churches represent half of all Protestant churches in the United States.
- The second class of churches is those that are slightly larger, they average two hundred to four hundred people. One out of every four Protestant churches fits this category.
- These churches are more aggressive evangelistically. The pastor is usually in his mid-thirties to mid-fifties. He is young enough to push the people to dream newer and bigger dreams yet experienced enough to orchestrate an effective team effort to implement those ideas. One of the pastor's consistent challenges is to keep people focused on the vision and primary goals of the church. These congregations are just shy of achieving critical mass.
- The third class consists of the large congregations. They represent just a fraction (less than 3% of all churches). The pastor is less than forty years old and the church is blossomed by attracting Baby Boomers. Nearly one-fifth of all churchgoers now attend more than one church.

- Small groups never really seem to have caught on; fewer than one out of every five adults is presently active in one.
- Fewer people are reading the Bible these days.
- People are “too busy” to devote much time to their search for meaning.
- Twenty years ago the most committed churchgoers averaged four blocks of time a week for religious activities, today the number is two.
- The potential for developing a network of church-based relationships is undermined by the lack of time people devote to church activities.
  
- More people are viewing churches as a “rest stop” along their spiritual journey, rather than as their final destination. This is fueled by four main factors:
  - 15 to 20 percent of all households relocate each year.
  - Our preference is for a variety in the church experience.
  - Our perception is that spiritual enlightenment comes from diligence in a discovery process, rather than commitment to a faith group.
  - Religion is a commodity that we consume rather than one in which we invest ourselves.
  
- There are fundamental assumptions that have harmed the progress or health of churches in the past two decades:
  - Americans have a firm understanding of the basic tenets of Christianity.
  - People who believe in God believe in the God of Israel.
  - If a pastor is a good enough teacher, that gift will compensate for mediocre leadership.
  - It’s okay for the congregation not to bring the Bible to church services.
    - People don’t even know where their Bibles are anymore.
  - A qualified pastor should have a seminary degree.
    - Seminaries remove seminarians from the real world for several years and put them through an academic exercise. The skills they learn are not synonymous with leadership.
  - The best way to revitalize churches is to create new ones.
    - Most of the churches begun have been doomed from the get-go. They launch with the wrong individual in charge (pastors who are not the catalytic, entrepreneurial leaders are required), with an inadequate core group, an outdated model, and severe undercapitalization. As a rule of thumb it takes roughly a quarter of a million dollars to launch a healthy church using the standard congregational model. If the church is undercapitalized from the start, their chances of success are minimal. Add the wrong leader and an inadequate core group and disaster ensues.
  - Non-Christians are vitally interested in salvation.
    - People are relying on their own good deeds instead of on Christ’s atonement for their sins.

### Chapter Three: In Search of Leadership

- Being a pastor these days may be the single most thankless task in America.
- These criteria are the measures of success:
  - attract and keep more visitors;
  - raise more money so the church can fund the ministry agenda approved by the elders;
  - raise the community's awareness of the church; and
  - expand the roster of ministries and programs under the church's umbrella.
- True leaders do not have to force themselves upon a group of people.
- When robots are placed in leadership positions, they operate as if on automatic pilot. Conflicts are covered up, and new ideas are tabled.
- True Christian leaders recognize that ministry is about taking risks, but have the intelligence to manage those risks and the faith to trust God in situations when risks seem warranted.
- Monarchs have been given a career reward for having played by the rules. Legalism is a prominent character trait of the Monarch.
- How Christian Leaders and Christian Teachers Differ:

<u>How Leaders Operate</u>	<u>How Teachers Operate</u>
Influence via vision and character	Influence via ideas and words
Provide direction and motivation	Provide intellectual challenge
Seek corporate transformation	Seek individual growth
Love to strategize	Love to study
Need a core of committed zealots	Need a teachable audience
Know when to make unpopular decisions	Teach the truth, even when unpopular
Motivate people to action	Motivate people to think
Resolve conflict	Stir up conflict

- Less than one out of every ten senior pastors can articulate when he believes is God's vision for the church he is leading.
- Only 5 percent of senior pastors say they have the gift of leadership.
- The typical pastor works long hours but devotes less than 10 hours per week to leadership activities.
- Most senior pastors serving churches today are not truly leaders, although they hold a position of leadership.

- How Leaders and Managers Differ:

<i>How Leaders Operate</i>	<i>How Managers Operate</i>
Conceptualize outcomes by working from the future back to the present	Conceptualize plans by working from the present to the future
Focus on the long-term	Focus on the short-term
Embrace a macro perspective	Embrace a micro perspective
Favor innovative thinking	Favor routine thinking
Balance idealism and realism	Emphasize pragmatism over idealism
Revolutionary flair	Protector of the status quo
Emphasis on what and why	Emphasis on how and when
Clarifies the vision	Implements the vision
Inspiring and motivating	Controlling and directing
Excited by change	Threatened by change
Identifies opportunities	Identifies obstacles
Takes risks	Avoids risks
Pursues acquisition of resources	Action limited by available resources
Person-centered, idea-centered	Systems-centered, plan-centered

- A Profile of Protestant Pastors, 1997  
Base: 601 Pastors

<i>Pastor's x</i>	<i>1997</i>
Male	95%
Average age (in years)	48
Married	95%
College graduate	88%
Spiritual gifts:	
-preaching/teaching	69%
-pastoring	15%
-administration	15%
-exhortation, encouragement	11%
-evangelism	6%
-leadership	5%
Years in full-time ministry	17
Years at current church	5
Annual compensation package (\$000)	36.4

## **Chapter Four: One Size Does Not Fit All**

- Christians and churches make two types of blunders when it comes to handling change: they refuse to change when change is called for; or they "change for the sake of change," resulting in indefensible or inappropriate decisions.

- The church never defines what it is that they are striving to achieve.
- There are five primary criteria used to evaluate the aggregate health of the ministry:
  - Congregational size
  - Church facility
  - Scope of ministry
  - Budget size
  - Pastoral credibility
- The Sunday morning head count is considered to be the best measure of a church's vitality.
- During the initial period of development, the vision powers the ministry, and the values that define its character are formed. The focus of the group is directed largely to the future. During the first five to ten years of ministry the size and scope are developed. The emphasis is on expansion in people. In the mature phase the primary focus is on smooth operation of the ministry. The declining phase is the "final frontier." The church has lost its energy because it has fulfilled its purpose. The primary goal changes from growth to mere survival.

## **PART TWO: CHECK OUT THE COURSE AHEAD**

### **Chapter Five: The New Cultural Realities**

- Most churches pursue a one-size-fits-all ministry strategy, but the culture in which we live is too diverse for that. To be effective we must learn to target our efforts and to contextualize what we have to offer to others so that they see our offering as relevant, beneficial, and accessible.
- The educational system in America is in shambles.
- Kids graduating from high school are monumentally ill prepared to handle the world.
- Effective communicators:
  - understand how an audience absorbs information;
  - understand what an audience will pay attention to;
  - convey a clear and meaningful message to the audience; and
  - seek and evaluate feedback.
- Much of the current teaching and preaching in churches is designed for an older audience.
- The under-fifty crowd receives and interprets information differently than their older counterparts.
  - *Younger adults are accustomed to receiving information at a faster rate than older adults.* Pacing has become a crucial element in determining whether or not the typical listener sticks with an entire sermon.

- *Time is treasured.* Long before they are concluded sermons tend to lose younger listeners. Among the younger Busters, the tendency is to tune out after six to eight minutes – unless there is some type of transition that renews their interest.
  - *Words are important.* The language a communicator uses will largely determine the receptivity of the audience. Language that is theological, judgmental, or incessantly paternalistic creates problems for many young listeners.
  - *Attitude is everything.* Audiences who perceive speakers as arrogant or insensitive won't give them the benefit of the doubt.
  - *The medium used to transmit information impacts the perceived credibility of that information.* Information conveyed through the use of technology often has a higher degree of believability than does information coming directly out of a speaker's mouth.
- Time is our single most precious nonrenewable commodity.
  - People don't want anyone telling them what, why, how, where, or when to do anything.
  - The fear and suspicion that used to accompany the introduction of new products is largely in our past.
  - A major outgrowth of recent technological innovations is decentralization. People can obtain most of the things they need virtually without ever having to come in contact with another human being. One-third of the working population now work from their home instead of a centralized office.
  - Growing numbers of people now judge the validity and relevance of a church service by the church's use of technology. People think that if a church is intimately connected to the new digital world then it is more likely to understand their pressures and challenges.
  - The future of the Church for millions of people lies on the Internet itself.
  - The challenge to the Church is to provide people with more than solid teaching about the importance of family.
  - One of the chief struggles facing the Christian Church in the days ahead will be to persuade people that the blending of disparate religious beliefs and practices into a customized, impure version of Christianity is illegitimate.

## **Chapter Six: Revenge of the Generation Gap**

- We have five significant generations today: Seniors, Builders, Boomers, Busters, and Mosaics.
- Each succeeding generation is taking greater and greater liberties at redefining the faith dimension.
- Most busters reject notions such as the uniqueness of Christianity, the existence of absolute moral truth, and the authority of the Bible.
- Builders and Seniors will never abandon the traditional church.

- Five Generations of Americans:

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Years of Birth</u>	<u>Age Range in 1998</u>	<u>Population Size</u>
Seniors	1926 and earlier	72 and older	1909 million
Builders	1927-1945	53 to 71	39.8 million
Boomers	1946-1964	34 to 52	73.1 million
Busters	1965-1983	15 to 33	72.2 million
Mosaics	1984-2002	14 and younger	61.7 million

- Most older adults are not about to accept the new ways of experiencing and learning about God.
- We will not successfully drag most older Christians into new forms of the Church.
- Busters typically conclude that Christian churches are well intentioned but substantively lacking.
- In Gary Knudsen's mind the ideal church would be built on a handful of key factors: meaningful relationships; exploratory discussions in the spiritual realm; down-to-earth, unpretentious people; and substantive and satisfying opportunities for involvement.
- Al Perkins is a member of the church, but he regards the membership as a meaningless remnant of a bygone era. The lack of professionalism within the church has been a hot button for him. As well, he doesn't want to be stuck on a committee that hasn't accomplished anything in three years. He feels that real leaders threaten the pastor.
- He has these things to say:
  - "You see, when you reject the things I stand for – excellence, strategic thinking, progress, efficiency, vision, controlled risks, bottom-line performance – you reject me."
  - "Take something like church music. Why should I listen to choirs and organs? I never listen to them on my car radio."
  - "Family is another one that irritates me...why dump on me if you can't help me?"
  - "This permanent building campaign mentality gets old real quickly."
  - "At the moment, I can't imagine remaining as active [in the church]..."
- Maggie Fuller has these things to say about the church:
  - "The real problem isn't even that they [newcomers to the church] change things, but that they haven't earned the right to make those changes."
  - "The emphasis upon soul winning seems gone..."
  - "Now we have to be 'successful.'"
  - One of Maggie Fuller's greatest disappointments in the church is the loss of community.
  - The church has become too much like a business.
  - "A lot of them seem so sure of themselves, so arrogant almost. In the past, pastors were more humble."

- “Church is no longer the center of my journey. Now I depend on myself and my friends...”
- Today, people seek experiences that address their needs, preferences, and expectations in a highly personalized and accessible manner.

## **PART FOUR: CHECK OUT THE MAP**

### **Chapter Seven: The Unsinkable “True Church”**

- There are ten perspectives that should help give shape to our ultimate proposal for the second coming of the Church:
  - We must have a firm and accurate understanding of our business.
  - We must know the competition for our target audience.
  - To be effective we must anticipate, not merely react.
  - Before adopting a course of action, we must consider all possible alternatives.
    - The most effective change agents evaluate a series of “what-if” scenarios.
  - Effective change requires a detailed plan.
    - A good plan maximizes limited resources.
  - Forward movement is achieved by building upon existing strengths.
    - We compensate for weaknesses by exploiting our positive attributes and abilities.
  - The Church can be effective as the Church only if it operates within scriptural boundaries.
  - Creating a better future – the goal of vision – requires rational innovation.
  - Success demands that we think holistically.
    - The Christian life is a long-term effort.
  - Lean not on your own understanding.
    - In our efforts to serve God, we have crowded out God himself.

### **Chapter Eight: What Does a Real Leader Look Like**

- When Christians deny the importance of the gift of leadership, that denial has three effects:
  - It diminishes the standing of those who possess a gift from God.
  - Downplaying the importance of leadership paralyzes the Church by removing a crucial ability from the mix of abilities that are necessary for the Church to be healthy, functional, and growing.
  - Rejecting or minimizing the leadership gift – and those who possess the gift – insinuates that we know better than God when it comes to planning and preparing for the future of His Church.

- There are four primary reasons why most Americans avoid the positions of leadership:
  - Leadership is hard work.
  - Leading people carries huge responsibility.
  - Relatively few people have been prepared for leadership responsibilities.
  - Leadership requires a compelling vision of a future that people will seek to pursue.
  
- J. Oswald Sanders defines leadership by saying, "Leadership is influence."
- Leadership is about motivating people.
- Future leaders of the Church will need to expend themselves in the endless pursuit of the vision for life transformation within our culture.
  
- Christian leaders possess a unique blend of three special elements:
  - *calling* or anointing;
  - *godly character*; and
  - *leadership competencies*.
  
- The called leader will have a discernible sign of this calling:
  - Leaders have an awareness of God's call.
  - Leaders possess an inclination to lead. They will inevitably gravitate toward that position.
  - Leaders perceive reality differently from non-leaders. They reach different conclusions; they are analytical, strategic, future-focused, and always building mental bridges between the present and the future.
  - Leaders naturally influence people.
  - Leaders seek each other out as companions.
  - Leaders receive external acclaim.
  - Leaders possess internal strength. Their strength is manifested in championing the tough, unpopular stands; taking risks; penetrating uncharted waters; accepting responsibility for judgment calls; and resolving tensions and conflicts.
  - Leaders derive joy from leading.
  
- The Functional Competencies of a Christian Leader:
  - Identifying, articulating, and conveying God's vision
  - Motivating people to be supportive and involved
  - Developing and coaching people to reach their full potential
  - Synthesizing volumes of information to make strategic decisions
  - Persuading people to do what's right, in light of the vision
  - Engaging in strategic thinking, initiating strategic action
  - Spearheading conflict resolution
  - Developing the resource base
  - Effectively communicating truths, principles, and plans
  - Delegating authority and responsibility

- Reinforcing people's commitment to the vision and the group
  - Celebrating successes achieved
  - Making key decisions
  - Building a team of people with shared purpose and complementary gifts
  - Initiating evaluation of needs, plans, opportunities, procedures, and outcomes
  - Creating a viable corporate culture
  - Maintaining people's focus and priorities
  - Instituting reasonable methods and standards of accountability
  - Modeling godly behavior and values
  - Directing the efforts of other key leaders in the group
- The Directing Leader is the individual who provides the spark
  - Leadership Styles and Emphasis:

<u>Dominant Leader</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Currency</u>	<u>Unique attributes, strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Products</u>
Directing Leader	Vision	Ideas	Catalyst; Values-driven; Visionary; Standards; Passion; Motivation; Independent; Assertive	Details; Sensitivity; Hate compromise; Impatient; Dictatorial; Too talkative; Self-centered	Purpose; Vision; Recruits
Strategic Leader	Analysis	Information	Wisdom; Synthesis; Testing; Reflection; Patience; Thorough; Pragmatic; Well-prepared	People skills; Perfectionism; Internalize emotions	Plans; New programs
Team-building Leader	Mobilizing	Communi- cation	Relationships; Blending talents; Tactful; Enthusiastic; Optimistic; Flexible;	Details; Too emotional; Can become disorganized; Misuses time	Teams

Operational Leader	Managing	Structure	Organized; Creates process and order; Supportive; Accurate; Efficiency; Focused; Details	Vision; Insensitivity; Lacks enthusiasm; Too cautious	Efficiency; Systems
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### **Chapter Nine: Thinking Like a Christian**

- Millions of Christians view transformation in Christ as a onetime solution to a “crisis” rather than a lifelong “process.”
- Many believers stop growing in their faith. Instead of measuring their performance against God’s commands, the standard for comparison is “Did I do better than the next guy?”
- Many Christians have developed a distorted understanding of what constitutes purposeful or successful living. Top items that Christians live for are good health, a successful career, a comfortable lifestyle, and a functional family.
- A large majority of Christians contend that the true meaning of our earthly existence is to simply enjoy life and reap as much fulfillment as we can from our daily pursuits.
- Christians are not prepared to fight the good fight of faith.

### **PART FOUR: REDIRECT THE COURSE**

#### **Chapter Ten: A Vision For Spiritual Renewal**

- There are a number of things that we can learn both from Jesus’ ministry and the activities of the early Church:
  - Jesus seemed more intent on the quality of ministry than on the quantity of people.
  - Jesus showed His followers that the Church is truly different from existing pagan and religious groups.
  - A hallmark of the early Church was its integrity.
  - The first-century Church was distinguished by its attitude. Specifically, the Christians of the day felt a sense of urgency about ministry, and exhibited an intense passion for Christ.
  - The Lord would have searched for evidence of dependence on God.
  - The true Church is strategic in its response to conditions and opportunities.
- The Church must pursue a three-pronged strategy for renewal:
  - We must motivate people to pursue, embrace, and live according to a biblical worldview.

- We must allow the Church to be led by the people whom God has called and anointed for the task – that is, leaders.
- We must develop new forums and formats through which people will experience, understand, and serve God.

### **Chapter Eleven: Cultivating a Biblical Worldview**

- A dynamic spiritual development process developed by The Navigators consists of five activities. They are:
  - hearing the Word of God;
  - reading the Bible;
  - personal Bible study;
  - Bible memorization; and
  - Meditating on the content of God’s Word.
- If a church is serious about investing in the spiritual development of its people, it may seek to provide five basic resources to its people:
  - Assistance in charting a plan to develop a biblical worldview.
  - Biblically based instruction that will challenge and inform believers.
  - Materials that will aid each person’s development.
  - Personal counseling to facilitate individual growth.
  - A means of holding individuals accountable.

### **Chapter Twelve: How To Train New Leaders**

- The type of leadership development that is most sorely lacking is that which identifies and nurtures people who will provide intentional leadership in areas beyond the bare necessities required for survival.
- A few qualities to seek in trying to identify the influential leaders of the future are:
  - They have led people in the past.
  - They resonate with vision.
  - They are anxious to create meaningful change.
  - They are responsible.
  - They have courage.
  - They love God.
  - They learn quickly and continually.
- There are some universal principles that will help you train your leaders more appropriately:
  - Personalize the Process
    - A key to personalizing the developmental process effectively is to incorporate “growth partners.” These are individuals who serve as “personal trainers to the nascent leader.

- Development is a Continual Process
  - The Emerging Leader Should Push The Process.
  - Maximize Leader Growth by Creating a Positive Learning Environment:
    - Accept mistakes.
    - Allow time for the lessons to “soak in.”
    - Vary the approaches used in training.
    - Balance the head and the heart.
  - Specify the Importance of a Biblical Worldview Before the Training Begins
  - Intentionally Escalate the Prospects of Success:
    - Increase the levels of responsibility assigned to the emerging leader;
    - delegate the required levels of authority in decision-making situations;
    - giving credit publicly for the good choices and efforts made by the emerging leader; and
    - treat failures not as setbacks but as an unexpected and effecting lesson.
  - Pace the Process Appropriately
  - Never Underestimate the Power of Positive Reinforcement
  - Demand Evidence of Growth
    - Value the process according to evidence.
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- Research on leadership development has underscored the importance of combining four particular facets of growth:
    - The *personal development* of the leader;
    - a *clear concept* of leadership itself;
    - actionable and reliable *feedback*; and
    - *skill building*.
  - Every leader should develop the ability to do three things related to vision:
    - They must be able to discern God’s vision for their ministry.
    - A leader must be able to articulate the vision in ways that inspire and direct people.
    - Leaders must incorporate the vision into every aspect of the ministry.
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- A developmental program may:
    - Build gradually.
    - Direct the focus outward.
    - Direct the focus inward.
    - Get feedback from others.
    - Consider the alternative.
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- What Effective Leaders Do To Motivate People:
    - Captivate their hearts and minds by addressing things that matter to them.
    - Earn their respect by demonstrating godly character.
    - Win their trust by delivering on your promises.
    - Clearly and convincingly communicate your purpose: to serve them.
    - Facilitate their enduring focus on a compelling vision.

- Offer them a concise, significant, and challenging role in the fulfillment of the vision.
  - Support them with resources, guidance, encouragement, and rewards.
  - Describe your reasonable performance expectations of them.
  - Lead by offering captivating ideas, persuasive words, and an inspiring example.
  - Always place the needs of the people above the needs of the program.
  - Provide generous praise; selflessly and genuinely deflect credit to the entire team.
  - Celebrate each small win along the path to ultimate victory.
- Individuals who fail to inspire participation must evaluate why their calls to action fell upon deaf ears.
    - Did they recruit the wrong people?
    - Did they use the wrong message:
    - Did they present the opportunity in a way that was too dry, confusing or unattractive?
    - Is there a perceived dissonance between what the leader says and does that might cause people not to trust or respect him or her?
    - Was there an adequate base of resources and support to ensure success:
    - Was the goal unrealistic?
    - Was the connection between the task and the ministry's vision sufficiently visible?
- In assessing the ability of the individual to anticipate and respond strategically, there are several keys to growth:
    - Help emerging leaders identify their assumptions.
    - Examine how thoroughly and intelligently the individual has assessed his or her ministry environment.
    - Some energy might be profitably devoted to understanding past efforts and outcomes.

### **Chapter Thirteen: Reengineering The Local Church**

- If we wish to maximize our influence by restructuring the Church for optimum effectiveness, we need to consider the following perspectives as guiding concepts:
  - We must have a clear goal in mind as we set out to develop the new Church.
  - If we are to maintain momentum and influence, we must build on existing islands of strength.

<u>Change factor:</u>	<u>Changing from:</u>	<u>Changing to:</u>
Authority	Centralized	Decentralized
Leadership	Pastor-driven	Lay-driven
Power distribution	Vertical	Horizontal
Reaction to change	Resistance	Acceptance
Identity	Tradition and order	Mission and vision

Scope of ministry	All-purpose	Specialized
Practices	Tradition bound	Relevance bound
People's roles	Observation and support	Participation and innovation
Principal product	Knowledge	Transformation
Success factors	Size, efficiency, image	Accessibility, impact, integrity
Primary challenges	Momentum, relationships, leadership, complacency	Heresy, relationships, unity, leadership, balance
Effects of technology	Attention-grabbing	Growth facilitating
Means to growth	More, better-run programs	More relationships and experiences
Growth prospects	Limited	Unlimited

- There are four specific ways in which a typical congregation might transition "into an effective twenty-first-century ministry."
  - Birthing Centers for New Churches
    - *Cyberchurch planting:*
      - Relational options - chat rooms and bulletin boards;
      - Spiritual experiences – live worship music, downloaded audio clips of worship music, video clips of valuable teaching, or visuals of spiritually significant places;
      - Points of access for spiritual events as well as other useful sites and resources.
    - *House church planting.*
    - *Other alternatives. I.e. independent, community-wide celebration events.*
    - People will come together for a time of discussion regarding religious-orientated matters.
    - *Compassionate clusters.*
  - Training Centers
    - Teaching churches could fill the gap in teacher training and the absence of leadership development could be addressed by training churches.
  - Service Centers
  - Partnerships
- Some inevitable outcomes will take place:
  - Traditional ministry organizations and roles will be redefined. Denominational headquarters will be repositioned as resource centers.
  - Representatives of the new Church and parachurch agencies will have to assume a higher public profile.
  - Admissions to Bible colleges and Christian colleges will rise steadily.
  - The role of the family will be greatly elevated in the faith dimension.
  - At least initially, we can expect to see a decline in ministry performance as competition explodes for people's involvement.
  - People's true spiritual nature will emerge.

- Today's young people are "mosaic thinkers," able to put information together in new patterns, often arriving at unusual, novel, or surprising conclusions.
- Boomers, Builders, and Seniors are "linear thinkers."
- The younger the adult, the less interested he or she is in a smooth presentations. Excellence and professionalism are "performance strategies" that appeal to the late Builders and early Boomers. Among the Busters, however, the keys are relevance, genuineness, and authenticity. They are more interested in experiencing a sincere and hones presentation that raises meaningful questions than a polished, well-rehearsed speech that provides all the answers.
- Younger adults resonate with "visionary preaching": that is, sermons that are not narrowly focused on the here and now, but that empower the listener to envision a better future. The communications strategy that has most effectively overcome their aversion to moral absolutes has been the intelligent use of stories as the means of conveying truth. Stories, to the postmodernist, relativistic mind, are undeniable: Experience is permitted where theology or philosophy is rejected.
- Young people feel that sermons are lectures and are one-sided communiqués that are ineffective.
- To the Buster mind, participation in the process of learning and arriving at truths or principles is even more crucial than the truths or principles themselves.
- Those who communicate with true sensitivity and depth serve as magnets to a pair of generations (Boomers and Busters) that are admittedly emotionally damaged and relationally starved.
- Using excessive quotes, historical references, or literary references in sermons turn off young listeners. The use of quotes from esteemed individuals serves little purpose.
- Consistency in attendance is a cultural artifact in America.

#### **Chapter Fourteen: The Special Role of the Family**

- The family will be at the center of the transition that will create that future.
- Each of us must come to see our family as the core spiritual unit.
- We must deliberately, systematically teach Christian values to our children. There are a few ways in which we can do this:
  - We can convey values by doing things such as abandoning the TV set for a few hours to work together at a soup kitchen, or taking time for family devotions.
  - Teach the Bible
  - Develop Strong Relationships
  - Promote Christian Behavior
  - Have Family Worship Times
- To equip your family as a spiritual center, you must recognize and integrate three simple truths into your efforts:
  - You will not effectively build your family into a spiritual center unless your family becomes a priority in your life.

- We are not likely to have much impact on the spiritual development of your families unless we have a plan for maturation
- Remember that we are working with people; people need affirmation.

### **Chapter Fifteen: Putting It All Together**

- Think about the parallels between a failed revolution, based upon historical analysis, and an unhealthy church, based upon scriptural teaching:
  - They lost focus.
  - They lost passion.
  - They lost sight of their common enemy.
  - Lessons for today.
    - The American church could be described by all three of these weaknesses. As well, the enemy no longer seems so ominous. Distracted by our material well-being, we have stopped living the revolutionary vision God handed to us, and have simply accepted our situation as the way things should be.
- Unless we develop a way for believers to hold each other accountable and to grow in faith, there will be a widespread outbreak of heresy, syncretism, and apathy.