

Table 40: Church Leaders Comment on the Lukewarm Church in the U.S.

<p>“Christians today are just like the culture. We need to be transformed and then turn around and transform the world around us.” Chuck Colson, columnist and founding president of Prison Fellowship⁶⁶</p>
<p>“This generation sees what many are only recently coming to realize; the Church is in a pathetic state of decadence and decay. It is, to a large degree, fragmented, watered-down, and retreating from cultural relevancy. Biblical and theological ignorance, cultural apathy, and social indifference are a plague upon the American Church and what passes for Christianity in many circles is often a mere shadow of historical orthodox Christianity or worse something altogether different.” S. Michael Craven, president, Center for Christ & Culture⁶⁷</p>
<p>“But the ‘inch deep’ metaphor can also be applied to North America, where anti-Christian impulses surround and even permeate complacent churches. We find ourselves sadly yet inextricably complicit in our nation’s celebration of greed, habitual recourse to violence, and relaxation of sexual standards.” Jonathan Bonk, editor, <i>International Bulletin of Missionary Research</i>⁶⁸</p>
<p>“Rather than seek the God who spoke from the burning bush, we have decided the real drama is found in debating whether to podcast our services. Rather than encounter the God who sees idolatry as a pervasive, life-threatening temptation, we decorate our Pottery Barn lives with our tasteful collections of favored godlings. Rather than follow the God who burns for justice for the needy, we are more likely to ask the Lord to give us our own fair share. A bland God for a bland church, with a mission that is at best innocuous and quaint—in a tumultuous world.” Mark Labberton, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California, and author of <i>The Dangerous Act of Worship</i>⁶⁹</p>
<p>On the decline in the church in the U.S.: “My primary assessment would be because American Christians tend to be incredibly self-indulgent so they see the church as a place there for them to meet their needs and to express faith in a way that is meaningful for them...There is almost no genuine compassion or urgency about serving and reaching people who don’t know Christ.” Erwin McManus, lead pastor of Mosaic Church in Los Angeles, a church that has grown from 300 to 3,000 in the past decade.⁷⁰</p>
<p>“I think if Jesus were here, he would say, ‘Some of you have been hanging around because of what I can do for you.’ ... The ugly truth is you love yourselves more than you love anyone else, and that gets in the way of being a disciple.” Kay Warren, author, global needs activist, and wife of Rick Warren, author of <i>The Purpose-Driven Life</i>⁷¹</p>
<p>“The way things are now in America, the way we do church, is kind of like a program... We are doing church as a club. We’re trying to make people feel good, to entertain them. So because of that concern — we don’t want them to go or to lose them — we kind of try to suit them... We are pleasing men instead of please God.” Sunday Adelaja, pastor of the 30,000 member God’s Embassy Church in Kiev, Ukraine, in a video interview with pastors in the U.S.⁷²</p>
<p>“We’re getting fancier and fancier at church worship. We know how to do church, [but] we don’t know how to be the church.” Dr. Ralph D. Winter, founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission⁷³</p>

Notes for Chapter 8, Table 40, page 133

- ⁶⁶ Chuck Colson; “Rethinking Church”; Christian Post; posted 12/5/2007; <<http://www.christianpost.com/pages/print.htm?aid=30360>>; p. 1 of 12/5/2007 9:33 PM printout.
- ⁶⁷ S. Michael Craven; “They Love Jesus; They Don’t Like the Church!”; Christian Post; posted 2/26/2008; <<http://christianpost.com/pages/print.htm?aid=31323>>; p. 2 of 2/26/2008 11:11 AM printout.
- ⁶⁸ Jonathan J. Bonk, “Africa Unbound,” *Christianity Today*, November 2007, p. 50.
- ⁶⁹ Mark Labberton, “The Lima Bean Gospel,” *Christianity Today*, January 2008, pp. 32, 34.
- ⁷⁰ Michelle A. Vu; “Cultural Architect: Why Churches Are Declining in America”; Christian Post; posted 1/15/2008; <<http://www.christianpost.com/pages/print.htm?aid=30855>>; p. 1 of 1/15/2008 12:55 PM printout.
- ⁷¹ Cary McMullen; “Kay Warren Urges U.S. Churches to Help World”; Lakeland, FL Ledger; posted 3/8/2008; <<http://www.theledger.com/article/20080308/NEWS/152320967/1374>>; p. 1 of 3/11/2008 7:43 AM printout.
- ⁷² Michelle A. Vu; “Europe Mega-Pastor Gives Tips for Revival of U.S. Christianity”; Christian Post; posted 4/24/2008; <<http://www.christianpost.com/pages/print.htm?aid=32082>>; p. 2 of 4/24/2008 1:11 PM printout.
- ⁷³ Michelle A. Vu; “Prominent Missiologist Identifies Biggest Trend in Global Mission”; Christian Post; 7/30/2008; <<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080730/prominent-missiologist-identifies-biggest-trend-in-global-mission.htm>>; p. 1 of 7/30/2008 5:35 PM printout.

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Global Triage, MDG 4, and
Unreached People Groups

Excerpt: Table 40

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