

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

**FOOTBALL
SUNDAY**

UNSHAKEN

HOSTED BY:
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MESSAGE 3: BLEEDING & SPUTTERING

Are we making disciples?

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*Are we more committed to **Jesus**
and his missional **mandate** (Matthew 28:19-20),
or to **American Christianity** as we know it?*

*All **good to great** companies
began the process of **finding a path** to greatness
by **confronting the brutal facts**
of their **current realities** ...*

Jim Collins, Good to Great

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SIX FACTORS OF DECLINE

1. Inflated: The Church is smaller than we think.
2. Hated: Accelerating anti-Christian culture.
3. Dividing: Splitting on politics & social justice.
4. Bankrupt: Dependent on decreasing dollars.
- **Bleeding**: Young people & others are leaving.
- **Sputtering**: Not reaching new people.

FACTOR #5: BLEEDING

The evangelical church in the United States is losing the people it does have and the twenty-somethings are exiting faster than any other group.

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THE **LOST** GENERATION

- Barna estimates that of every **five** young evangelicals, **four** will “**disengage**” from church by age **twenty-nine**.
- Lifeway researchers have found that of every **three** young evangelicals that leave, **two** do not return.
- If this rate continues about **five million** age **18** to **29** year-olds will have **left** the church from **2007** to **2027**.
- Less than one-half of one percent (**.005**) of these young evangelicals have a biblical “**worldview**”

*"The **body** of Christ (The Church) is **bleeding out**.
We are **losing** our own **kids** –
somehow failing to **pass on** a meaningful **relationship**
with **God** (Father) through **Jesus Christ**.
In Jesus' terminology, we are **failing** at discipleship.
That is, we are failing at the **core command**
Jesus gave to his **followers**. ...
Jesus did not **call** His church to build **buildings**
or **websites** or worship **services**.
He called his **followers** to make **disciples**."*

John S. Dickerson
The Great Evangelical Recission (2013)

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FACTOR #6: SPUTTERING

*“Not only are we **bleeding** by **losing** the **people** we do have, our **engine** of **discipleship** is not **gaining** new people fast enough to **offset** the **losses** and keep up with the rapidly **growing** population.”*

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*“Therefore, **go** (in my power & authority)
and **make disciples** of all the nations (people),
baptizing them in the name
of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Teach these new disciples to **obey**
all the **commands** I have given you.
And be sure of this (**never forget**):
I am **with you** always (every day),
even to the **end** of the age.”*

Matthew 28: 18-20 NLT

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Are we making **disciples**?

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*Every believer (**disciple**) was faithfully **devoted** to following the teachings (**instruction** and **training**) of the apostles.*

*Their **hearts** were mutually **linked** to one another, sharing **communion** and coming together (**gathering**) **regularly** for (all kinds of) **prayer**.*

*A deep **sense** of holy **awe** swept over everyone, and the apostles **performed** many miraculous **signs** and **wonders**.*

*All the **believers** were in **fellowship** as **one** body, and they **shared** with one another **whatever** they had. ...*

Acts 2:42-44 TPT

*Daily they met together (gathered) in the temple courts
and in one another's homes to celebrate communion.*

*They shared meals together
with joyful (generous) hearts and tender humility.
They were continually filled with praises to God,
enjoying the favor of all the people.
And the Lord kept adding to their number daily
those who were coming to life (being saved).*

Acts 2:46-47 TPT

The Simple **Measure** of Health:
New Disciples

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For “*Everyone* who calls on the name of the Lord will be *saved*.”

But how can they *call* on him to *save* them
unless they *believe* in him (Jesus)?

And how can they *believe* in him unless someone *tells* them?

And how will anyone *go* and *tell* them without being *sent*?

That is why the scriptures say (Isaiah 52:7),

“How *beautiful* are the feet of *messengers* who bring *good news*!”

Romans 10:13-15 NLT

But the *believers* who were scattered (by persecution)
preached the *good news* about *Jesus*
wherever (*everywhere*) they went.

Acts 8:4 NLT

*“If we commit ourselves to **making** disciples
who then **make** more disciples,
we can **reverse** each of the twenty-first century
declines documented in this book.
It will not be easy. But it will be worth it.
This is our **moment** of decision.”*

John S. Dickerson

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3 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Are our **standards** for **success** (dollars, size, power and fame) the same as those of **Jesus'** missional **mandate**?
What are we **measuring** and how are we **doing**?
2. Are you "**winning** as many as possible?" Do you have specific **people** you are **praying** for with hope they will be **saved**? Are you a **messenger** of the good news?
3. Read **John 21:16-19**. What did Jesus **ask** Peter three times and then what did he **tell** him to **do**?