

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



5 Tell-Tale Signs

OF A REMARKABLE CHURCH

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"Be genuine. Be remarkable. Be worth connecting with." - Seth Godin

Your church grows when people tell their friends about it. It really is that simple. In my recent book, [Church Growth Flywheel](#), we explored how to add regular prompts to remind your people to talk with their friends about your church. At its core, the book is all about how to make your church more remarkable – literally a church that people remark more about.

As I've studied and observed churches over the years, I've noticed that growing churches are the kind of churches that people talk about. There is something happening to them that is different enough that people are talking about them. Here are five tell-tale signs that I see repeatedly in churches that people are remarking about.

Remarkable Churches Have Messages that Connect with Real Life

¾ of church attendees, studied by Gallup, say that messages based on scripture and are relevant to life are a major factor in choosing the church they attend. [\[ref\]](#)

Churches continue to be teaching driven communities. It might seem blindingly obvious, but it can be an easily overlooked part of what our churches "do". **Remarkable churches have messages that people talk about.** They connect the timeless truths of scripture to people's everyday lives. They devote time, energy and resources to ensuring that the message portion of what happens every weekend is of as high quality as possible.

5 Ways Most Churches Could Improve Their Messages

- **Delegate More** // Most pastors are doing too many other things that aren't core to generating a great message this weekend. Narrow the focus of how to spend your time to ensure a large portion of the week is given to this task.
- **Seek (Honest) Feedback** // Building a community of people who will give honest feedback on messages is a vitally important part of improvement. Push beyond the "Great sermon, pastor!" backslapping that happens on Sundays.
- **Get More Visual** // Jesus was constantly using what he saw around him as an object lesson to drive home a deep truth. Your people are visual learners and using a well-placed "prop" in a message will make your messages more sticky.
- **Practice** // Please don't have the first service be the place where you first run through the message. Professionals practice while amateurs wing it.
- **Drive to Application** // When we encounter transcendent truth it should move us to live differently. Work hard to move beyond vague platitudes and push towards practical applications to real life.

Remarkable Churches Serve Their Community

Volunteerism is at a 30-year high. Every age group is volunteering more today than in the past. [\[ref\]](#)

Getting people out of their seats and into the streets continues to be something that many churches are doing to impact their communities. Remarkable churches know that people want to make a difference in their cities and so create platforms for these opportunities. People want to be a part of churches that model a selfless lifestyle, and community service is one important way that the church displays this.

3 Reasons Community Service Drives a Church's Remarkability

- **Good Thing vs. God Thing** // We think that caring for the last, least and lost in our communities is a "God thing", while the people we're attempting to reach see it as a "good thing". Community service allows our churches to express what we're "for" rather than against and many in cities we serve can find an align with that.
- **People Aged 34-44 Volunteer the Most** [ref] // Many churches would say that they are attempting to reach adults in their mid-30s. Curiously, the highest volunteer rates are also people in their mid-30s. In fact, the volunteer rate of this age group is nearly 1/3. This age group of people values community service and are attracted to churches that are also serving!
- **Instagram Friendly** // *This is the shallowest of reasons!* Social media is driving real-world behavior. People are thinking about where they are spending their "spare time" to help craft the sort of image they want to portray online. These community service events are natural events that people love sharing online.



It goes without saying that there is lots of evidence in the New Testament that the church needs to be engaging with the poor. In fact, time and again the "outcome" of the community of Christ is the poor are served. It's clear that we're called to do it and our community responds well to it... what are you waiting for?

Remarkable Churches Invest in Next Generation Ministries

Studies show that parents lose sleep worrying about their kids more than any other worry in their lives. [ref]

The amazing thing about the study sighted above is that parents lie awake at night and worry about their kids regardless of their age! We're worried about how our kids are developing and growing into being well-adjusted humans. We're concerned about their educational and emotional growth. We're rethinking what we said to our kids and overanalyzing what they said back to us.

Parents are worried about their kids and not how to parse the Greek verb in text you're talking about this weekend.

Remarkable churches have always invested to make sure that their kids and student ministries are thriving because they want to pass the message onto the next generation, and they know that parents are open to help with raising their kids.

5 Ways Your Church Could Invest More in Next Generation Ministries

- **Invite Leaders in** // Don't relegate these leaders to the "kids table" but bring them into the overall church leadership conversation. Often times 50% of the church volunteers are serving in this area, and this fact alone means they need to be at the table!
- **Listen** // There are lots of great ideas brewing in kids and student ministry teams. Take time to listen to what these leaders are saying about the future of the church.
- **Give Them More Money** // What if you invested the same percentage of your budget in next generation ministries as they serve at your church? What if you doubled the percentage?
- **Hire Well** // Look for the absolute best leaders you can for this vitally important aspect of your church, and then hire them to lead this area.
- **Celebrate Them** // Take time out and celebrate what is happening in this area with the rest of the church. Brag on them behind their backs and in front of their faces!

Remarkable Churches Create Online Content Worth Sharing

68% of U.S. adults are now Facebook users and roughly three-quarters of those users are connecting daily! [ref]

Social media has been both a boom and a bust for the local church. Many pastors have seen first-hand the destruction social media has had on members of their communities and so might be hesitant to embrace the platforms. However, the midweek ministry opportunities that these platforms provide are unparalleled in history.

If your church is ignoring these platforms then you are ignoring your community.

Remarkable churches develop online content that their people will want to share. So much more than just content that asks people to “come to church this Sunday”, this content is the sort of thing that people find intriguing, inspiring or entertaining. This online content could include but isn’t limited to:

- Great stories about what’s happening in people’s lives.
- Compelling images of what it’s like to attend church.
- Quotes from messages that connect with people.
- “FAQ” content that tackles questions people are asking.
- Video content from within your services.
- Articles designed to inspire conversation.



3 Resources to Help Your Church with Online Content Worth Sharing!

- [10 Churches \(You May Not Have Heard Of\) to Follow for Social Media Inspiration](#)
- [16 Social Media Tools You Need To Know About](#)
- [How you Can Use Social Media to Help Grow Your Church](#)

Remarkable Churches Build Relationships

“Many people desperately need to receive this message: ‘I feel and think much as you do, care about many of the things you care about... You are not alone.’” - Kurt Vonnegut [ref]

People need to be needed. We were created to be social beings. Some have said that loneliness and isolation are the ills of this age. Truly remarkable churches connect people with each other. They push far beyond the “show” and move towards each other.

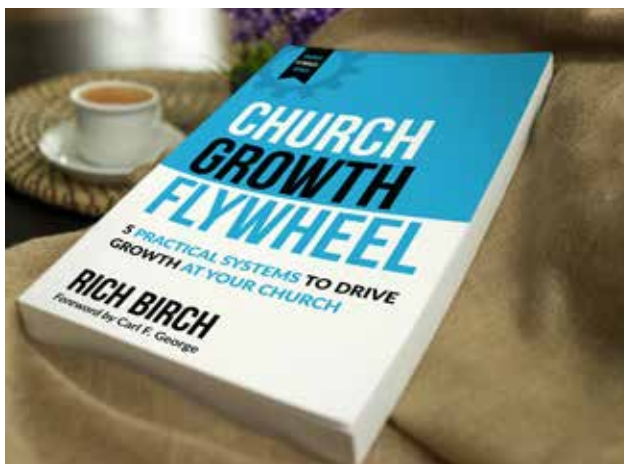
Remarkable churches constantly move people from anonymity towards community.

7 Ways to Make Your Church More Relational

- **Add Some Coffee** // Something almost magical happens when coffee is available in any environment; it makes it more relational. It slows people down from just rushing out at the end of the service. Even the big football player type guy can be intimidated to talk to other people, but when he has a cup of good coffee in his hand he’s comfortable to chat it up.
- **Start a Foyer Team** // Find your most outgoing (and not creepy!) volunteers and ask them to help “connect people” in the foyer. Charge them with “swimming” the foyer before and after your services to find people who might be just “standing around” and approach them to get to know them. Ask them to make introductions between people... like a great party host. The key to this team is that they aren’t at some “post” to stand there and do a specific job; their role is to move around the foyer to find people to connect and welcome.
- **Add Conversation Prompts During the Service** // Why not add some fun conversation starters to your service next weekend and see what happens? Near the beginning of the service, ask people to turn to someone they don’t know and answer a simple and fun question. Don’t make it too complex... something that can just spark a small conversation. Hopefully, these small interactions will break the ice and make it easier to connect after the service.
- **“New Here?” Strategy** // How do you acknowledge people who are new to your church? Make sure to take time out during the service to acknowledge people who are new to your church and give them a sense

of how they can take some initial steps into the community. Lots of churches offer some sort of “first-time guest gift” for people when they arrive... everybody loves to get a gift!

- **Name Tags** // We’ve talked about this before in a previous post entitled “[5 Reasons Your Church Should Offer Name Tags Every Sunday](#)”. Read & apply.
- **Clear & Easy Next Steps** // How easy is it for people to get onto a service team or into a small group? What could you do to make it twice as easy as it is today? Providing über clear “next steps” is critical for churches to become more relational. Every weekend people arrive at your church wanting to “get plugged in”. Are you ready for them when they are ready for you? (Or do you make them wait for a special time during the year?) How can you make it even clearer how people can find their place in the community?
- **Add Play to the Service** // At its core, friendship is just shared experiences. What if you did something really fun in an upcoming service so people have some sort of shared experiences? Throw out some beach balls during a high energy worship song on a long weekend. Put a mini golf set in the foyer as people arrive to play together. Hand out popcorn to highlight a message that’s going to use some movie clips to tell a point. Find something fun for your people to participate in together, and you’d be amazed the relationships that will begin to develop.



Practical Help to Make Your Church More Remarkable

Are you ready to see your church impact more people than it has ever done before? Are you tired of church leadership books that are long on theory but short on practical help? Have you wanted to reach more people in your community but weren’t sure where to start? Are you worried that your church isn’t reaching its full potential? “[Church Growth Flywheel: 5 Practical Systems To Drive Growth at Your Church](#)” is full of practical insights to help your church reach more people, starting today!

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