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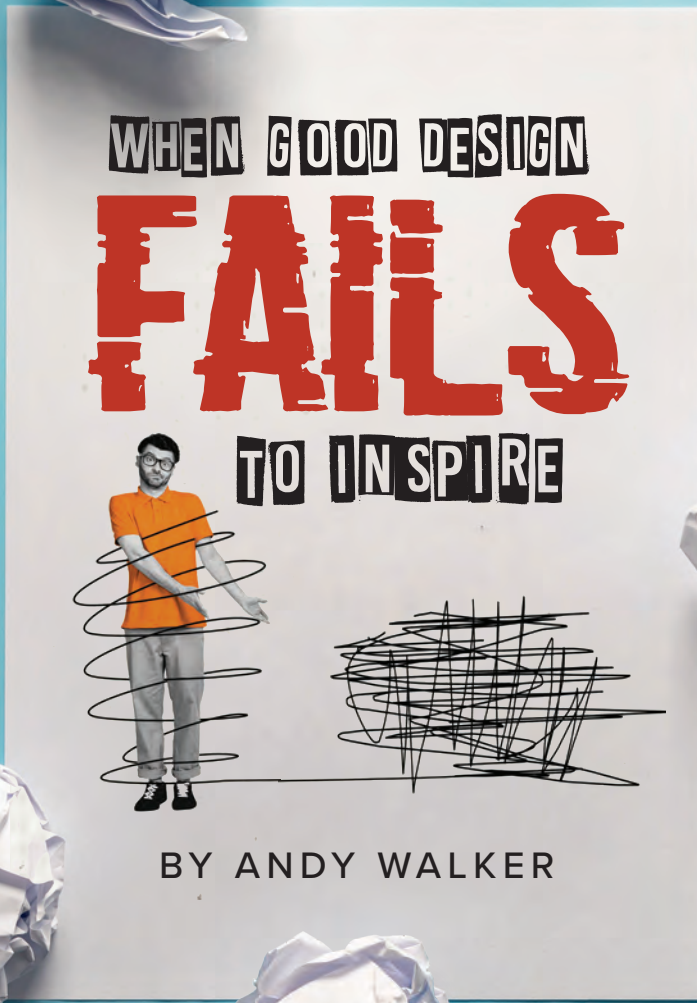
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Design can powerfully shape how people connect with a cause. But what works for one organization may not work for another. The look, tone, and style that inspire generosity are deeply tied to how authentic they feel to the story.

Effective fundraising design, therefore, does not mean simply choosing what is most beautiful or trendy. Rather, you want to create something that stays true to the message and moves donors to respond.

Early in my career, I worked for a ministry that decided to redesign all of its print and digital fundraising materials. Our original materials—direct mail letters, newsletters, and email appeals—conveyed a rough grittiness. The simple layouts, often black and white, offered only one brand color as an accent. Far from flashy, our design felt real and raw. It reflected the struggle and redemption stories that defined our work.

The best design moves people to act because it connects their heart to the cause.

The new design was the opposite: bright, clean, and modern. Its hopeful, uplifting tone made everything look professional and inspiring. We were proud of how fresh it felt—exactly the kind of visual transformation we thought would attract new donors and energize existing ones.

But when the campaigns launched, the numbers told a different story. Donations dropped. Response rates declined across our direct mail and digital fundraising programs.

We had improved the look but lost the connection. Our new design aesthetic, while beautiful, no longer mirrored the emotional truth of our mission. Donors who had once felt the grit and urgency of our work now saw polished hope instead of authentic need.

We eventually reverted to our original design aesthetic. The rough edges told a story the clean lines could not. That experience shifted how I think about fundraising design. It reminded me that great

design is never the sole goal. Rather, design serves as a tool to communicate stories that inspire people to give. When design loses that focus, even the most beautiful work can fall flat.

I want to share three key lessons that have stayed with me:

1. Design Should Serve the Mission

Great fundraising design goes beyond visual appeal. It starts with understanding what will communicate the message in a way that moves donors to respond. Every color, image, and layout should support the heart of the story.

When the design and message work together, people feel it. When they do not, your audience will sense the disconnect and either scroll past or toss it aside.

2. Authenticity Drives Response

People give when they feel something is real. The raw, imperfect look of our old materials reflected the honest struggle and hope in our work. That authenticity invited donors to join the story. The polished redesign unintentionally conveyed a lack of urgency—almost as if the need had already been met.

3. Test Before You Transform

Creative decisions should be guided by results, not assumptions. A small test can reveal what resonates before a full rollout.

Our choice to skip that step cost us time, money, and momentum. Testing gives clarity and protects both the message and the mission.

Design serves a purpose. In fundraising, it must inspire action. Every image, color, and layout choice should make it easier for someone to feel the weight of the story. The best design moves people to act because it connects their heart to the cause.

That lesson has shaped every campaign I have worked on since. When design starts with a deep understanding of what donors feel and care about, and ends with clear communication, the response follows naturally. **1**



ANDY WALKER

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With over 15 years of specialized experience in digital and social media marketing as well as fundraising, Andy loves helping people remove the stress and hassle of marketing their organization.



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What If
**MORE
PRESS**
IS NOT
What You
NEED?

BY M. TONI BUCKLEY, ED.D.

Too many leaders equate public relations with publicity—measured in media clips, not attitude change. Media coverage can be valuable, but articles alone rarely deliver what executives actually want—shifts in attitudes and behavior.



Even awareness—the most generous outcome of an isolated “hit”—often falls short because the effort did not achieve enough frequency or reach in the right outlets to register, let alone move people to act. So, do not rush to secure more clips. Instead, consider these priorities for a stronger PR strategy:

Start at the end. Reverse engineer from the outcome to achieve what you desire: donations, sign-ups, policy support, product adoption, reputation repair. Desired outcomes drive strategy. Strategy drives tactics. The right tactics (including press) meet objectives *when tailored to the goal and integrated into a unified plan*. If the change you seek is significant, expect your communications to be equally substantial: more touchpoints, more time, more precision.

Remember, audience reality matters. First, locate each audience segment on the continuum—from receptive to neutral to skeptical to hostile—and match the intensity and layering of your PR plan to that starting point. Second, surface objections early and address them head-on with credible proof, third-party validation, and practical steps that remove friction. Third, never ignore the reasons people hesitate. Engage them directly if you want real persuasion. Finally, do not forget effective PR is research-driven, so map beliefs, test messages, and iterate.

Counteract the “noise.” Map the forces that influence your audience: reference groups, opinion leaders, influencers, algorithms, competition, and public opinion. Borrow trusted voices when possible. Counter unhelpful narratives with clarity and empathy. Relevance is earned in the context of what else your audience hears each day.

Think of impact as a simple equation:
Impact = (Reach × Frequency × Relevance × Credibility) – Friction

Multiply impact with integration. Earned stories can spark reach and credibility, but you multiply impact when you integrate communications across channels. Pair media with owned content, email nurturing, events, ambassador programs, and—when appropriate—paid amplification. *Treat every placement as a spark, not the fire.* Feed it through your ecosystem to build and sustain momentum.

Own your story. If you do not, someone else will. Even “bland” organizations can differentiate if they claim a clear, defensible space and tell a story only they can tell. Center communications on three core messages. People will not remember more. Write with language your audience can feel. Make an emotional connection without sacrificing substance. Facts inform. Emotion motivates.

Make no mistake, authenticity is nonnegotiable. Truth, transparency, humility, and integrity create the credibility you need for repeated exposure to become trusted guidance. Overpromise or aggrandize, and audiences will sense it and step back. Without trust, there is no persuasion; without persuasion, there is no progress.

Do not confuse publicity with public relations. In reality, PR is the discipline for every relationship issue and every communication challenge or opportunity. It is never, “Can PR ...?” It is only, “How?” How do we achieve the goal with PR? What will it take to cultivate the right relationships: which audiences to prioritize, at what intensity, through which channels, over what time horizon? Work backward from the outcome you need, specify the milestones, and execute.

Finally, define success before you start. Align on measurable objectives and the cadence necessary to pursue them. Treat PR as a symmetrical, mutually beneficial exchange—a living conversation in which you listen, offer value, gather feedback, adjust, and offer again. Press is a tactic. Public relations is the strategy that surrounds it—to make sure your message is seen and believed, heard, and acted upon. **i**

WITHOUT TRUST, THERE IS NO PERSUASION; WITHOUT PERSUASION, THERE IS NO PROGRESS.



TONI BUCKLEY, ED.D.
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Toni has 25+ years' experience guiding marquee brands on launches, campaigns, and crisis strategy to deliver measurable impact.

EVOLVE WITHOUT DRIFT

HOW STRONG BRANDS STAY RELEVANT

BY JASON DREISTADT

There comes a moment for every brand when things start to feel a little ... stale. Maybe the messaging does not land as it used to. Maybe your logo feels like a Capri-Sun at a dinner party: nostalgic, but not quite the right fit. Or maybe you are just plain tired of saying the same thing over and over.

You know your brand needs to stay current, but you also do not want to lose what made it strong in the first place. This is the classic brand tension: *How do we evolve without drifting away from who we are?*

Start with this truth: strong brands do evolve. But they do not do it reactively. They do it strategically, intentionally, and anchored in a clear sense of identity. They grow without forgetting their roots.

Why Brands Must Evolve

The world moves fast. What connected with your audience five years ago might feel out of touch today as attention spans shorten, design trends shift, and your audience's needs evolve.

If your brand does not adapt, it risks becoming irrelevant—not because the mission has changed, but because the message no longer resonates. The answer is not a full-blown reinvention but a thoughtful evolution.

Think of your brand like a house. Over the years you might repaint the walls, swap out furniture, or even remodel a room or two. But the foundation stays the same. The address does not change. It is still “home.”



What Drift Looks Like

When brands drift, organizations often do not realize it until symptoms appear: Messaging starts to feel inconsistent. Visuals lose their focus. Tone shifts without intention. Each change seems small, but over time, the brand loses its clarity—and its trustworthiness.

Drift often results if you try to stay relevant without a clear sense of what you are evolving *from*. Instead, you chase trends, adjust for every audience, or overhaul your identity based on internal fatigue rather than strategic purpose.

Brands do not usually lose trust in a single moment. They lose it through a slow fade—one inconsistent campaign, one off-brand visual, one diluted message at a time.

How to Grow Yet Not Lose Ground

Thoughtful evolution does not require reinvention. Consider these three ways to stay fresh while staying rooted:

1. Revisit your brand essence.

What is the one big thing your brand stands for? What promise are you making? Everything else—tone, visuals, campaigns—should orbit around that core truth.

2. Modernize, do not replace. Trends can inform your updates, but they should not define your brand. Tweak your color palette, refresh your photography

style, or adjust your voice for today's platforms—but do it in a way that still feels unmistakably “you.”

Target is a great example. They have updated their design, ad styles, and messaging tone over the years—but their brand has always felt like Target.

3. Align internally before changing externally. If your team is not clear on who you are, your audience will not be clear either. Make sure your people understand your brand's core identity—not just the logo files, but the values and personality behind them. Alignment on the inside creates cohesion on the outside.

Brands That Last

Brands that stand the test of time do not chase novelty for novelty's sake. They evolve with clarity. They update with purpose. They honor the past while making space for the future.

So, if your brand feels like it needs a refresh, that's okay. But before you change direction, ask: *Are we drifting, or are we growing?*

Because the strongest brands do not just stay current—they stay *true*. **i**



JASON DREISTADT

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Jason is best known for his passionate commitment to strategic thinking and creative innovation. He brings a broad spectrum of experience in branding, creative design, event planning, marketing, direct mail, and nonprofit management to his work at Infinity Concepts.



Beyond THE *Hype*:

How AI can multiply your ministry's impact
yet not lose the human touch

BY DARRELL LAW

Artificial intelligence. For some ministry leaders, those two words spark excitement. For others, they trigger anxiety about losing the personal connection that makes their work meaningful. The truth is, AI is not here to replace the human heart of ministry. *It is here to amplify it.*

At Infinity Concepts, our recently released research shows that 85 percent of evangelicals view AI as a neutral tool—its value depends entirely on how it is used. When used thoughtfully, AI can free your team from time-consuming administrative tasks so they can focus on what matters most: *building genuine relationships and advancing your mission.*

Recognize the Real Opportunity

Your team spends countless hours on routine tasks. They schedule appointments, answer frequently asked questions, send follow-up emails, and categorize donor information. All necessary tasks—but not where your team's unique gifts shine.

Every hour spent on administrative work is an hour not spent praying with a donor, strategizing with your team, or planning your next outreach campaign.

AI excels at repetitive, time-intensive duties. It works around the clock, which allows your team to redirect energy toward high-impact activities that require human wisdom, empathy, and spiritual discernment.

Invest in Practical Applications

Many ministries already use AI to multiply their impact in powerful ways:

- ***Personalized donor communication:*** AI-powered tools can analyze your donor database and help you tailor messages based on giving history, interests, and engagement patterns. You can use AI to identify donors at risk of lapsing. The system can flag these individuals, so that the development team can reach out personally. AI does the analysis; humans provide the care.
- ***24/7 support:*** AI chatbots and voice agents handle routine inquiries any time of day or night. Someone visits your website at midnight with questions? An AI assistant provides immediate answers and gathers



information for follow-up. This does not replace your staff; it extends their reach.

- *Data-driven insights:* AI can process vast amounts of data and surface insights that would take your team weeks to uncover manually. Which campaigns most resonate? Which channels are most effective? AI provides the intelligence; your team provides the interpretation and strategy.

Ensure that AI Enhances Rather than Diminishes

Ministry is fundamentally about relationships. Here is how to ensure AI enhances rather than diminishes the human touch:

First, establish clear boundaries. Use AI for tasks that do not require human judgment, emotion, or spiritual insight. Keep humans at the center of pastoral care, strategic decisions, and relationship building.

Second, be transparent with your supporters. Let people know when they are interacting with AI, and give them easy ways to connect with a real person when needed.

Third, invest in training. The organizations that benefit most from AI are those that educate their teams. Our research shows that informed individuals are twice as likely to recognize AI's benefits.

Take the First Step

In order to begin using AI, you do not need to overhaul your entire operation overnight. Start small. Identify one area where your team is overwhelmed by administrative tasks. Choose one application of AI and implement it well. Measure the results. Learn from the experience. Then expand from there.

The goal is not to build an AI-powered ministry. The goal is to build a more effective ministry that happens to use AI as one tool among many. The heart of your work remains unchanged: love people, share the gospel, and make a tangible difference in the world.

Here is what concerns me: While some ministries thoughtfully explore AI, others wait on the sidelines. But

there are people you could reach right now if you had the capacity. Families who need support. Communities that need your message. Donors who want to give but have not been properly engaged. AI can help you reach them.

The truth is, AI is not here to replace the human heart of ministry. It is here to amplify it.



Infinity Concepts has helped ministries leverage technology to expand their reach and deepen their impact. If you are ready to explore how AI can serve your mission, we would be honored to guide you on this journey. **1**



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Darrell is a 20-year veteran leader of a multi-campus megachurch and international television and radio broadcast ministry. Darrell specializes in maximizing results out of limited resources. Whether developing fundraising strategies, creating donor retention programs, launching humanitarian outreaches on the other side of the world, or implementing marketing and assimilation strategies to grow a local church, Darrell's passion is to help clients achieve their goals and fulfill their mission.

AI is not the future of ministry. *People are!* But AI can help you reach more people, serve them better, and multiply your impact in ways that were impossible just a few years ago. The organizations that thoughtfully embrace these tools will be better positioned to fulfill their calling in the years ahead.

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TECHNICAL SEO IN THE AGE OF AI:



How to Stay Visible When Google
Is the One that Answers for You



BY DAVE OFFORD

The way people find information online is changing very fast. For years, to get your organization noticed meant one thing: climb to the top of Google's search results. But the definition of "top of page one" has completely changed. Strong SEO, quality content, and backlinks used to be enough to get clicks. Now, even if you rank number one, that does not guarantee anyone will visit your site. Why? Because Google has started to *answer questions itself*.

WITH THE RISE OF AI OVERVIEWS—the automatically generated summaries that appear above traditional search results—Google’s artificial intelligence reads through trusted websites and creates its own short answer. And unless your content is part of what it quotes, you might disappear from view altogether. That might sound daunting, but it is actually an incredible opportunity. If you learn how to structure your website and your content for AI, you can become one of the sources that Google’s AI chooses to feature.

Q AI CANNOT SUMMARIZE WHAT IT CANNOT CRAWL

Think of Google as a librarian who tries to catalog every book on the planet. If your “book” is not labeled properly, the librarian cannot find it—and neither can AI. That is where technical SEO comes in.

Keep your robots.txt and sitemap clean, so Google knows how to navigate your site. Optimize your Core Web Vitals: speed, security, and stability. And above all, make your site mobile-first.

As of 2025, about 60 percent of all web traffic comes from mobile devices. Google’s crawlers look at your mobile version first, so if it is slow or poorly formatted, your visibility in AI results will suffer.

Q WRITE CONTENT THAT IS EASY FOR AI TO READ

AI does not read like a person. Instead, it scans, summarizes, and looks for clear structure. That means your content should be AI-readable.

Use question-based titles that match what your audience asks. For example, one of our posts was titled “How Can Nonprofits Use Social Media for Donor Acquisition?” We chose that title by combining data from Google’s “People Also Ask” tool, search console, and actual client questions. The title matched real search intent, used keywords that people typed, and was easy for AI to recognize.

The rest of the article used bullet points, short paragraphs, and descriptive subheadings. Within one week, it appeared inside a Google AI-generated answer box. That was not luck—it was structure and strategy.

Q ADD SCHEMA MARKUP

Schema markup is a small piece of code that helps Google understand what your content means, not just what it says. It labels questions, answers, and other elements so search engines can display your content accurately. If you use WordPress, I recommend Yoast SEO or Rank Math SEO.

Both plugins automatically add schema for posts, pages, products, and FAQs—no coding required.

Q BUILD TRUST AND AUTHORITY

Finally, remember Google and AI systems value E-E-A-T: *experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness*. Add author bios, cite credible sources, and link internally between related topics. When your site looks reliable, AI is more likely to use your content.

FINAL THOUGHT

The way people search evolves faster than ever these days, but the goal of SEO remains the same: help people find trustworthy, helpful information. The message has not changed either. Only the *method* has.

If you keep your technical SEO clean; write clear, structured content; and establish credibility, your message can shine, even when Google’s AI is the one that does the talking. **I**



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Digital Campaign Specialist
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Dave is a compassionate, data-driven marketer committed to strengthening his community. He blends creativity with analytics to craft impactful, memorable campaigns.



Media and the
MISSION

New Research on Evangelical
Media Engagement

BY MARK DREISTADT

In every generation, the Church has relied on new tools to proclaim timeless truth. From the printing press to magazines, radio, television, websites, and now digital streaming, media has always played a central role to help advance the gospel. Yet today's communication landscape is more complex than ever: fragmented, fast-moving, and filled with both opportunity and challenge.

Infinity Concepts, in partnership with Grey Matter Research, recently conducted an extensive national study called *The Core Audience: Evangelicals and Christian Media*. Our goal: to understand how the evangelical audience actually engages media today—what they use, what they value, and what they believe it accomplishes in their spiritual lives.

For this article, I also compared our findings with Barna's recent complementary national research, *The State of Christian Media*, which surveyed the broader American public.

Together, these studies offer a remarkable window into how media shapes faith, culture, and the mission of the Church.

A DEEPLY ENGAGED AUDIENCE

The State of Christian Media found that 61 percent of Americans use some form of Christian media, and about half do so weekly. And among evangelicals, the picture is even more striking.

We surveyed for the use of 11 different types of Christian media. Our study revealed that 80 percent of evangelical Protestants use at least one form weekly, and nearly half engage one or more types daily. In fact, we found that the average evangelical

These patterns point to a simple truth: Christian media is not merely entertainment—it is a spiritual ecosystem where believers seek encouragement, growth, and connection with God's Word.

uses 4 of the 11 media types at least once a week, and 54 different types at least once a month.

A surprising discovery is that evangelical Protestants under age 35 engage with more Christian media than any other age group—especially music and social media. They are also the most frequent consumers of Christian television and video streaming.

Evangelicals are not casual consumers. Their engagement is both habitual and spiritual. In fact, daily use rises to 79 percent among those who have the highest levels of regular spiritual engagement (Bible reading, prayer, worship attendance, etc.), which underscores a strong correlation between media use and spiritual vitality.

Across the board, Christian music, radio, social media, and streaming content dominate, while books and magazines remain significant for one in four evangelicals.

These patterns point to a simple truth: Christian media is not merely entertainment—it is a spiritual ecosystem where believers seek encouragement, growth, and connection with God's Word.

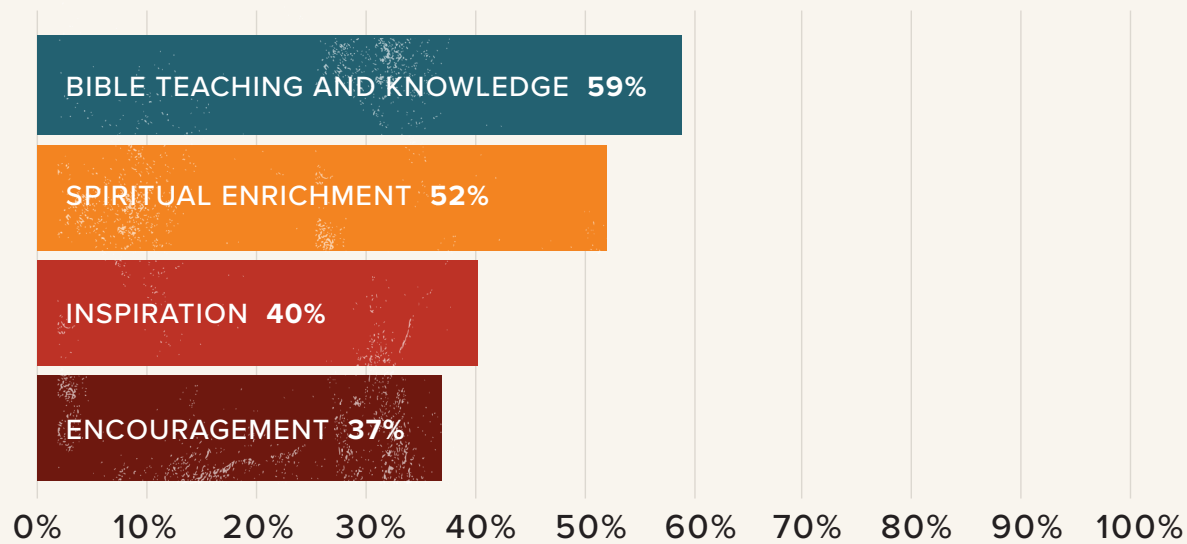
WHAT EVANGELICALS WANT FROM CHRISTIAN MEDIA

We asked evangelicals what they most desire from Christian media and found these top answers: Bible teaching and knowledge (59 percent), spiritual enrichment (52 percent), inspiration (40 percent), and encouragement (37 percent). These far outpace interests like politics, news, or entertainment.

The message is clear: people turn to Christian media primarily for spiritual growth, not distraction.

That finding contrasts sharply with much of the broader cultural narrative. In an era when

WHAT EVANGELICALS WANT FROM CHRISTIAN MEDIA



media often divides or distorts, evangelicals overwhelmingly see Christian content as a source of peace, truth, and discipleship.

As Scripture reminds us, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” For millions of believers, Christian media is how they “hear.”

THE REPUTATION GAP

Still, challenges remain. Our research found that 56 percent of evangelicals believe Christian media has a positive reputation among Americans, but only 27 percent view that reputation as very positive.

Barna’s national survey confirmed that perception gap: while most practicing Christians see Christian media as trustworthy and valuable, many non-Christians describe it as biased or manipulative.

This gap presents both a warning and an opportunity. If our content feels insular or self-promoting, we risk alienating those we hope to reach. Yet when Christian media is authentic, sincere, and biblically grounded, it not only strengthens believers—it attracts seekers.

BROADCAST MEETS DIGITAL

One of the most profound shifts in both studies is the convergence of broadcast and digital platforms. Barna found that 69 percent of Christian media users engage both: they seamlessly stream a worship service on TV, then listen to a podcast or follow a ministry on Instagram.

The Sunday sermon may be the spark, but podcasts, emails, devotionals, and social posts keep the fire burning all week. Media is no longer an extension of ministry—it is ministry. So, our communication strategy must be holistic.

LESSONS FOR LEADERS

So, what does this research mean for pastors, ministry executives, and Christian communicators?

1. Media matters more than ever. The people you shepherd are immersed in it every day. Media shapes their worldview and offers you a powerful channel to reinforce biblical truth.

2. Authenticity builds trust. Audiences respond to transparency, humility, and messages that speak to real life rather than hype or fundraising appeals.

3. Integration is essential. Leaders should view every communication touchpoint—sermons, websites, social content, podcasts, and donor communications—as part of one unified voice.

When aligned, these elements amplify one another, which deepens engagement and impact.

4. Data and discernment must work together. To understand your audience through analytics is not unspiritual; it is good stewardship.

The opportunity before us is not simply to reach this audience but to shepherd it well—to steward influence with integrity, clarity, and purpose.

The apostle Paul used every available means to reach his audience: letters, travel, and testimony. Today, we have media. When used with wisdom and integrity, and guided by research and understanding, these tools extend the mission further than any pulpit alone.

A LOOK AHEAD

In a world defined by rapid change, cultural tension, and endless noise, the mission of Christian media stands unchanged: to share hope, truth, and light. The methods may evolve, but the message remains eternal.

Our research confirms what many of us have long sensed: media is more than background noise; it is a daily source of spiritual nourishment, connection, and growth.

The opportunity before us is not simply to reach this audience but to shepherd it well—to steward influence with integrity, clarity, and purpose.

We build on that foundation with our new research—*The Core Audience: Evangelicals and Christian Media*—which offers deeper insight and clear direction for content creators, producers, and broadcasters across every platform. The research reveals how the most spiritually engaged believers interact with media, what they value, and how they can be better served in this digital age.

If the Church will rise to this moment—meld timeless truth with timely tools—then every message,



EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS UNDER AGE 35 ENGAGE WITH MORE CHRISTIAN MEDIA THAN ANY OTHER AGE GROUP—ESPECIALLY MUSIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

every broadcast, and every click can become more than communication. It can become participation in the greatest story ever told: God's redemptive message reaching the world through every available medium. **1**



MARK DREISTADT
Founder / President / CEO
at Infinity Concepts

Mark has a long and distinguished history of transforming organizations through his strategic counsel, innovation, and blended approach to communication, branding, marketing, advertising, fundraising, and media. Mark is a dynamic communicator known for his clear and compelling style of presenting transformational insights and strategies.



**FREE
RESEARCH
REPORT**

Download *The Core Audience: Evangelicals and Christian Media* at InfinityConcepts.com.

7 REASONS DONORS NEVER GIVE A SECOND GIFT

Every organization wants more new donors, and with good strategy and hard work, you can get them. But your goal is almost never to obtain a one-time gift; it is to establish a long-term relationship with the donor that results in years of support for your cause.



That second gift is crucial. After all, no third or fourth gifts happen without a second. However, that second gift can prove challenging. You will never be able to solve for every issue that might hinder a second gift, but you can certainly fix some and proactively work to address others. Here are seven of the most common reasons donors never give a second gift.

1. They never heard from you again.

Regular and consistent communication is key to a long-term relationship. But too often, organizations do not communicate properly, or technical issues keep new donors from being able to hear from you. Fix this, and you will fix a big part of your conversion problem.

2. You never asked.

Too often, organizations simply inform new donors—they educate and share stories but avoid making another appeal for fear of “scaring them away.”

While education is important and the desire not to overwhelm is valid, there must also be clear and direct

opportunities to give again. If you wait six months before another ask, donors may assume their support is not really needed and shift their giving elsewhere. Remember, they gave because they care about the cause—not just to receive a newsletter.

3. You were too slow.

The moment of the first gift is the moment a donor was the most engaged with your organization. So, begin to nurture the relationship immediately.

4. They feel overwhelmed.

You can overcommunicate; daily emails and texts may indeed drive many donors away. Some may want that level of communication, but make sure they knowingly opt into it, or else they may opt out from you.

5. They have lost trust in your organization.

Sometimes you can fix this; sometimes it is not all in your control. Bad processes, bad customer service, and inaccurate statistics can be prevented. Bad media

attention, however, is more difficult to address in the moment. If your organization does or says anything that may have caused donors to lose faith, go over and above to make it right.

6. They gave to a crisis, not to you.

If a natural disaster strikes the area you serve, you may receive a flood of donations. However, many of those donors gave to the event, the region, or the people impacted. You just so happen to be the convenient channel for an impulse gift. Recognize when this is what has happened, and shift your communications to try to build a relationship that goes beyond the crisis at hand.

7. The chemistry was not there.

Once they get to know you better, donors might decide this relationship is not a good fit. That is unavoidable to some extent, and a natural process of relationships. However, make sure they see the best of you early on and hear from your heart.

If their heart is very different from yours, that is okay if they walk away. But you never want to lose someone because they did not clearly understand what you are all about.

If you proactively work to address these seven areas, you will watch more and more donors send a second—and then third and fourth—gift to the meaningful work that your organization champions. **I**



GEORGE KONETES

VP of Strategic Engagement
at Infinity Concepts

With a PhD in communications media and instructional technology, George intuitively grasps how to use media to impact audience behavior. Guided by data-driven insights, he specializes in implementing strategic plans that produce desired outcomes, with a focus on both efficiency and efficacy. He also oversees the client success department to ensure strategic implementation and successful results for all clients.

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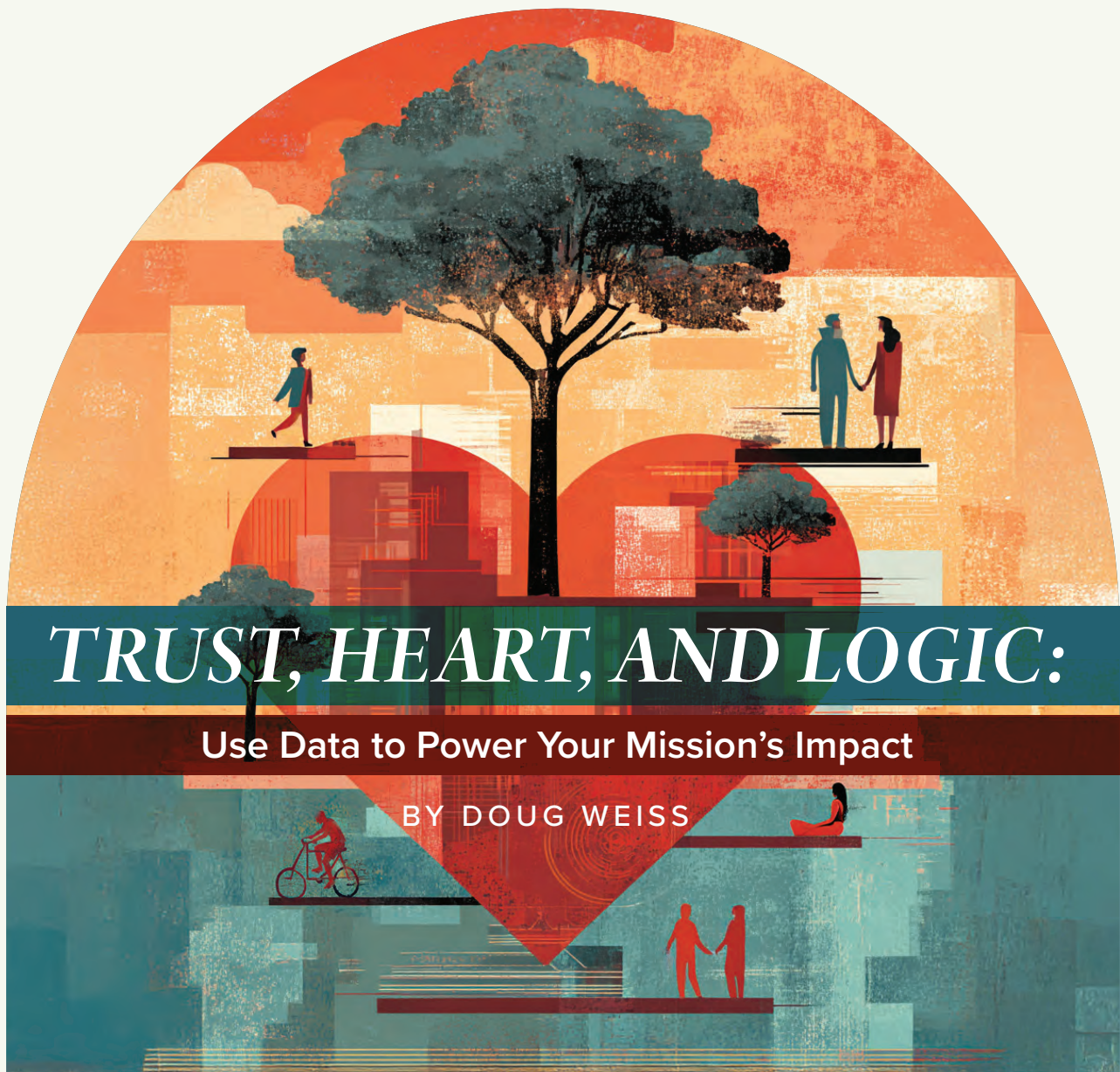
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TRUST, HEART, AND LOGIC:

Use Data to Power Your Mission's Impact

BY DOUG WEISS

When you use data to communicate the effectiveness of your organization, you build trust and credibility. But bear in mind: while data connects with the mind, stories grab the heart. So, combine both, and you create a compelling message that engages donors, inspires your audience, and demonstrates measurable impact.

In today's world of information overload, your audience must constantly evaluate whether your message is authentic and effective. Yes, donors want to see the impact of your mission—but they also want to feel it. Your effort to integrate data and storytelling allows you to communicate both the rational and emotional dimensions of your work.

THE POWER OF ARISTOTLE'S RHETORICAL TRIANGLE

Aristotle's rhetorical triangle is a classic model for persuasive communication that emphasizes three appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos. When used together, they provide a framework to help you build stories that are both emotionally moving and logically convincing. You'll see in the rhetorical triangle, data is not independent of storytelling, but when you overlap them, it is a powerful driver to your storytelling.

Ethos: build credibility and trust

Ethos appeals to the audience's sense of credibility and authority. It answers the question, "Why should I believe you?"

The goal is not to overwhelm with statistics; rather, the goal is to integrate meaningful data points that strengthen your story.

Nonprofits and ministries build credibility through authenticity and transparency. Share your mission clearly and back it up with stories of real impact. Highlight the expertise of your leadership, showcase testimonials from those you serve, and celebrate partnerships that add credibility.

Pathos: connect through emotion

Pathos appeals to the emotions. This is the heartbeat of storytelling. Emotional stories create empathy, which then helps your audience understand the human side of your mission.

For instance, instead of a presentation that contains only your annual statistics, add the story of Lisa—a single mother who found hope and stability through your programs.

Once the audience connects with Lisa's story, you can add, "Last year, 250 families like Lisa's found permanent housing through our program." This approach transforms a number into a story of impact.

Logos: engage logic with data

Logos appeals to reason and logic. It is where your data reinforces your story and demonstrates measurable results.

Data provides structure and validation and gives your audience confidence that your organization is effective and responsible.

Emotions move people to act; numbers show them their action makes a difference. For example:

- "Our discipleship program helped 50 students grow in their walk with God."
- "Since we launched our clean water initiative, 12 new wells have been built, which provide safe drinking water for over 5,000 people."

These facts build a logical case for your organization's impact. But remember: the goal is not to overwhelm with statistics; rather, the goal is to integrate meaningful data points that strengthen your story.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE DATA

The best way to communicate data is to visualize it and humanize it. People remember visuals far better than raw numbers.

Use simple, engaging formats like:

- *Infographics and charts* that clearly show growth, change, or comparison
- *Before-and-after visuals* that illustrate transformation over time
- *Impact statements* that connect emotion and logic: "Every \$25 donation provides clean water for a child for an entire year."

Data should not stand alone. Pair every key statistic with a narrative that explains *why it matters*. For example, a graph that shows growth in your programs is far more powerful when accompanied by the story of a changed life.

When storytelling and data come together, they create a dynamic message that builds trust (ethos), connects with hearts (pathos), and satisfies logic (logos).

This balanced approach transforms ordinary communication into a story of purpose, progress, and proof. **i**



DOUG WEISS
Senior Media Manager
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With over 15 years of experience in media, distribution, marketing, and digital ad buying, Doug manages our media buying and broadcast television placements and partners.

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We love working with Infinity Concepts. It is more than a partnership; they are an extension of our ministry.

– **Christy**
Executive Pastor

Our partnership with Infinity Concepts has been amazing! ... We instantly felt like a weight had been lifted from our shoulders.

– **Laura**
Executive Director

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– **Jim**
Executive Director/President