

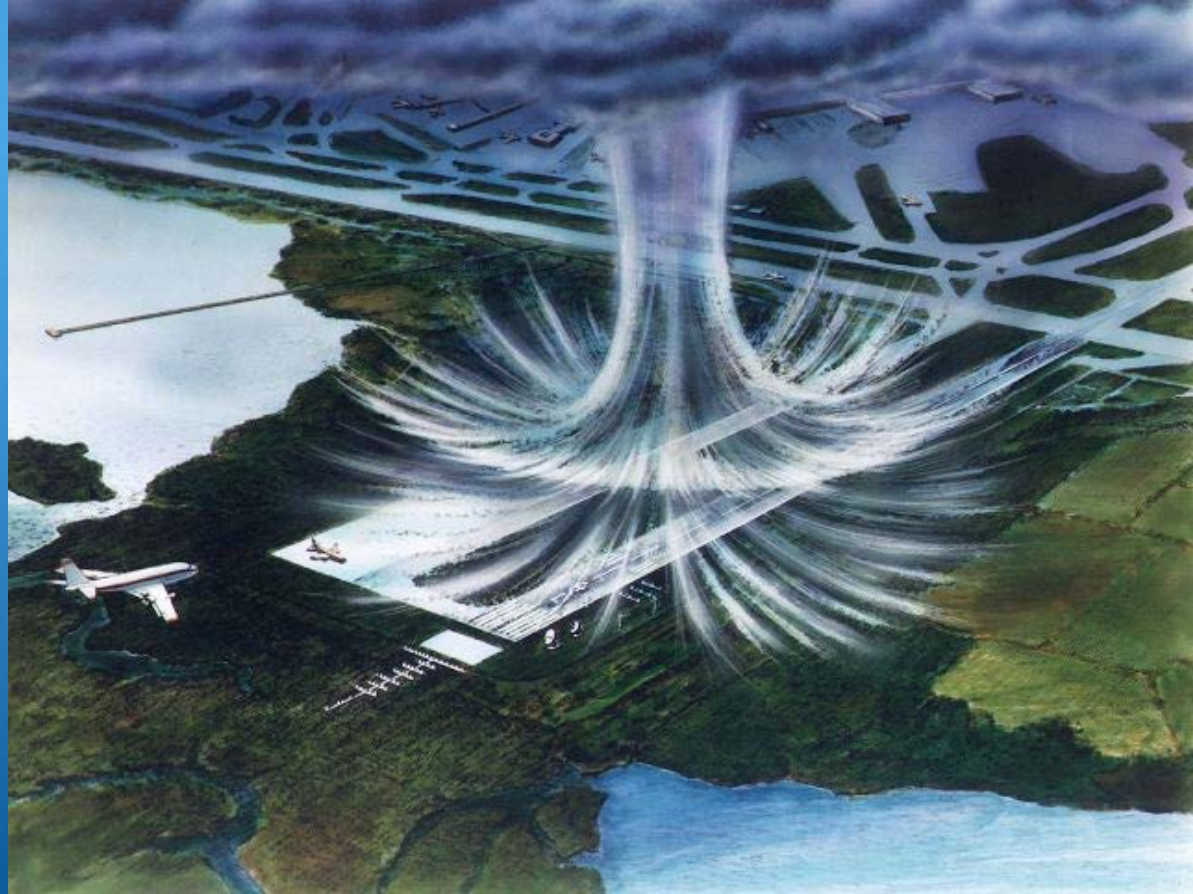


# Missions and Ministry in a Post-Christian Society: “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

Gulf Coast Baptist Association  
May 10, 2016

# “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

(image yourweatherblog.com)



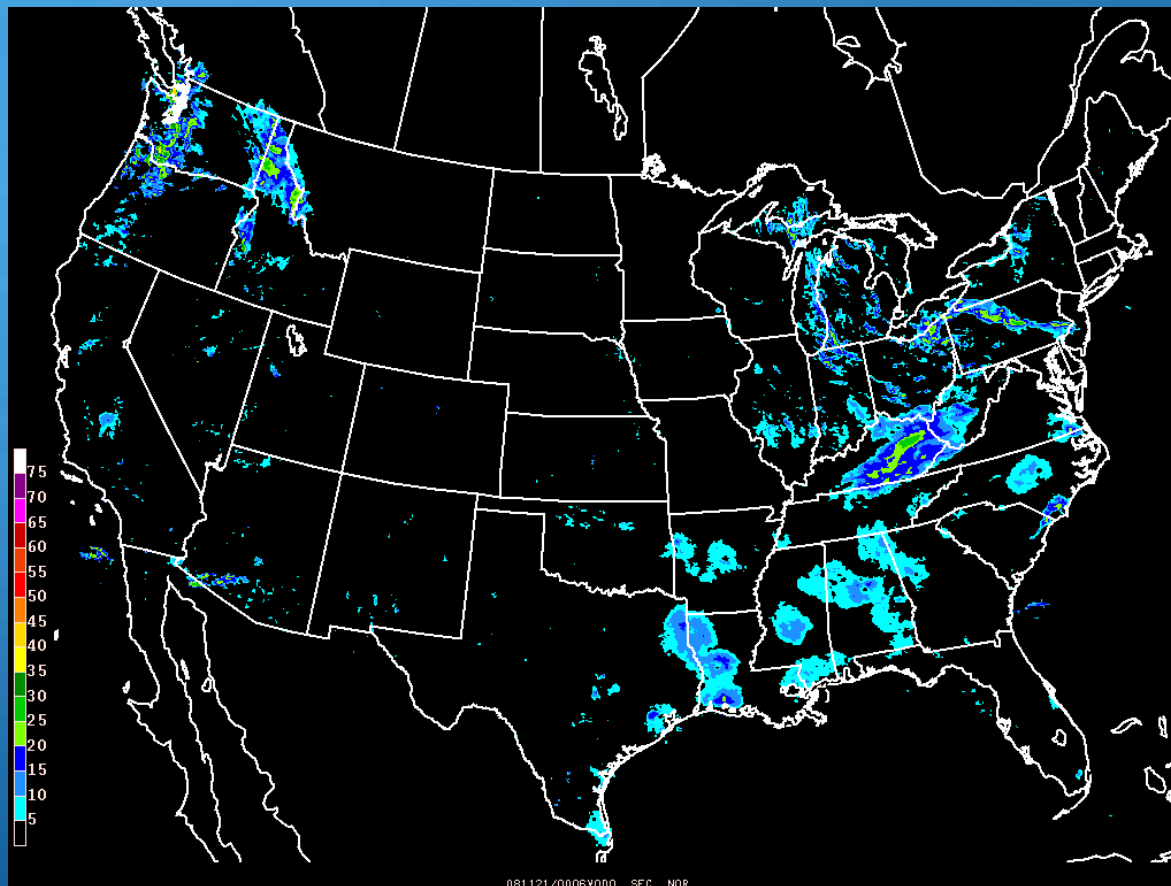
# “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

(image photographyblog.dallasnews.com)





# What happened to the map?





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- Context and Overview: What happened to the map?

### 1) The death of Christendom

-- Constantine and AD 313

- \* Pagans joined the church
- \* Emperor interference
- \* All “Christians”
- \* Marriage of church and state



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- Reformation – changed just the look
- Enlightenment – rationalism, empiricism, and the autonomous individual

Bottom line: Christendom is dead



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### 2) The fading of American Civil Religion:

- Protestant Christendom

- Christian nation? Remember:

- \* Entire world was “Christian”

- \* First secular nation!

- \* We miss Civil Religion

- \* Civil Religion is fading



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3) The growth of secularism – push religion to the margins and out of public life

4) The post-modern worldview:

- No absolutes
- Rejection of authority
- Constructed truth
- Pluralistic/multiple worldviews





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- Developing a Biblical Response

- 1) What we have to know:

-- Barna:

- \* 4% of American adults
- \* 9% of “born again”
- \* 51% of Protestant pastors
- \* 71% of SBC pastors



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### 2) What we have to be:

- Rediscover being a “peculiar” people
- Take a hard look at ourselves
- Learn from history and global church
- Grace and truth – theology of life

### 3) What we must do – the changing “fishing pond”



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- The Changing Fishing Pond:

1. Per Gallup:

- \* Religious preference in 1948

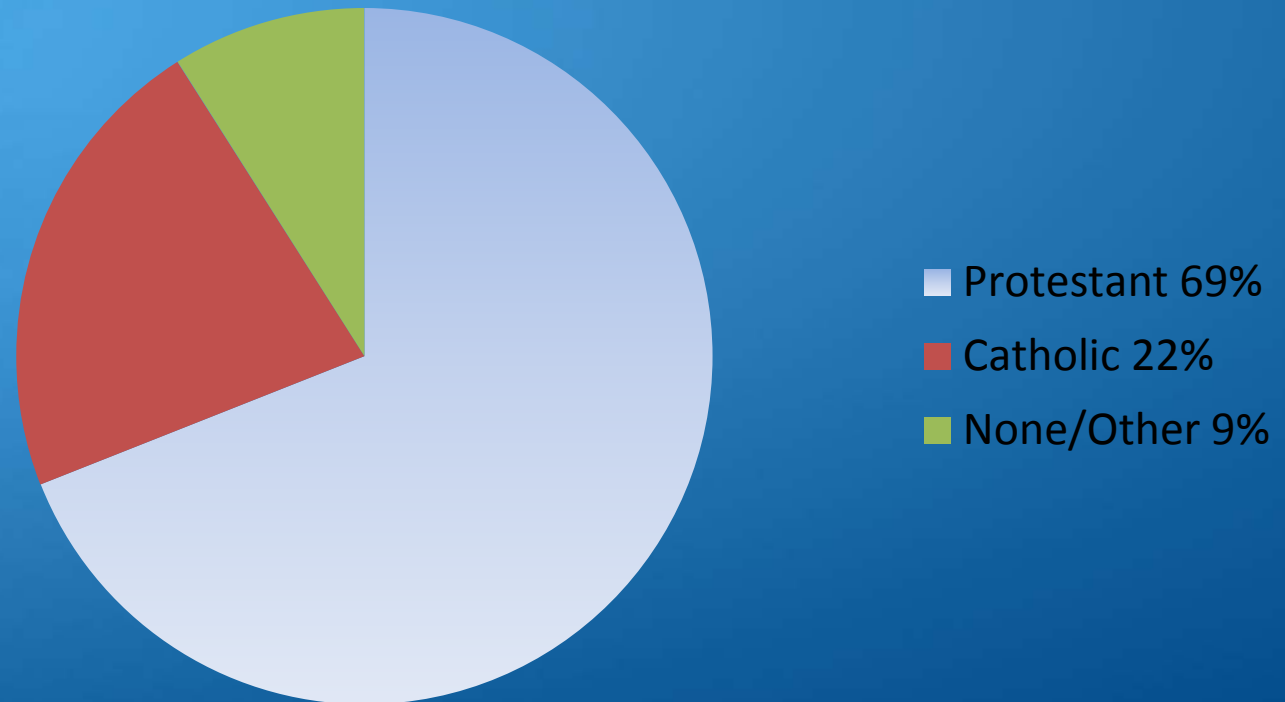
- Protestant 69%
- Roman Catholic 22%
- None/other 9%

- \* Religious preference in 2015

- Protestant (“Christian”) 47%
- Roman Catholic 23%
- None/other 30%

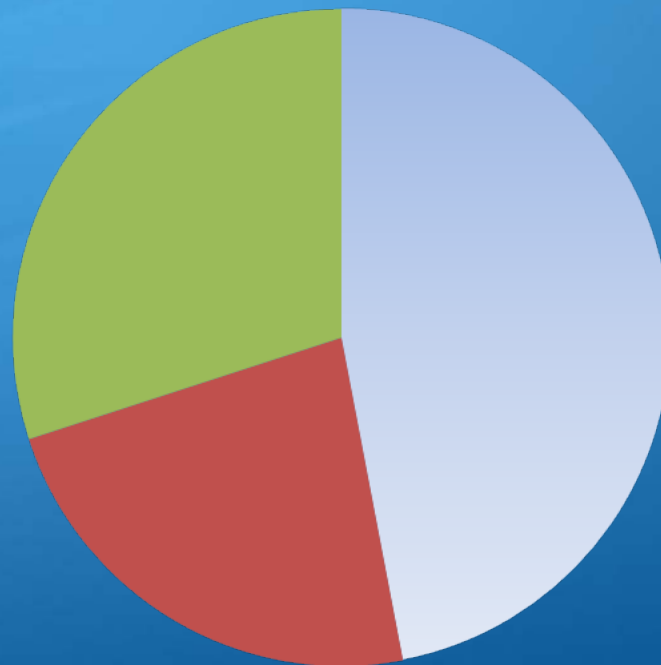
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## Religious Preference in 1948



# “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

## Religious Preference 2015



- Protestant 47%
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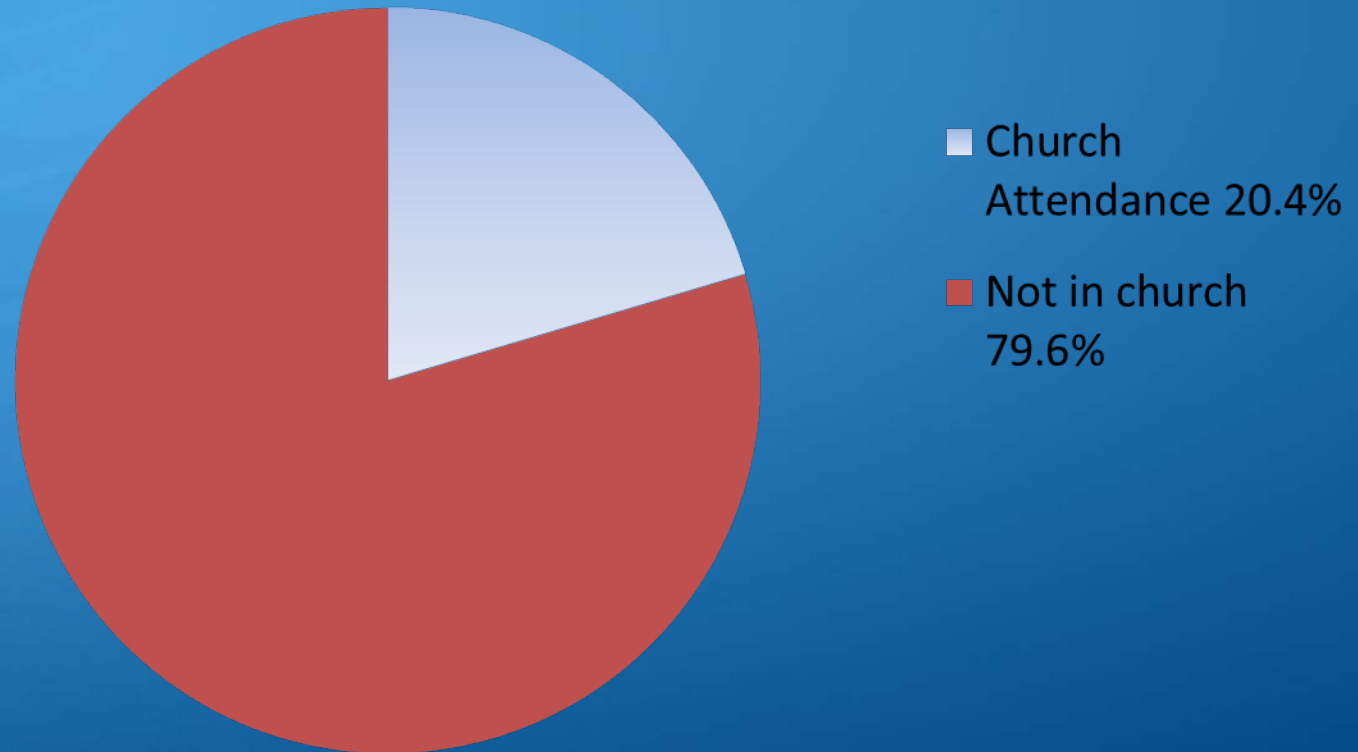
- The changing fishing pond

### 2. David Olson in *The American Church in Crisis*

- \* Actual church attendance in 1990 (including Roman Catholic) as 20.4%
- \* Estimated to be at 14.7% by 2020
- \* At this rate it will down to 10% by 2050

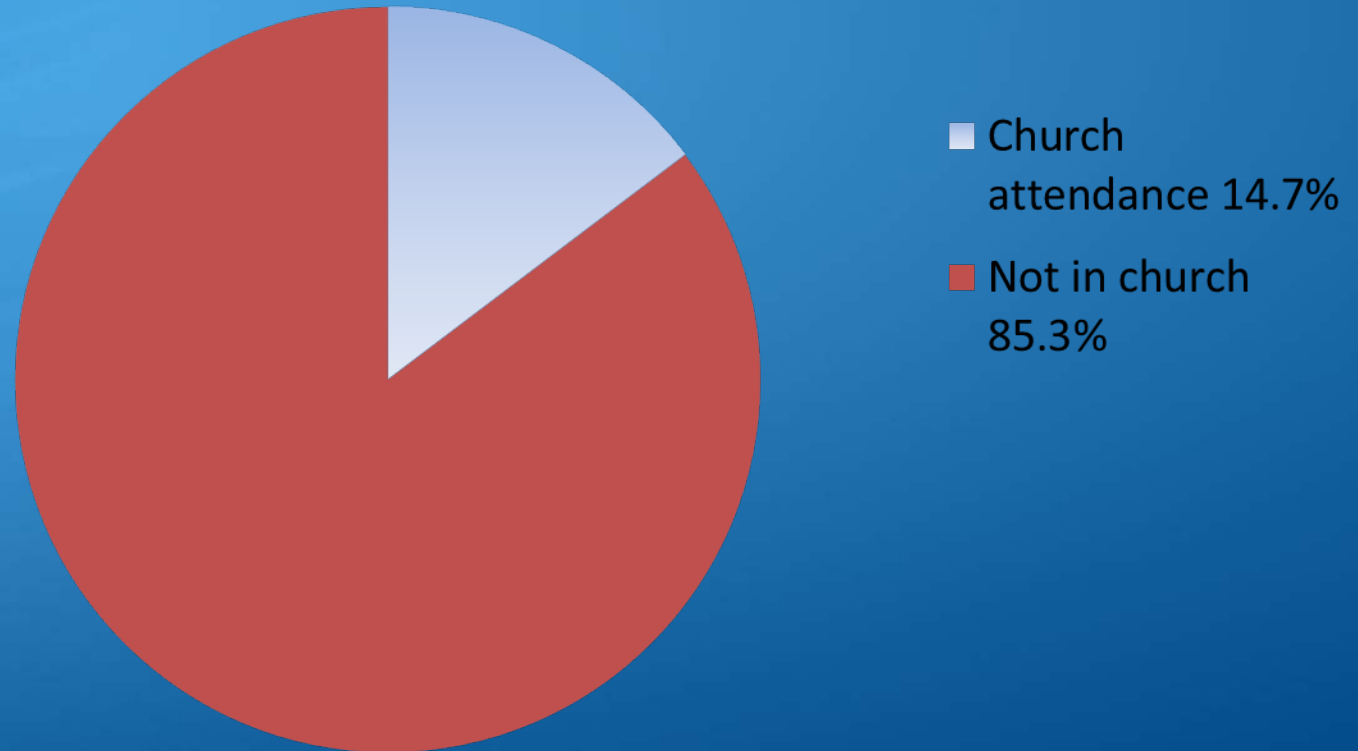
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## Actual church attendance in 1990



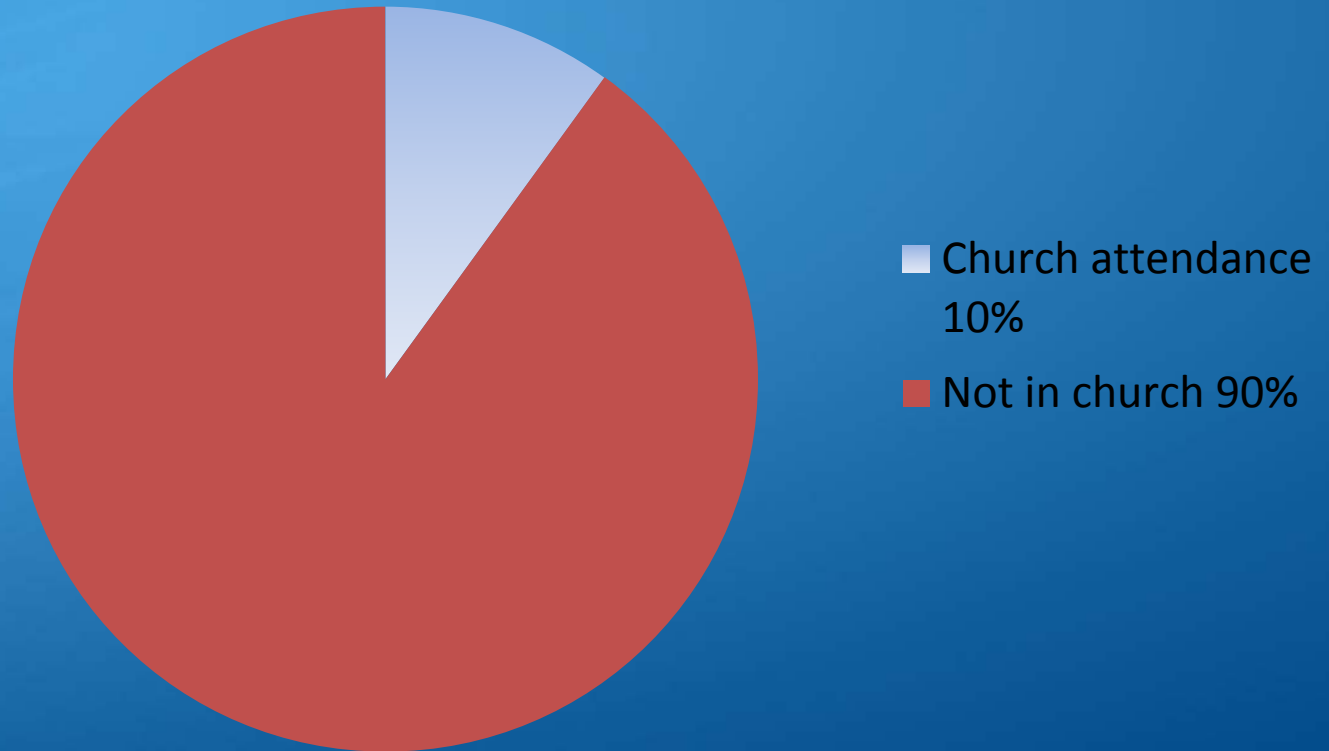
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## Actual church attendance in 2020



# “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

## Actual church attendance in 2050?





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What do we notice in 2015 about the “fishing pond”?

1. The percentage of lostness is increasing significantly. Bad news/good news.
2. More realistic 2015 pie: How many of those who declare a preference are actually born again disciples of Jesus? Actually saved?



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1948



- Born again, saved, disciples: Church attenders minus lost church attenders plus saved but not in church = 50%
- "Open" to gospel (Cultural Christians, drop-outs, etc) = 41%
- "Closed" to the gospel (atheist, secular, world religions, p-m thinkers) = 9%

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**1990**



- Saved = 20%
- "Open" = 50%
- "Closed" 30%

# “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

2020



- Saved = 15%
- "Open" = 45%
- "Closed" = 30%

# "A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"

2050



- Saved = 10%
- "Open" = 40%
- "Closed" = 50%



## “A New Flight Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

- Changing strategies and methodologies.
  1. Where have and where are most of our evangelism, missions, and ministry strategies focused?
  2. What theological, religious/church language, customs, ritual, traditions do we assume?
  3. Which group is targeted most often by evangelical churches? Think of our programs, events, and outreach?
  4. How well do we really know the lost piece of the pie?





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5. Do we know anyone in the lost piece of the pie?
6. Where are we afraid to go?
7. Where do nice Christians go and who do nice Christians hang out with?
8. Who do we criticize, judge, and stereotype?
9. Have I made my point?



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What about some of the outreach methods/language/strategies we have used over the last few decades?

1. Where do you go to church?
2. If you were to die tonight and find yourself standing before God and he were to ask . . .
3. The Bible says . . .
4. Are you tired of boring and irrelevant sermons? Or positively, “relevant and applicable sermons.”
5. Traditional service at 9:30; Contemporary service at 11:00
6. None of grandpa’s music here!



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7. Invite your friends
8. “People are just not committed any more. Used to have 3 services per week.”
9. “I was raised in the church: we were there Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, for visitation . . .”
10. Join us for exhilarating praise and worship
11. Etc, etc.



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### 4) How we must do it all: 1 Pet. 2:11-17

a. V. 11 – We have to live lives above reproach

b. V. 12 – Do good in the world so they may recognize God

c. V. 13 -16 – Submit ourselves to governing authorities

d. V. 17 – Respect everyone, love the church, fear God, honor the king.