

# Finding New Prospects for Your Church

A magnifying glass with a silver handle and frame is positioned over a large crowd of dark grey, stylized human figures. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on a single, glowing yellow human figure with its arms raised in a gesture of joy or praise. The background is a dense field of these grey figures, creating a sense of a large, diverse group of people.

Church Renewal Resource  
Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada  
Region  
Church of the Nazarene

# Finding New Prospects for Your Church

*The purpose of this module is to challenge and equip the participants to find and reach new prospects for their church so they may be transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.*

*The objectives for this module are:*

- To realize the importance of reaching new prospects.**
- To examine eight key principles that will assist the church in reaching new**



# Finding New Prospects for Your Church

## I. Introduction

### A. Illustration

People went crazy during the gold rush of 1849. They had to find those gold nuggets! To find them they had to develop a plan. They needed to obtain tools. They had to figure out a method. Then they had to have an idea of where to look for those gleaming nuggets. No one ever dreamed of sitting at home and hoping gold would simply appear. They were prospectors. They went looking for what they valued.



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- B. This is the same way the church ought to think about finding new people for Jesus.
1. Unfortunately too many churches just go about their business HOPING new people will turn up in God's house. How sad!
  2. A plan is needed in order to REACH new people.
  3. We need to become prospectors. There is a "gold rush" waiting to be HARVESTED.



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- C. Such a plan rests firmly on PREVENIENT grace.
  1. Theologians tell us this is the grace that “goes before.” God’s grace “goes before” people ACCEPT Christ.
  2. God reaches out to us while we are LOST in sin. Without this grace we would never become a Christian.



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- D. What does this have to do with our discussion?  
People away from God NEED to be found.
1. They also WANT to be found because God's prevenient grace has created a spiritual hunger in them.
  2. A plan to reach new people rests on God's GRACE which "goes before" we ever get there.
  3. Lost people are WAITING to be found.



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- II. The plan to reach new people is comprised of eight key principles.
  - A. The principle of PASTORAL leadership
    - 1. The pastor must lead the WAY in finding new people.
      - a. Congregants will rarely ENGAGE in a ministerial activity unless they see the behavior modeled by their pastor.
      - b. The ministerial team must DECIDE to make this a commitment.



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2. If every pastor and staff is to set the example they must be **INVOLVED** in the lives of lost people.
  - a. This active involvement is basic but often **IGNORED**.
  - b. Often the pastor and staff are so **BUSY** doing the everyday tasks of ministry they fail to get involved in the lives of others.





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- i. How does the pastor rub shoulders with the lost?
- ii. Illustration

Just yesterday I attended a “young authors” day at the elementary school and a Little League baseball game. In those two events I was introduced to people who need to be found. Get out of the office. Join service clubs. Work out at the YMCA. Get out there!



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B. The principle of getting the WORD out.

1. To reach new people a certain amount of MARKETING takes place.

a. Advertising is simply another way of saying to lost people, “the church LOVES you.”

b. Many of the lost think of the church NEGATIVELY. Our job is to let them know the truth.



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2. Use all possible METHODS to get the word out.
  - a. PLAN for a monthly marketing event.
  - b. Brainstorm with your leadership team to explore ideas for REACHING new people who may work in your setting.



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- c. Some ideas include:
  - i. Passing out school pencils with church information stamped on it
  - ii. Web Site Pop Ups
  - iii. Newspaper ads
  - iv. New homeowner letters.
  - v. Try a variety of things and see what works.



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3. In getting the word out focus on passing out information in a way that alleviates the FEARS of new people. Here are some of the questions people ask, which reveal a particular fear about attending church:



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Question: “What do I wear?”

Fear: I will dress inappropriately.

Question: “Which door do I enter through?”

Fear: I will feel stupid.

Question: “What will they ask me to do there?”

Fear: I won't know what to do and I won't be in control.

Question: “Will anybody care that I am there?”

Fear: I won't be wanted.



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Question: “Will it be boring? How long will I be there?”

Fear: I will waste my precious Sunday morning sleep.

Question: “Will my kids be taken care of?”

Fear: I don't want my kids to be hurt.

Question: “What will take place during the worship time?”

Fear: I won't know how to do what they do.

Question: “What time does church start?”

Fear: I will show up too late/too early



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C. The principle of MOBILIZING members

1. Churches that routinely find new people are churches that EXPECT every member to be involved in the process.

a. Everyone is needed REGARDLESS of his or her gifts and talents.

b. People are NEEDED who can speak out, cook, set up chairs, baby-sit, make posters, and peel stamps.





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## 2. THINK of your church.

- a. How many people are INVOLVED in the ministry of reaching out to new people?
- b. What PERCENTAGE of the church does that represent?
- c. STRIVE to reach 100% participation by conducting a “catch the vision” service.
- d. Sermons on the biblical topic of the priesthood of all believers and the Body of Christ will also help ENCOURAGE participation.



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D. The principle of public CELEBRATION

1. Celebrate the FACT that new people are coming to Christ. Beat the drum!

a. Schedule times for new people to TELL their salvation stories.

b. Tremendous excitement is GENERATED as individuals tell their story



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2. Every church can do SOMETHING in this area of celebration.

A new family at one church recently shared one of the reasons they chose that church. Some of the services start with a time of greeting each other as music plays. This mini celebration made this new family like they were part of the church family.



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E. The principle of RELEVANCY.

1. If we are really going to find and keep prospects we must be CULTURALLY relevant.



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- a. Understand that the church culture is vastly DIFFERENT than the culture in most communities.
- b. We typically speak in a different language, sing to different instruments, and dress differently than those OUTSIDE the church.



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- c. The church must DECIDE to make changes in its culture in order to reach and keep new people.
- d. This change can be risky business if the church confuses METHOD with message.
- e. The MESSAGE must never be changed, but the method is up for grabs if it reaches the people of our community.



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2. To fail in this area means we may attract new people but not KEEP them.
  - a. The church must CONSISTENTLY answer the unspoken question in the mind of new people: “What does this have to do with where I am?”
  - b. If the church does not meet their needs again and again they will ABANDON the church.



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- C. After all, there are plenty of other “communities” calling out to them if the church lets them **DOWN**.
  - i. They will find relevancy in the community of Little League, Soccer club, Karate school, and “Biker Night” at Hooters.
  - ii. How tragic for them to find greater relevancy in those groups than in the Body of Christ!





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F. The principle of Big SUNDAY.

1. Denominations have long recognized there are two annual natural PEAKS in church attendance during the year.
2. One Sunday per month plan to have a higher attendance Sunday that REACHES out to new people.



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G. The principle of utilizing one day a week for OUTREACH.

1. Churches that are EFFECTIVELY reaching new people select one day a week in which to do nothing but evangelism.



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- a. We all know it is too easy for the church to get sidetracked doing everything but the main thing: reaching NEW people.
- b. To be successful we must put the good INTENTIONS we have in outreach on the calendar. Just as a magnifying glass can start a fire when properly focused so too can the church reach new people when it is properly focused.
- c. Imagine what could happen if you focused all the ENERGY and resources of the church one day a week on reaching new people!



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2. After you make the commitment to weekly focus on outreach, **DECIDE** what must be done on that day. Some suggestions include:
  - a. **PRAYER** teams spending time in prayer for the lost.
  - b. Volunteers working the phone lines to **CONTACT** recent visitors.



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- c. Pastoral led TRAINING sessions on the subject of outreach.
- d. Sending out VISITATION teams.
- e. Teams of people who gather to write PERSONAL notes of love and encouragement to people who are not yet part of the church.



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H. The principle of no PLAN B.

1. We must firmly understand the church is the final HOPE for people who need Christ.
  - a. The Bible gives no indication God has created a BACKUP plan if the church fails. The buck stops with us.



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- b. Failure of the church to REACH new people means we have increased the population of hell.
- c. When the church adopts this mindset we will finally become the OUTREACHING institution God wanted us to be. Safety nets will fall.



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- d. Personal opinions and preferences will be set aside. UNITY will prevail.
- e. God has CHOSEN us to be the outreaching arm of His love to a sick and dying world. We must not fail.
- f. There is no PLAN B.





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2. This ATTITUDE must start at the top and work its way down to every member.
  - a. The pastor must passionately believe there is no plan B. This belief must be then TRANSFERRED to the leadership team.



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- b. Soon a FIRE for the lost will be burning brightly. For some churches it will take longer than others.
- c. Too many churches have focused on themselves so long that when it comes to lighting a fire for others their wood for is wet. Keep GENERATING sparks and sooner or later the fire will start.



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## III. Conclusion

- A. The children of America have a new cartoon hero: Bob the Builder. The church has much to learn from this smiley construction worker. He routinely asks, “Can we fix it?” Then, he responds with the exciting answer: “YES, we can!”
- B. Can the church reach new people? The answer is exciting: YES we can!



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## Small Group Activity

1. Discuss the likeness between the Gold Rush of 1849 and the spiritual harvest field all around us. Focus on key ideas such as value, passion, equipping, and planning. How similar is your church to the group of “Forty-Niners” that invested their lives to find gold?
2. List some ways your leadership team can rub shoulders with the lost in your own community. What marketing currently takes place in your church? How can you improve in this area?





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3. Discuss the pros and cons of appointing a person to be responsible for marketing your church to the community.
4. Approximately what percentage of your church is involved in the outreach process? What can you do to increase that percentage during the next twelve months?
5. What are you currently doing in the area of celebrating the fact that new people are coming to Christ? Right now plan one way to celebrate within the next month.



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6. Imagine you are an unchurched person who comes to your church for the very first time. Through these new eyes and ears what do you notice about the language? music? sermon? dress? What would need to change to make you, as a new person, feel more comfortable?
7. What would need to happen in your church to make a weekly big Sunday possible? What resources would you need? Who would need to be involved? Brainstorm about the possibility of starting a team who will be responsible for making big Sundays happen.



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8. 1. Decide which day of the week would best be suited for outreach. Why would that day work better than others?

Discuss the implications for the church regarding the fact that there is no “plan B” for reaching the lost.





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For more information, find us online

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