

## A Church Leadership Revolution

By Larry Holland

RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN a new dynamic expressed in church leadership. The institution established 2000 years ago and rich in heritage and tradition, while in a world of literary and art revolutions, plus industrial and information revolutions, now finds itself in a new revolution: a *leadership* revolution.

Methods which have been sacred for centuries are now in question in virtually all camps of Christendom. The methodology of church had become so established that it seemed to be insulated from the changes of the world, where its members lived their daily lives. The industrial and information revolutions brought but subtle changes to the operation of the church, when compared to the impact these events had on the world at large.

A new generation has arisen and many leaders of this neo-church are second or third-generation church leaders.

Compared to their parents, they're more concerned with mission than method, and find that influ-

encing people is more important than impressing peers. Their methodology incorporates the use of tools and media which are commonplace outside the church, yet heretofore foreign to the church. They've sanctified the tools of society as an aid in fulfilling the Great Commission.

A casual survey of growing churches in the United States indicates some common threads crossing denominational and doctrinal lines. While the most visible aspects are the unorthodox tools and methods, a not-so-visible common factor belies those outward characteristics. This change speaks to the philosophical differences found in the generations following the previously dominant Baby Boomers.

These generations hold that the sacred methods of prior generations have been comparatively ineffective, and they're placing more emphasis on results than on methods. As a consequence, they're embracing an active, dynamic approach to attracting and retaining converts. Although you may find dissimilar approaches in the visible aspects within this neo-church movement, there is a common theme: *relevance*.

Today's America, with its political philosophy of religious tolerance, includes the acknowledgement of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Humanism and so many other religions of the world that there's no longer the predominant

Christian influence on public behavior. Therefore, the relevance of the Christian church to the public society has dissipated.

No longer can Christian church leadership simply preserve the gospel and revere the heritage. Today, church leaders must *relate* the basic tenets of the Christian faith to the demands and challenges of life in this post-modern world, *publicize* the positive impact of the gospel on one's life in this world, and *lead* converts in the application of Christian truths.

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command to "Go into all the world and make disciples..."

This new dimension of *leadership* encompasses far more than managing the operation of the religious institution. It demands a penetration of the world of the unbelievers in such a dramatic and practical way that they're drawn to Christianity from a point of need and, especially, *led* in the application of Christian doctrines and disciplines in their personal and professional lives, to the point of realizing the positive results from the application of scriptural truths. *Making* disciples is a proactive, hands-on mentoring process, requiring deliberate interjections into the lives of those new followers of Christ.

This *neo-leadership* is a bold, entrepreneurial, proactive movement of men and women (such as was exhibited by the first-century church), who have the confidence in their faith, their mission and the message that motivates them, to invade the surrounding world by whatever means necessary and overcome any doubts, challenges or fears so that they become influencers of people.

**Larry Holland** is pastor of administration/CFO of Covenant Church, Carrollton, Texas. Visit [covenantchurch.org](http://covenantchurch.org) or contact him at [larryh@covenantchurch.org](mailto:larryh@covenantchurch.org).