

Deep & Wide

Creating Churches Unchurched People
Love to Attend

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last update 19 Jul 2016

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**Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched
People Love to Attend**

Andy Stanley

- Church is the most appealing when the message of grace is most apparent.
- God’s grace is only as visible as God’s truth is clear.

This document is not a complete summary of the book. Rather, it contains some key points to consider about how to embrace the tension between grace and truth by going deep and wide.

What is the Church?

Cornerstone: Christ

The cornerstone of the church is the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (**Mat 16:15-18**). This is about the only thing churches hold in common.

Definition

A church (ekklesia) is a gathering of people united by a common identity and purpose.

History

When Constantine became a Christian, people were able to safely designate permanent meeting places for the church. Eventually, people began to use the term church to refer to the buildings.

Tension

Grace and Truth

- If we're all about truth, we sacrifice grace.
- If we're all about grace, we sacrifice truth.
- Jesus is fully both:
 - ▶ **John 1:14**
 - ▶ **John 1:17**

Grace

Law, Justice, Truth

- Church is the most appealing when the message of grace is most apparent.
- God's grace is only as visible as God's truth is clear.

From the early church until today, we have struggled to define our requirements for people to be a part of the church. The first big issue was whether people had to become Jewish be part of the church. The Jerusalem Council concluded that we should not make it difficult for people who are turning to God by requiring them to adhere to a long list of rules (**Acts 15:19**)

Seeming Inconsistency and Unfairness

When grace AND truth are your driving forces, it's not possible to be consistent and fair.

- Jesus chose only 12 apostles from hundreds of disciples.
- Jesus gave preferential treatment to 3 of 12.
- Jesus did not heal everyone.

His seeming inconsistency and unfairness drives many people crazy.

Going Deep

Spiritual formation is not a cognitive exercise. You can't build a relationship on obedience. You have to build it on trust. How do you grow to trust God more deeply? Andy believes there are five catalysts that build faith.

Five Faith Catalysts:

1. Practical teaching
2. Private disciplines
3. Personal ministry
4. Providential relationships
5. Pivotal circumstances

Practical Teaching

The Word of God isn't about knowing stuff. It's about doing stuff.

Adjust your sails to harness the winds of culture to take people where God wants them to go.

We must teach for life change. We should give a practical call for action at the end of every message. Be aware that people are more interested in what works than in what's true.

If you present truth without the application, people will view your message as irrelevant. Strive for action-oriented teaching.

Private Disciplines

God responds to your private acts of righteousness: prayer, Bible reading, giving... ([Mat 6:6](#))

To hear God speak, hide and seek.

- Consider giving people a specific prayer to pray each week. If they are new to prayer, this may be what they need to begin private prayer.
- Teach people the importance of giving. Andy suggests encouraging them to pick a percentage to give that they will privately commit to God. As they grow, encourage them to grow as givers.

- Make reading the Bible accessible. Find ways to make it easy for them to read it on their own.

Personal Ministry

We grow when we stretch ourselves serving Him in a capacity that we can't handle without His help. Our role is to bring Him what we have and let Him take it from there. A little fear keeps people teachable and dependent on Him. Embrace the apprenticeship model of leadership development.

Providential Relationships

At every critical juncture in your faith journey, God will provide people whose paths intersect with yours. Your faith gets bigger when:

- You hear from God through another person.
- You see God in someone.

The church cannot create providential relationships; however, we can create environments that make it easier for them to develop. Andy recommends long term groups in which deep relationships are more likely ([Heb 10:24-25](#)).

Pivotal Circumstances

We have no way to predict pivotal circumstances or how they will impact our faith. The key is our **interpretation** of the event and the conclusions we draw about God. What determines how we interpret events and circumstances:

- our worldview (is it biblical?)
- who we are doing life with at the time (do they help us put things in proper context?)

The church can help people develop a biblical worldview and create a relational ministry model.

Spiritual growth is not a passive or temporary pursuit. It requires pressing on and straining ([Php 3:12-15](#)) and is a lifelong endeavor.

Going Wide

Creating Irresistible Environments

Three Essential Ingredients:

1. Is the **setting** appealing? Some things that will always be appealing are:
 - ▶ Clean and tidy: Sends the message that you are expecting guests and that they are important to you.
 - ▶ Organized: Says that what you do is important and that you know what you are doing.
 - ▶ Visibly safe: Sends the message that you care about the welfare of guests and their loved ones.
 - ▶ Targeted decor: Says that you understand your audience (decor should vary for each setting).
2. Is the **presentation** engaging? It's not enough to present the Truth. We must tell it in a way that captures their attention. (In most cases, people are not equally gifted in content development, presentation skills, and facilitation skills. Key = Assign responsibility, not tasks. Staff should be responsible for getting it done, not for always doing it themselves. They should recruit gifted people to do gift-dependent tasks.)
3. Is the **content** helpful?
 - ▶ Think right: For each message, deliver a simple, clear biblical truth. Give a clear application challenge (call to action) for the truth.
 - ▶ Intentional contextualization: Help listeners see how the biblical truth applies to them at their stage of life.
 - ▶ Whole truth: For weekend messages, focus on biblical truths they need to know and do at this time. Provide classes for those who want a deeper theological and biblical framework.

Rules of Engagement

Be clear on your purpose. Be certain that your approach aligns with your purpose. What is the big win for the weekend? For Andy there are two:

short-term [experience]	regular attender brings a guest who comes back
long-term [content]	regular attender makes life changes that align with the Bible

Before you can have success in changing someone's thinking or behavior, you have to build a relational bridge. Engage > Involve > Challenge

Engage:

- Pre-service experience: The key is to make people comfortable and make things easy for them.
- Opener: Open with something that makes people smile (song, game). It should introduce the topic but not make a key point.
- Welcome: Only give information that is helpful to guests (not announcements for those already engaged).

Involve:

- Singing: At this point, invite people to sing, not worship. Those of different faiths or no faith will get defensive with the term worship. Andy recommends that first songs be about God's mercy and forgiveness and that later songs be about Jesus. He advises against trying to guilt people into singing.
- Baptism: They work with each person to create a short video that tells their story in a clear, compelling way. On weeks where there are baptisms, they do the offering immediately following baptisms and make the point that life change leads to generosity.
- Specials (occasionally): These are songs, skits, or videos to create tension around an issue that the message will address.

Challenge:

- Title Package: This is a 1-2minute video to introduce a message series.
- Message: This is finally the point where you present the gospel and accept that some will be offended.
- Closer (occasionally): This should punctuate the series or message. If there isn't one, close with a prayer.

Double-Barrel Preaching

- Dual audience, single agenda: You need to know when to ask and how to ask to best get through to your audience. The issue is generally your approach.
- What are your message goals?
 - ▶ People to hear something they can use?
 - ▶ Skeptics to begin to doubt their disbelief?
 - ▶ Believers to believe more deeply?
 - ▶ People to want to read the Bible?
 - ▶ People to fall in love with God (or at least begin dating Him)?
- Does your approach support your goals? Entice your audience to follow you into a passage of Scripture with the promise that the text will do one of the following things:
 - ▶ Answer a question they've been asking
 - ▶ Solve a mystery that has them puzzled
 - ▶ Resolve a tension they've been carrying

Guidelines

1. Say something to let visitors know you are happy they are there.

2. Begin with the audience in mind. Begin by getting them engaged with the problem, tension, or mystery that the text will address.
3. Pick one passage. Stick with it. Jumping around gives people the impression it's okay to simply look for a verse that says what they want it to say. Make the one passage so interesting that they want to go home and read it again. Make it so clear that they understand it and keep reading.
4. Give them permission not to believe. Let them know when passages are specifically directed at believers. Never expect them to do something if they are not part of the family. Instead, invite them to try something, take a step.
5. Avoid, "the Bible says." Instead cite authors of individual Bible books. Don't assume people know anything about the characters, stories, or terms.
6. Acknowledge the odd.
7. Don't go mystical. It puts distance between you and your audience. It makes you appear to be the one "in touch" with God instead of helping them grow closer to God.

Becoming Deep and Wide

Coming to Blow with the Status Quo

Shared vision is the key to bringing about change. Talk about where you want to be (need to be). This helps build the necessary discontent with the status quo. It takes constant effort to ensure that the vision sticks.

Mission and Model

Focus on your mission and don't cling to your current model (way of doing things).

Mission > Vision > Model > Programming

Component	Examples
Mission = non-negotiable imperatives	Make disciples.

Component	Examples
Vision = contribution to the overarching mission	Create churches that unchurched people love to attend.
Model = chosen framework to advance the vision	Group model
Programming = approach or means to support the model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How we find and train group leaders ▪ How we assimilate adults, students, children into group life.

To decide on programming ask, "What is the best way to ____?"

General Questions will remain the same, but answers will change over time.

Examples of general questions. What is the best way to:

- Make Bible reading accessible to people?
- Introduce children to the gospel?
- Provide teenagers with a biblical worldview?
- Involve attendees in the community?
- Equip couples to build healthy marriages?
- Motivate and train parents to take responsibility for the spiritual development of their children?
- Recruit and train volunteers?

Whatever is the best way now will **not always** be the best way. Continue to ask these questions and challenge the current answers.

What preoccupies our church?

How do we pray?

Led to Lead

Sustained vision requires leadership. We need people who God has gifted with leadership to lead diligently (**Rom 12:6-8**).

*Write your vision in ink.
Everything else should be penciled in.*

Use the following questions to force yourself to keep programming subservient to vision and mission.

1. Is our vision / mission statement transferable? What percentage of our attendees know why we exist? What drives our decisions?
2. What do we love doing that is not effective in furthering our vision? Are we willing to sacrifice the beloved program so that we have room for one that will better further our vision?
3. What would we like to quit doing but fear the consequences of change?
4. If all current staff were removed and replaced with a staff charged with supporting the vision, what programs would they eliminate? Would they change the current model? If so, with what?
5. What do we measure? Do our measures give us a gauge of progress on vision/mission? What are some more relevant measures we could use? What do we hesitate to measure?
6. What do we celebrate? Do celebrations promote our vision/mission? What should we stop celebrating?
7. If our church suddenly ceased to exist, would our community miss us? Why?