



*"When we serve others in a culture that is so self-centered, that service will stand out. It's about intentional acts of kindness toward the people in our lives, saying, 'How do I authentically serve you?' as opposed to, 'How do I convince you that Christ is the Messiah?'"*

*—Matt Hammett*

# Voices of the Next Generation

by Jason Evans

Three leaders in post-modern ministry give us their take on the present and future realities of outreach.

*Authentic ministry. The life-changing gospel of Christ. Cultural context.* Each church, in its own way, must explore its identity and discover the unique role to which God has called them in their own community. Today, both new and established churches are feeling the impact of our changing culture. Ministry paradigms are evolving as church leaders strive to reach young adults and others in our post-modern world. *Outreach Magazine* recently spoke to Chris Seay of Ecclesia Church in Houston, Doug Pagitt of Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis and Matt Hammett of College Avenue Baptist Church in San Diego to get their take on outreach and its changing role in next generation ministry.

## OUTREACH:

In recent years, the “mega-church” has been the prevailing model for the evangelical church. What new models do you see on the horizon?

## MATT HAMMETT:

I think music is playing a much larger role in the new models we're seeing. Music is the medium in which the next generation speaks. Within the Willow Creek model, quality music was a part of the worship experience but it wasn't necessarily *worshipful* by design because they were trying to be non-threatening to the seeker. I think what we're finding now is that worship is not threatening to the seeker but is actually compelling. ➔



**MATT HAMMETT**

*is the lead pastor of Flood, a ministry to young adults at College Avenue Baptist Church in San Diego. Flood began in October 2000 as Sunday evening worship service geared to 16-to-35-year-olds and has quickly grown to two services a week of 1,500 persons each.*



**DOUG PAGITT**

*is the founding pastor of Solomon's Porch, a Minneapolis church for people seeking a fresh approach to faith, spirituality and historical Christianity. A graduate of Bethel Seminary, Doug is also a Senior Fellow with Emergent, a generative friendship of missional church leaders around the world.*



**CHRIS SEAY**

*is the founding pastor of Ecclesia in downtown Houston, a church existing as a holistic missional Christian community in an urban post-modern context. He also founded University Baptist Church in Waco, Texas. Chris travels extensively, teaching in the areas of missions and post-modern issues.*

**CHRIS SEAY:**

I don't think that the mega-church model is the ideal any longer. I think it has been a suburban aberration that will pass as quickly as it came. It's based on a felt-needs approach that says that the church is about meeting your felt or perceived needs. Instead, we need to take a look at the missional model we see in Acts—and today, internationally—and return to what authors like Leslie Newbigin have said about engaging culture in a “missional way.”

**DOUG PAGITT:**

I see community-based churches—churches that no longer see themselves as suppliers of religious experiences and services alone—as the model for the future. These churches form themselves around the essence of being a community, experiencing life's journey together and, in the process, bring people along that are still coming to faith or who are interested in faith.

**OUTREACH:**

**For the last decade church growth and leadership have been two hot buttons for the church. Will these have the same priority in the future?**

**MATT HAMMETT:**

I think that leadership will always be a priority. I don't know that the term “church growth” will last much longer, or that it will be as significant in the future. Church health will continue to become more significant.

**DOUG PAGITT:**

I don't think that churches that orient themselves around BHAG—Big Hairy Audacious Goals—will find this effective in the emerging culture. It's so cocky and seeking out the spectacular. I think many people are beginning to realize that the size of an organism, a church, can become severely limited at certain markers. Instead, I think that people will begin considering how church ministry and influence can grow in multiplicity, not in the size of one church. Church growth will shift from how big a church is to the fact that there will be a lot of

churches. That alone will force the re-articulating of the issues of leadership because if we have a lot of churches, we'll need a lot of leaders. And, we'll need more leaders with a different skill set than what you see in the multistaffed mega-church.

**How do you see the models of outreach changing over the next five to 10 years?**

**DOUG PAGITT:**

I think it will shift from the *content* to the *context*. Most evangelism has put a high emphasis on information. But most people come to faith within the context of family and *before* they have all of the information. This means that churches will need to shape the character of their own faith community, rather than focusing on content being properly disseminated. Churches will need to tell the Story using a minimum of communication skills and, instead, utilize hospitality and community in a greater way.

**MATT HAMMETT:**

The basic plan of salvation will remain, but how that message is delivered will be different. Fundamentally, outreach is about relationships, and it will always be that. I don't think we will see any new “tools,” although, I'm sure there will always be a place for that. There is not one specific way to reach out, and how we express that depends on how God has wired each of us individually. It should be unique to the individual.

**CHRIS SEAY:**

The church typically responds to the world as it was seen 20 years ago. We're still pounding “The Four Spiritual Laws,” and those were based on Newton's Laws. If you go to any university's science department, you'll find that we don't believe those are laws anymore. They exist as guides, but they are not known as *laws*. We are still doing this propositional evangelism to an emerging generation that doesn't learn in linear proposition. So we have to change our models drastically; otherwise, we'll continue toward extinction.

**Q** In what ways are you encouraging those within your faith community to reach out to the unchurched?

**MATT HAMMETT:**

**A** I think serving other people is very significant. We earn the right to be heard and gain influence on people's lives when we sincerely care for them, and when we put their needs above our own. When we serve others in a culture that is so self-centered, that service will stand out. It's about intentional acts of kindness toward the people in our lives, saying, "How do I authentically serve you?" as opposed to, "How do I convince you that Christ is the Messiah?" In serving others, I've found that they're not necessarily interested in the faith question right away, but if I serve them and they see that difference in my life, it will lead to dialogue.

**CHRIS SEAY:**

**A** People are now processing truth in new and different ways. Art, film and music have to become an important part of what we're doing, who we are, and how we teach. I'm a storyteller, so I'm *not* just taking the Scripture and extracting four points from it and saying, "This is what it means." I'm telling the story of God instead, which is what Christ did. As I teach, we use scores of digital images on multiple screens. We have areas where people paint while I'm teaching. I truly believe that we can learn in other ways besides verbal expression.

**DOUG PAGITT:**

**A** For those without an extensive evangelical experience, community and hospitality come pretty naturally. But for those that have been shaped by the evangelical context, it can be a painful process to find other ways to communicate the story of Jesus. We are trying to model community and provide opportunities for it in situations that are appropriate. If you provide opportunities for conversations, meals in people's homes, or events in which people's opinions and expressions become a center point, then learning perspectives begin to be formed. In our setting, we don't have a tactical approach to how we are going to instill this in people.

**Q** What books or materials are you reading right now that you have found to be helpful guides in reaching the unchurched?

**MATT HAMMETT:**

**A** I respect Erwin McManus' perspective in his book *Unstoppable Force*. It's an insightful work. A lot of times



when we speak of post-modernity, the conversation can become very deconstructive. But Erwin speaks quite positively to the issue of post-modernity and the church.

**CHRIS SEAY:**

**A** I would suggest works by Leslie Newbigin, and two books by The Gospel in Our Culture Network: *The Missional Church* and *The Church Between Gospel and Culture*.

**DOUG PAGITT:**

**A** *A New Kind of Christian* by Brian McLaren is helpful. Though, in my opinion, the things that are most helpful aren't yet written in books. I think it's too early to make conclusive statements about methodology or provide helpful information in book format. Understanding what it means to reach the next generation comes much more through conversations and through interactions with people. It's still in the "oral tradition," if I can use that historical picture. *A Celtic Way of Evangelism* by George G. Hunter speaks to this point. The text phase could still be a decade away.

**Q** If you could give pastors advice on how to reach out to the next generation, what would you say?

**CHRIS SEAY:**

**A** Look at people in Scripture, like Daniel, to learn what it means to be mission-oriented. Second, make some important changes in how you communicate and teach. Transition your →

## VOICES OF THE NEXT GENERATION

*Continued from page 37*

teaching and begin to tell the story of God. Create tension as the Hebrews did, rather than wrap it up all tight and neat in 30 minutes. Christ's stories were always subversive; they challenged the audience to think and to debate. Instead of directly answering their questions, his stories often made the people more confused.

Lastly, re-examine the modern Church structure. We tend to subdivide the Body in a way that has no natural relationships or interaction because we're built on felt-need models. Instead, single people need to learn from married people; young marrieds without kids should learn from married people with kids; and married people with kids should learn from married people with grown kids.

### DOUG PAGITT:

**A** Ponder your decision to reach the next generation very carefully. Don't sacrifice what and whom you are in order to reach a certain group. If you are doing a ministry *for* post-modern people, don't pretend to be one. If you don't have the time or information to make the full transition yourself, then don't pursue the idea. Don't push your church into this—it isn't something to enamor people with. These kinds of transitions should not cause strife and division.

### MATT HAMMETT:

**A** Make sure to have an emphasis on worship. Music has always been a big part of the Church, but it's even more important now because it's the universal language that people speak. Next, recognize how God has wired you and don't try to be something you're not.

Often in the evangelical community we see something that works, but rather than saying, "I want to learn from this," we say, "How can I copy this?" Get a fresh vision from God of how He wants to use you to reach this next generation.

The third piece would be to put a huge emphasis on a team concept. Church is not a one-man show all about the pastor. There needs to be a renewed sense of the priesthood of all believers, and the church should allow people to discover who they are in Christ and serve Him in their unique calling. ✨



*Jason Evans is the New Church Specialist for Outreach, Inc., where he works with church leaders devoted to new models of ministry and church planting. He served as the Director of Administration and the Young Adult Pastor at Daybreak Community Church in Carlsbad, Calif. He also helped plant Matthew's House, a collection of house churches in North San Diego.*

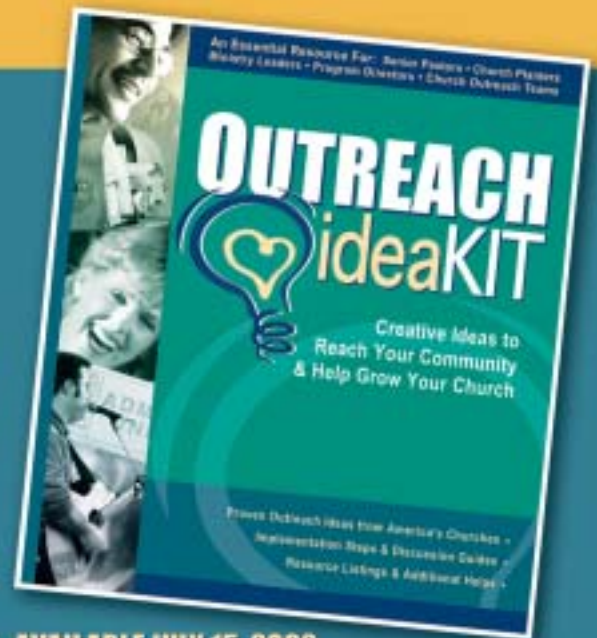
# Need some **CREATIVE IDEAS** for OUTREACH?

## WE HAVE THEM!

Full of ideas, resources and real church examples, the Outreach Idea Kit is easy to use, compact and informative. The attractive three ring binder provides everything you need to create exciting, effective outreach events. The kit includes: assessments, step-by-step instructions, resource lists, guidelines and evaluation forms for every idea—enabling your team to select ideas for your church's unique culture and community.

**Increase your church's outreach effectiveness.  
Order your copy today. Only \$59.95!**

**800-991-6011 or [www.Outreach.com](http://www.Outreach.com)**



**AVAILABLE JULY 15, 2002**

### Unique Outreach Ideas Include:

- Host a Celebrity
- Movie Theater Ads
- Throw a Block Party
- Community Appreciation Day
- Prayer Outreach Adventure & More!