

The Church of Irresistible Community Influence

*Book Reference: The Church of
Irresistible Influence, Robert Lewis*

Presenter: Rick Reese

Jan 7, 2015



Can You Imagine...



- The community in which you live being genuinely thankful for your church
- City leaders valuing your church's friendship and participation.
- A large number of your church members actively engaged in community service
- The community changing because of your church's involvement
- Many in your city praising God for your church's impact
- Can you imagine the spiritual harvest that naturally follows if this is true

Reconnecting the church with the community



Irresistible Influence is real...

- **Matthew 5:16** *Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*
- **Matthew 5:13** *Ye are the salt of the world...*
- **Matthew 5:14** *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
- **Matthew 22:39** *...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*
- **Matthew 28:18-19** *...all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*
- **Galatians 5:23** *Against love, “there is no law.”*

Love is irresistible—Irresistible Influence (I²)



Irresistible Influence is about Love and Deeds

- Hebrews 10:24

“love and good deeds”



- James 2:14-26

“faith without deeds is dead”



Spanning the Great Divide

*What Will It Take to
Reconnect the
Church and Culture?*



Why the Growing Chasm? *Between...*

- First-century authority and postmodern skepticism;
- A bold proclamation of God's love and unmet human needs;
- The selfless vision of Christ and the self-obsessed reality of our world
- The truth of God's laws and the moral compromise of our culture
- Those who believe and those who don't.

Consider...

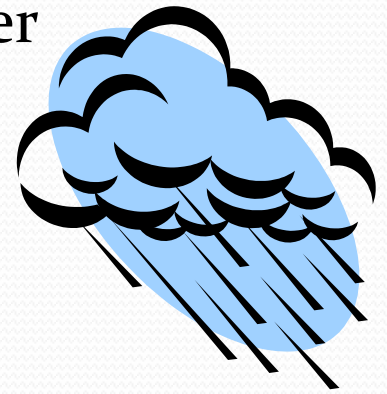
- *6 out of 10 Americans believe the church is irrelevant*
- *Not only losing ground but losing our voice*
- *170 million non-Christians make America the 3rd largest mission field*
- *1 out of 3 pastors believe the church is making a positive impact on culture*





Fallback Strategies

- “Be Culturally Relevant” – Contemporary repackaging
- “Promise Heaven Now” – Health, Wealth, Power
- “Just Preach the Word” – Stay doctrinally pure
- “Stay the Course” – Same “tried-and-true”



The question is simple: What impact is the church having on the community?



Without its own bridges to the world, church life – in time – fades into isolation, self-congratulation, and finally, irrelevance.



Relevant Church

A community of people who stand firm in the truth over time against the raging currents of opposition and who present living proof of a loving God to a watching world.



New Testament Church: A Foundation to Model

- Let Everyone See Your Good Deeds -*Matthew 5:16*
- Love Your Enemies, Do Good to Them -*Luke 6:31-35*
- It Is More Blessed to Give -*Acts 20:35*
- Overcome Evil with Good -*Romans 12:20-21*
- Do Good to All People *Galatians -6:9-10*
- Created to Do Good Works -*Ephesians 2:10*



New Testament Church: The Correct Foundation

- Do Not Grow Weary of Doing Good -2 *Thessalonians 3:13*
- Be Rich in Good Deeds -1 *Timothy 6:17-19*
- Engage in Good Deeds -*Titus 3.8*
- Be Eager to Do What is Good -*Titus 2:11-14*
- Spur One Another to Love and Good Deeds -*Hebrews 10:24*
- Be Eager to Do Good -1 *Peter 3:13*



Bridge Builder Questions

- *What kind of impact do you believe today's church is having on our culture?*
- *How does the community around you “know” your church? Do they feel a positive connection with it?*
- *What tangible influence is your church having on your community?*



Designing The Structure

The How-Tos of Bridge Building



The Big Idea



- *Irresistible influence was Jesus' Big Idea*
 - *The church possesses and exercises it*
 - *Illustrated by multiplying loaves and fish*
 - *On this rock, I will build my church*
 - *Go forth and make disciples*
 - *The salt of the earth...the light of the world*



Christian Lifestyle for a Relevant Church

We exist to manifest the reality of Christ to the world by equipping Christians to live lifestyles of spiritual integrity, which are...

- *Passionately committed to Jesus Christ (a heart for God)*
- *Biblically measured (everything by the Book)*
- *Morally pure (in a morally comprised age)*
- *Family Centered (healthy homes are priority)*
- *Evangelistically bold (willing and confident in sharing one's faith)*
- *Socially responsible (the community around us is our business)*

...and to equip Christians for influential works of service in our community and the world.



The “Vision” of Good Works

From Lay Spectator to I² Participant

- When gifts and abilities could make a difference...then GO Serve!
 - *Results:*
 - *Some went inside the church*
 - *Some joined nonprofits*
 - *Some went to assist public schools*
 - *Some went overseas*
 - *Some got involved in social issues in government*
 - *Some helped start new churches*
 - *Some became spiritual mentors*
 - *Some started new spiritual enterprises:*
 - *With the poor, those suffering from divorce, with AIDS patients, in prisons, adoption agencies were established, television commercials were produced, deaf community was reached, inner-city programs were started.*





Bridge Builder Questions

- *What kind of impact do you believe today's church is having on our culture?*
- *How does the community around you “know” your church? Do they feel a positive connection with it?*
- *What tangible influence is your church having on your community?*



Expanding the I² Effort



Equipping Leaders



Who are we looking for-- Characteristics of Leaders

- *Keen intellect*
- *High energy*
- *A track record of leadership accomplishments*
- *Spiritual passion and a godly lifestyle*
- *An ability to think conceptually*
- *Results-oriented*
- *An ability to work in a team environment*
- *A bent toward idealism*



Your Personal Transition to I²

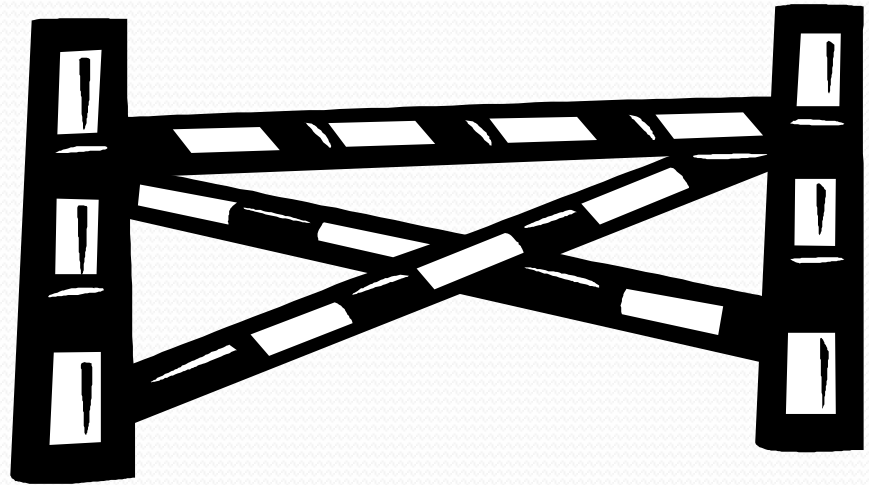
- *Reversal of critical perspective:*
 - *From being served to **serving***
 - *From finding community in the church to **impacting community as the church***
 - *From retreating to **influencing***
 - *From isolation to **engagement***
 - *From the church of my needs to the **church of good deeds***





Four Personal Roadblocks

- *Fear*
- *Confusion*
- *Lack of Direction*
- *Questions of Impact*





Equipping Christian Leaders for Community Service Training

2010 Course Themes

- January The Real You
- February Spiritual Warfare & Prayer
- Mar– Apr Knowledge, Wisdom, & Skills to Empower
- May Community & Civic Service
- June Marketplace Ministry

Community Field Trips



*At some point, the questions
must be asked:*

What is the purpose of my life?

Where has God designed me to serve?

*The church structure must help people
ask those critical questions, and then
answer them.*



Bridge Builder Questions

- *Does our church have a way of identifying future church and community leaders with your congregation and encouraging them? How?*
- *What support-financial, personal, practical-could a young leader expect? Is the development of future church leaders a priority of your present church leadership?*



Anticipating the Future

The Church in the Twenty-first Century

If you are serious about having your church make an impact, become an expert in your community. Pastors should know more about their communities than anyone else.

Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*



Questions for the Church?

- *What are the unique strengths as a church?*
- *What are the critical issues of our community?*
- *Which of those can our church effectively influence?*
- *Do we have a structure that can move our people to those needs?*
- *Are we willing to commit resources, staff, and people to make an impact?*

A stylized illustration of a bridge with a large arch, rendered in black and white with some blue shading, set against a light blue background with wavy lines.

Raising Money for Marketplace Ministry

- *Urban and Social Entrepreneurs*
 - Distinct from a business entrepreneur who sees value in the creation of new markets, the social entrepreneur aims for value in the form of transformational change that will benefit disadvantaged communities and, ultimately, society at large.

Command those who are rich in this present world... to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

- 1 Timothy 6:17-18



Developing a Community Strategy

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

Every community has a story...

*And that particular context must be
thoroughly understood and
considered by any church wanting
to make an impact on its
community in a meaningful way.*



Phase 1: Community Research

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

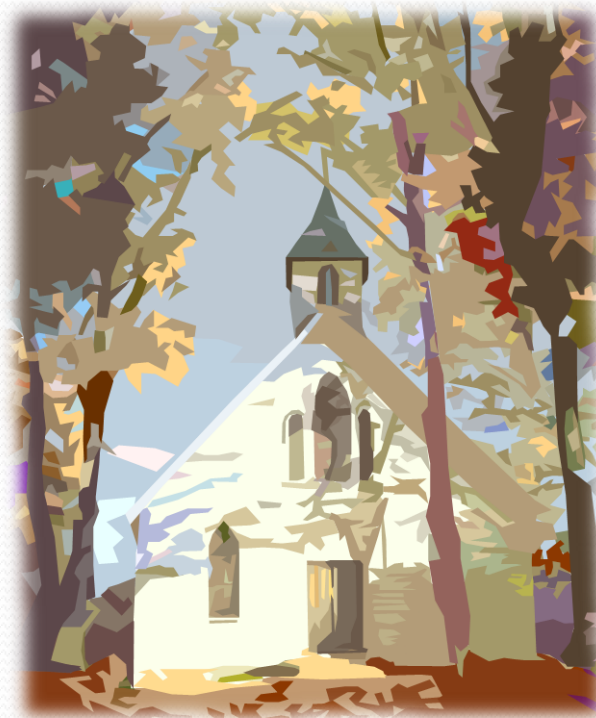
*Identified the real needs of
the community*



Major Community Issues

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

- *Affordable housing*
- *Domestic violence*
- *Health-care access*
- *Youth in poverty*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Elderly issues*
- *Transportation*
- *Economics/Employment*



**Church's
Responsibility?**



Phase 2: Focus Group Feedback

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

Brought community and social service leaders together to prioritize the community needs.



Phase 3: Survey of Churches

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

Matching demographics and local church programs with community needs to assess how connected or disconnected they are.



Surprising Results

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

Fact #1: *The popular perception that central Arkansas is a highly “churched” community is wrong.*

Fact #2: *Race and education are still dominant issues in our community.*

Fact #3: *There is presently a wide gap between the major needs of the community and the availability of programs in churches to meet those needs.*

Fact #4: *Central Arkansas churches invest very little money in local ministry programs.*

Fact #5: *The community welcomes church involvement.*



Fellowship's I² Investments

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

- *To powerfully connect with our city in philanthropic partnerships;*
- *To bless our city with more and more strategic Common Cause ministries, which build genuine relationships and open doors for the sharing of the gospel;*
- *To give significant gifts of money to strategic faith-based causes that minister beyond the reach of Fellowship Bible Church;*



Fellowship's I² Investments

Fellowship Bible Church's Survey – Case Study

- *To help train the next generation of pastoral leaders through a church-based Leadership Residency Program;*
- *To assist large numbers of churches in their development through an annual church training conference;*
- *To plant and nurture new churches throughout the United States;*
- *To advance the fulfillment of the Great Commission.*



In Summary: 3 Requirements

- *I² will Require Pastor to Redefine Success*
- *I² Will Require the Church to Redesign Its Structure*
- *I² Will Require Laypeople to Reconnect with a Lifestyle of Specific Spiritual Standards and Service.*



Equipping Christian Leaders for Community Service Training

Vision

Be the marketplace church of free men who are the funding arm of their church and respective passions -- to support community outreach and Kingdom building.

- Raise up Kings anointed to collect and distribute the wealth of the marketplace
- Create a union of servant-leaders anointed for civic leadership
- To walk in the love of God, country, community, and our fellow man
- Be the church of irresistible influence in our community by freely giving of our time, talent, and treasure.
- Assume the authority of the Believer with the Spirit of Wisdom, and Revelation of Christ and His Word.



People today show interest in the truth of the gospel only after they've seen the relevance of the church and the credibility of Christians.

- Elmer Town and Warren Bird, Into the Future

What is your responsibility to the community?