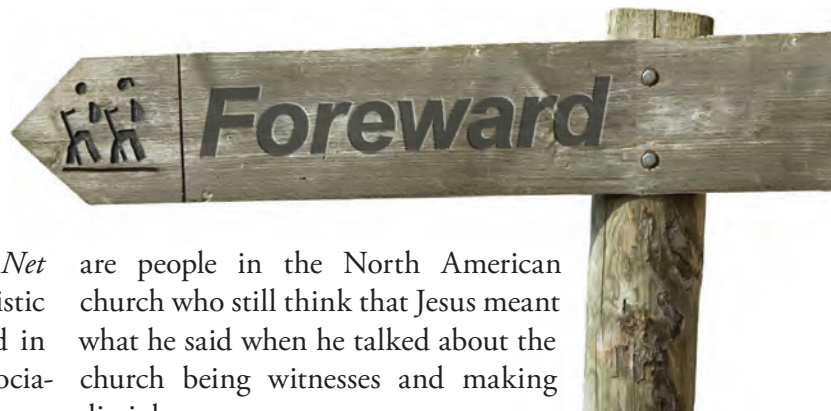


# WHAT GOES AROUND ...

A Word from Managing Editor  
Bill Tenny-Brittian



Some things go a full circle. Back in the day, *Net Results* was one arm of the National Evangelistic Association. The NEA was originally founded in 1904 as a guild of professional evangelists. The association went through a number of overhauls and restructures as various presidents came and went. Under the leadership of Herb Miller, the NEA supported eleven denominations in their evangelistic efforts. *Net Results* delivered church growth and evangelism tools and tips to over 15,000 subscribers.

But times change. By the early 90s the church growth movement had been dismissed as gimmicky and program-based. Evangelism became one of those topics that polite church members didn't talk about, let alone practice. And by the turn of the century, the NEA had become a ghost of its former self and the subscription base of *Net Results* had shrunk to less than 2,000. At that point, the notion of closing up the magazine looked pretty attractive. In its print format, it was hemorrhaging money and no one really wanted to take it on.

And so, with the encouragement and support of the NEA, Tom Bandy and I took on the magazine. Eventually, Tom moved on into new ventures and the magazine has become a labor of love for a handful of folk who manage, write, and edit pretty well gratis. It's because there are still folks who believe *Net Results* is one of the best resources available for equipping and empowering congregations that we keep on keepin' on.

Back to that full circle thing I mentioned in the first sentence. In July, the remaining members of the NEA board approached my wife Dr. Kris Tenny-Brittian and me about lending our hands and hearts to the association. It took us about four-and-a-half seconds to pound out an email response that we would be honored to do what we could.

That response got us where we are today. By the first week of August we had become co-presidents of the National Evangelistic Association. It's too early to tell you exactly how we'll be proceeding, but I can tell you this. There

are people in the North American church who still think that Jesus meant what he said when he talked about the church being witnesses and making disciples.

So, here we are again. *Net Results* and the NEA have become reacquainted, this time as a loose affiliation who share a common mission of transforming the church from the ground up. Keep your eyes open for future developments as the NEA finds its legs again.

The question we all face, though, is whether the church is really ready for church growth. Evangelism still carries more baggage than Jacob Marley's ghost. As for those gimmicky church growth programs, it turns out that church leaders still scour bookstores, the internet, and past issues of *Net Results* looking for a cure-all to congregational decline.

It turns out, there isn't a cure-all program that, once applied, transforms congregations. However, there is a common trait found in those seemingly "lucky" congregations that get turned around on the transformation road. That common trait is called discipleship and it starts with the leaders and trickles through the whole congregation.

This month's Discipleship theme has articles and tools designed to help you and your congregation take the first and most important step towards transformation. Before a congregation can grow, church leaders must become and remain engaged in their own spiritual grounding. But it can't just be a personal, inward journey. Those church leaders must then lead the congregation as models, mentors, and teachers of sound spiritual habits – including faith sharing, AKA, evangelism.

Churches that build a strong foundation of discipleship practices, such as the ones found in this month's issue, are the ones that end up being the growingest churches in the community. 