

Announcer: Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof leadership podcast. A podcast all about leadership, change and personal growth. The goal? To help you lead like never before, in your church or in your business.

Announcer: And now, your host Carey Nieuwhof.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well hey everybody, and welcome to episode 237 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I don't know whether you can say it often enough or emphatically enough, but we live in really changing times, like turbulent, kinda crazy, like hmm, not sure we've seen quite this in our lifetime before, and there are very few voices making more sense of it these days, or at least trying to cut the way through the fog than Ed Stetzer. Ed's my guest this week, and I think you're gonna love this interview. It is wide-ranging, we go all over the place, as in is there a cultural war? Is the church winning or losing, hint, Ed and I would both think we're not exactly winning that one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Why does it matter? We talk about the MeToo movement, we talk about how to create a voice on social media, also about future church trends, cultural trends, it's sort of all over the place, which makes it in my view, awesome. And Ed is somebody who gets consulted all the time. You'll recognize him from USA Today, CNN, Christianity Today, a columnist for Outreach Magazine. He is the executive editor of The Gospel Project. He holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair For Church Mission And Evangelism at Wheaton College. He's also the Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center, and he's also the Chair of The Evangelism and Leadership Department in the graduate school at Wheaton. Oh, plus he writes about a thousand books. So, anyway.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes I do ask him, Ed, how do you get it all done? And his answer's really interesting. It's a really good leadership development principle. So, I think you're gonna love today. Man, we have got a great lineup lined up for 2019. If you haven't subscribed yet, and the statisticians tell me about 20% of you who would listen to a typical episode have not, just hit subscribe and we'll automatically send you content into your inbox. It's free wherever you listen to your podcasts, Apple Podcast, Spotify, wherever.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, we got an excited year ahead of us. So, a couple of things I wanna tell you about. First of all, what are you doing in terms of social media? Last year one of the top episodes we did was with Clay Scroggins, we'll link to it in the show notes, and it was on the digital disruption. And here's reality, most churches staff 99 to 100% for what happens in person on the weekend, and almost nothing for online. And one of the challenges you probably have is, well it's just budget, you've got to check out Pro Media Fire. Because often church staff is overwhelmed to keep up with the demands of media, and you think about all

the things you could do and you're not getting done, and that's an issue for everybody, including for us.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, there's a brand new service just coming out called Pro Media Fire. They've got experience, but this is a brand new service that they are offering and you are some of the very first to hear about it on this podcast. It's a cloud-based, church creative team, and they provide unlimited graphic design services, unlimited custom church videos for a monthly flat fee, that honestly is pretty competitive. This team has over 30 years combined experienced working in this field. So, they have got a limited time launch special for listeners of this podcast, 10% off all plans for life, and 40% off the media bundle for life, with unlimited graphic design and video services. So, head on over today to promediafire.com/carey, you will not miss out on this launch special if you do. That's promediafire.com/carey, and you'll save depending on what you do, between 10 and 40%.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also hey, I don't know whether you guys do New Years resolutions, but we're gonna do something a little bit different this year. I've got some training for you that is absolutely free, that is going to help you I think make the best of 2019. So, a lot of you know, 'cause I've talked about this, some of you are like, "Ad nauseam," but you know what? We get feedback on it all the time 'cause I think it's an epidemic. But I burned out about 13 years ago in 2006. And my life on the other side of burnout, totally different than on the front side of burnout, plus I'm leading like, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say 10X more than I did before I burned out.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, and I'm actually enjoying my life. And, the biggest thing that made a difference is I switched to using a new calendar. And I am giving you for free the exact calendar I used to maximize my impact and my leadership. So, my life at home, also my life at work. This is the calendar that has helped me become, well just kinda, you know, what I do today and manage it all. Plus, I walk you through in a free video, how you can use it. So, where can you get this calendar for free? It's for free for a limited time only, head over to thehighimpactleader.com and you can download the free resource right now. So, head on over to thehighimpactleader.com, I'm giving away the calendar I use for free. It'll fit on any device and I hope it helps you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well guys, we're gonna jump into my conversation with Ed Stetzer, and I hope you enjoy all the places that this conversation goes. And once again, we do have show notes, it's just careynieuwhof.com/episode237. There's also transcripts there too. If you hear something you wanna go back and search it, or study it with your team, it's all there for you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anyway, here's my conversation with Ed Stetzer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Ed Stetzer, welcome to the podcast. It's a thrill to have you on.

Ed Stetzer: It's like the highlight of my day. I mean I'm on with Carey Nieuwhof, it's like I don't know, it's like I'm kind of like, being on with a celebrity.

Carey Nieuwhof: I thought you're gonna say it's the highlight of my hour. I'm like, yeah.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah, no, it's just true. It is an hour.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is the hour. So-

Ed Stetzer: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I hope it's the highlight of your hour.

Ed Stetzer: It is probably the best thing this hour.

Carey Nieuwhof: And it's been great. You and I, you and I have, you know, crossed paths many, many times over the years, both in person and online. But it's really good to have you here and to pick your brain. You're one of those leaders who's built up I think a broad but also a deep area of expertise in the church world, so this can be a lot of fun. Thanks for doing it.

Ed Stetzer: Well, I'm glad to do it man.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup. And, let's start here: You do see the wider church a lot, partly because of your role at LifeWay, and the books you've written, and the research you've done. Now you're at Wheaton College, you hold the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair For Church Mission And Evangelism at Wheaton, so you're meeting the next generation, the whole deal.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some trends you're seeing, well let's start positive, that really encourage you? Like when you look over the broad church ... 'Cause it's always so much gloom and doom, like what are you going "Yes"?

Ed Stetzer: Well, I mean it is a lot of gloom and doom but it's not always gloom and doom that's actual doom. It's sort of this ... You know, evangelicals are in the season of self-loathing, and so, they tend to read everything through the glasses of their discontent, which is fine and I get it, but now let's talk about positive. Well, for example, using the general social survey, which is the most widely used source of religion data in the United States. University of Chicago does this study now every two years. We're at the highest level of regular church attendance in evangelical churches for young adults since the survey began in 1972.

Ed Stetzer: Which again-

Carey Nieuwhof: Did not know that.

Ed Stetzer: Well, it's always a surprise to people-

Carey Nieuwhof: Seriously?

Ed Stetzer: It seriously is, and people are ... 'Cause they hear the doom and gloom, you know, there's a Newsweek cover story that came out, woulda been December, and it talks about the death of evangelicalism and it's political, and what they keep saying is, "Why do evangelicals, why do evangelicals," I don't know know about you, I mean Carey you and I were white, we're evangelicals.

Carey Nieuwhof: Evangelicals.

Ed Stetzer: I don't-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: I don't actually think of myself as a white evangelical, I think of myself as an evangelical, and a third of evangelicals are actually people of color. So, what you find is, we're actually at the highest level, again using the general social survey and what's called the reltrad, so all the doom and gloom, the sky is falling, doesn't actually align with what we call real numbers. So, I think that's encouraging.

Ed Stetzer: I think also I'm encouraged by the fact that among those who are maybe younger, but not just younger, because it's becoming clearer in our culture that what is a Christian is different than what's not a Christian, and that wasn't always the case. Still, the majority of people in the US, in the low 70's in the US, in the high 60's in Canada, self identify as Christian. But people are increasingly getting that kind of Christian is different. Now, hopefully, sometimes that's bad because, you know, some Christians have made bad choices, in our culture right now, but I think the difference is causing people to ask, "What's going on?"

Ed Stetzer: And, in many ways what we're finding is, for Christians, they're actually having to live their faith more seriously. The whole idea of being a nominal Christian is sort of declining, and as it declines I think a more serious robust faith for many is taking its place.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. That is interesting because I think you're right. I don't know whether we've seen the disappearance of nominal Christianity, but we've certainly seen the decline in the last 10 or 15 years, for sure.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. You can look ahead, if you look at the US right now, and you put it into quartiles, or just take the middle half, the middle half, the 50% half in the middle is actually, calls themselves Christian, but they don't necessarily shape their lives or whatever around it. You got 25% who call themselves Christians and it doesn't back their lives, you can actually measure it, 25% who just don't call themselves Christians.

Ed Stetzer: In Canada the numbers are a little lower, but not dissimilar. But when you look to current college students using one study called the ARIS, The American Religious Identification Survey, what they found is nominal is about down to a third. So, you're at 50% the population as a whole in the US, in the US you're down to a third in the next generation. So I think what's going away is nominalism. A robust faith is not going away, I mean nobody really thinks that, and no real researcher anywhere thinks that it is. What's going away is nominalism, what's growing is secularism, the NONES, N-O-N-E-S. So, both countries are becoming much more secular, and Australia leading ahead, UK leading ahead, they're becoming much more secular, but the percentage of people who are devout isn't shifting, so that tells me there's still opportunity that the mission force might actually engage the mission field.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I wanna go back to what you said about young adult church attendance actually increasing, like the highest level since 1972 was it, when the study began? Can you say a little bit more about that, 'cause I don't think, I didn't know that.

Ed Stetzer: Well, I don't think a lot of people know. It is in my new book, and I kinda broke the news there, but anybody can actually find the data, it's you take the general social survey, you run the reltrud over it, and it sorts by denominational tradition. And what you find is, you're at the highest level ever. So right now, slightly over 12% of Americans, 12% of young adult Americans, 18 to 29, say that they're attending an evangelical church on a regular basis.

Ed Stetzer: Now, I mean like Protestants is substantially lower, particularly among the next generation, and I do think that that is worth noting, and you know, by the time this will air, this is not a live recording as people guess, I'll actually have released that into an article I'm about to run on a secular news site, kinda talks a little bit about the Newsweek article that was kind of short on statistics and strong on opinion. And I was quoted in that article, and so was several other evangelicals. And so, it just helps to clarify that, just so you know no real researcher anywhere believes that evangelicalism is drying. Nobody anywhere.

Ed Stetzer: In Canada where you are, Reginald Bibby actually recently kinda walked back his earlier predictions of doom, doom's too strong of a word, of substantive decline, and actually now sees some pick up in the percentage of evangelicals, but Bibby would explain it and your Canadian listeners would know who Reginald Bibby is, but no American's gonna know who Reginald Bibby is. But he credits the shift in migration patterns. So, again-

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Ed Stetzer: White evangelicalism doth not have a strong future, but the evangelicalism does, and I'm saying the evangelicals are the only people who are the holders of the gospel, but I would say that gospel Christians have an opportunity here. You know, the sky's not falling statistically, but the ground is shifting, and the

question is, in the midst of a shifting ground, when the countries are becoming more secular, countries and at the same time nominal Christians are actually leaving and becoming the NONES, will the church step up, will Christians step up and show and share the love of Jesus in a broken and hurting and world.

Ed Stetzer: That's kind of my ... That's why I wrote, Christians In The Age Of Outreach, just to sort of say getting mad at a secular world is not what Jesus has called us to do.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes. Yes. It's really hard to love something you're angry with, right? It just is.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. Yeah. You can't war-

Carey Nieuwhof: And judgement is a terrible evangelism strategy.

Ed Stetzer: Well, that's a great line actually. You can't war at a people, you know, people talked about the cultural war. You can't war at a people and reach a people at the same time. You sorta have to make a decision. It doesn't mean you can't stand up for what's right and culture and more, but that's the challenge. You can't ultimately go to war and be on mission at the same time.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just so listeners know, 'cause you mentioned Canada a few times, but first of all, 80, 85% of listeners to this podcast are US, but for those who are Canadian and those of you who are always curious about my Canadian background, 'cause here I am, you're in Chicago, I'm an hour north of Toronto as we do this interview via remote. But, I always think of Canada as a canary in the coal mine, you know, back 100 years ago they put a canary in the coal mine because if a toxic gas gets released, a fatal gas, the canary dies first. So, if you're on lunch break, you look over and the canary's keeled over, time to get out of the mine.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I feel that's what we are, we are 10 to 15, maybe 20 years ahead of the secularization curve in North America, so we feel those things. We're somewhere between the US and Europe I think in terms of secularization, but I would totally resonate with what you're saying, because basically the only reason left to go to church in Canada is because you actually love Jesus or you're curious, and you're emerging out of your secularism or your spirituality or whatever you happen to believe and go, "Wonder if there's something to this Christianity thing? I wonder if there's something to Jesus?" Those are the only two valid reasons to go church. The rest melted away in my parents generation.

Ed Stetzer: It does make a difference, your being Canadian, and I speak Canadian as you can tell.

Carey Nieuwhof: You married one, ha, ha, ha.

Ed Stetzer: I did marry one that is true. That is true. But I think it's worth noting there was a, you know, one of the bigger denominations in Canada, kind of the non-Anglican,

non-Catholic, Canadian denomination, my wife's parents were a part of. And it kind of at one point got down to in their Sunday school class. They just stuck around 'cause they were good Canadians, peace, order and good government. And, it basically got down to they were in the Sunday school class, they were actually studying Canadian history, 'cause there was nothing left for them maybe to look at.

Ed Stetzer: And so, as awesome as confederation is, I don't know that that a bible study doth make. But, so I do think that the ... We should embrace the weirdness of the gospel and say, you know, depending on who you ask, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada says about 11% of Canadians are evangelical. And they count people by belief generally when they ask that question. And, and that number it's been relatively steady, but there was a decline, but it's kinda steadied out and maybe grown in some ways as well.

Ed Stetzer: So, it's a ... But I would agree with you about the canary in the mine. And I think the order you can follow things are, I think you've gotta leave Europe, continent of Europe out of the conversation because it is, just it thinks just wholly differently than the English-speaking western world. Because, I mean this is where religious wars went on for on and on and on and on and on, and so, there's a, you know, in France, French Revolution, it went to completely secular. It went, I mean whole different direction. The most religious nation in the world, self identifies Christian, at one point was France, to the point where it'd be one of the least religious. By the way, and that's what requiring people to be religious does.

Ed Stetzer: But if you look, and you look at the US, US is a real outlier statistically. And so, you look at religiosity well call it, it's the US, it's Canada, it's the UK, it's Australia and it's New Zealand, and I think that path is the most likely path. So I think that the future of the US doesn't really look like France, but it does look like Canada, and Canada looks more like the UK, and the UK probably looks something like Australia, and to the point where New Zealand's actually a minority Christian self identification in some parts.

Ed Stetzer: But I do think you're right, and so, I've had a few authors write on my Christianity Today space, about what it's like after the culture war, you know, what does it look like to live for the gospel in a post-Christian, I mean still the majority identifies as Christian, but in a post-Christian context, any way that may be different than living in the US.

Ed Stetzer: So, I think you're right on track when you explain it that way.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you win the culture war?

Ed Stetzer: I think first of all, no, but I think partly because, you know, one of the questions we asked at LifeWay research was if there were a culture war, and I forget the exact wording, regardless of whether or not you use that language, because I

don't find that language helpful, I said, you know, we asked the question: did Christians ... We asked pastors this, win, lose, whatever. And if there were a culture war, we kinda lost and so, so I think that part of the reality of the moment is, is that the people are unsure, because they might see like a Doug Ford or you know, the recent elections in Quebec, or they might see President Trump here, that there's been a sense of rising of kind of a different kind of nationalism, but even that is mostly moved on from some of the culture war issues.

Ed Stetzer: So, there might be a nationalism, but they're not turning back the tide on views of sexuality and gender and more-

Carey Nieuwhof: Abortion-

Ed Stetzer: And that's where a lot-

Carey Nieuwhof: Or any of those things.

Ed Stetzer: Abortion, other. Now, you know, President Trump has made some, you know, with particularly in point is the Supreme Court, and it's interesting 'cause with Trump, he said we wanted to appoint judges that would overturn Roe V. Wade, which is the landmark law in 1973 that legalized abortion in all states. But what's interesting is, he said that he wanted to overturn that, but when he as asked about Obergefell, which is what made same-sex marriage legal in the States, he said, "Oh, that's settled law."

Ed Stetzer: So, it's interesting to me that, you now, so Roe V. Wade is 1973, and we gotta overturn that, but Obergefell which was like Thursday, is settled law. But he sees the same poll numbers that anybody else does. I mean the culture's moved on. What you and I view on some of these issues, I mean that's just out of the mainstream now, and part of what we're trying to do is sort of carve out space and place to say, "It should be okay for us to believe this in our communities as well."

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and that's exactly where the discussion is in Canada now, because I remember our same-sex ruling from the Supreme Court came 13 years ago, in 2006. And I remember, I was a lead pastor at the time, I remember getting the emails, the people knocking on my door in my office going, "You must oppose this." And I didn't, because the toothpaste was out of the tube. The boulder's rolling down the hill, I'm not gonna stop this. The culture has been moving in this direction for 30 years, 40 years, it's almost an unstoppable force, and it doesn't necessarily determine the future of the church or the future of the kingdom of God or the future of Christianity.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean, you know, Christianity was born in a secular empire. Completely secular empire. And so, it's one of those things that I've always found perplexing as a Canadian, I guess probably because the canary's been in the coal mine for a long

time here, that that people think the battle is gonna be won in the culture, I'm not convinced we are gonna win that one in the culture.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. Another thing is that in the States, the New York Times columnist, his name is Ross Douthat, and he wrote an article talking about negotiating the terms of our surrender. And a lot of people resonated with it because you're trying to figure out, if the culture's moved on, if you've lost, at the same time, you know, no one's coming to our church or my church saying, "You have to do this wedding or not." But at the same time, you know, truly western, you're always dealing with it in Canada, and so, there are consequences in it, and you know, just as we're recording this, that basically Canada reversed its ruling about the federal government's summer jobs program, and allowing space for people, but The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada was one of the people that spoke up on that.

Ed Stetzer: So, it's kinda hard to know where that space is. You wanna stand for what's right, but also you wanna be able to say, we should as people of faith, and also I believe this for, I don't think Jewish deli owner's should be forced to sell ham, I don't think Muslim store owners should be forced to sell alcohol, and I don't think that Christians should be required to believe or participate in certain things in their institutions. So, it's a tricky thing though. And a lot of people are struggling with knowing how we walk through this new reality, 'cause we've lost Carey, we've lost our home field advantage, where we sort of had this privileged position, we sort of decided what was right and was wrong.

Carey Nieuwhof: Where we decided the laws.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. Pretty much.

Carey Nieuwhof: We decided the laws.

Ed Stetzer: Pretty much. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, you're right, and that's funny you should mention that, that was barely an issue here in Canada, just hit up the non-profit and church space. But a year ago, the Trudeau government announced that because there's grant money for summer jobs, that basically you had to sign off on the government's view of funded abortions, same-sex everything, you know, basically Trudeau's values, his personal values.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now it's something, my MP called me, so on, where I said, and I read the legislation and I'm like, "Whoa, this is a step further, this isn't a difference between the culture and what I believe personally, this isn't freedom of religion which is protected by our constitution, it's a move toward freedom from religion." And that is a massively different, you know, having studied constitutional law and political science in university, I mean that is very, that is fundamentally different.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, this is why I got upset. It impacted Christians, Muslims, Jews, anybody of any conviction, and often it was the Jews who were more upset than the Christians were about that, because it was basically saying, "We are gonna tell you what to think." And so, the government reversed that, which is really interesting. But that was different than just, "I just think the world should be the way I think it should be." Which, you know, you get to create your world that way, you might be able to craft a church culture, but ... Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: What is changing? We talked a little bit about fast changes in the culture, but what is changing fast in the church, faster than most people realize?

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. A couple of thing I would say, is that the growing sense of that ... Well of course some things let me say first, some things are like the new normal now. And I gotta tell you, I'm among the people who thought, I didn't think multi-sight would catch on like it did, and I saw it as kind of an overflow option. And was I-

Carey Nieuwhof: Should have bought stock Ed.

Ed Stetzer: I should have bought stock, it's so true. Well, I also thought that Jeb Bush was gonna be the Republican nominee, so what do I know? But again, I think everybody sorta thought that, so it is what it is. So, Multi-sight's the new normal, but the reason I mention that as significant is, I think it's actually creating a new sense of community without necessarily proximity. And so, what we're seeing is, the rise of ... If I'm already going to multi-sight and watching on the screen, can I stay home and watch it on the screen? As a matter of fact, there was a, Laura Turner wrote an article for the New York Times in-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes, in which we were cited.

Ed Stetzer: Mid-December. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, I think that there's a sense that, it has in some ways freed people to sometimes stay positively in community, when they're not in proximity. I think the challenge is, and Laura's article kinda pushed back on some of that, was that I do think the best community is gonna require feet and faces, not just electrons and avatars. But I do think that IRL, that in real life still matters, but I do think that for, for us to have multiple ways of engaging in community, is a good thing.

Ed Stetzer: So, I think that's one of the things that surprised me and is a good thing, is just how much we can wrap community in addition to proximity, but continue that community outside of the proximity with one another through electronic means. So, I think that's quickly moving in that direction, and if done well, and with wise stewardship, I think that can be a good thing and accelerate. I hear a lot of people really passionate about the next generation, and I think that's been something that, I guess that comes in waves, but here at Wheaton College, there's just a lot of excitement about what God's doing. We've had in our

conversations, we have several large Christian schools in Chicago-land area and they got together and talked about stirrings of revival, what God's doing.

Ed Stetzer: And so, that's encouraging to hear. And I would say, a strange thing, I talked to Keller, Tim Keller, I guess we don't have to say his first name, we just say Keller. I talked to him, was it last year or so, maybe a year or two ago, about how evangelism seemed to be at kind of the lowest ebb in his lifetime.

Ed Stetzer: And, I mean if you go back to when Tim was a kid, the evangelism explosion was everywhere. I mean everyone was doing evangelism conferences, and we've certainly substantially waned at that point, but I gathered together evangelist leaders from 50 denominations just recently, and they're starting to say, "No, you know what? People are asking again, how do we ... " And they're finding new ways to do it, and it's not the same starting point, it's not necessarily the formulaic response, but I'm encouraged by what I see as the beginnings of a greater desire to show and share the love of Jesus, not just be about us, but it'll be about God's mission in the world.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Even in books, I mean there's been a host of everything from apologetic books to sort of the ethic of love books that have come out as the lead in evangelism, which is encouraging.

Ed Stetzer: So, I just ordered, I went online, because I'm an evangelist professor, so I went online and just, I haven't read any of these books so I'm not endorsing them, but, you know, I got *Evangelism After Pluralism*, I got *The Scandal of Evangelism*, I got *Cultivating an Evangelistic Character*. These are all brand new books that when I talked to my publisher three or four years ago, they said, "If you put evangelism," ... I talked to my agent three or four years ago, "If you put evangelism in the title of a book, nobody will buy it." Well now there's a group of them that are coming out and re-engaging that conversation. I'm encouraged by that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I'm encouraged by that too. What are some things that should be changing faster in the church? I mean I realize we could camp out here for an hour.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: But things that should be changing faster in the church but just aren't, as you recall.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. I still think there's a very clear sense of consumer mentality. I think part of the challenge is we still live in a world where most people go to church as customers of the religious goods and services that are distributed there, rather than co-laborers in the gospel work. And I think the challenge is, you and I have helped enough people to revitalize or renew their church, that we helped them to be more friendly to people, that sometimes we forget that basically making a

friendly environment is actually great and, you know, Barnes & Noble wants to do that and Barnes & Noble does, and so does, you know, I just went to the Apple Store, they wanna do that.

Ed Stetzer: But ultimately, we've gotta move people from a friendly consumer-driven environment, to being on mission that really, you know, it's kinda goes from come and see to deny yourself and take up my cross. That's a pretty huge journey, and I think that the consumer mentality is the great, I mean it's really the great founding myth of our age, and founding myth doesn't mean that it's not true, but it's the great reality that undergirds the triumph of the west, and it's very hard to both appeal to that, which we do in some degree. You know, make your church relevant. But why? You're trying to appeal to people so they might consider the truth claims of the gospel.

Ed Stetzer: But if you leave them as solely people who have responded to a consumer-driven appeal, you end up with customers, not co-laborers, and the end result is one day you're gonna look back and you're gonna have a room full of disgruntled customers who are gonna leave Target and go down the road to Walmart 'cause they're doing it better than you are.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Is that ... I really appreciate that. And on my space, on my blog, I go there almost every month, talk about relevance, talk about reaching new people, the whole deal. And yet what I have seen is, I think it is possible to move people from a place of, you're here at church for the very first time, we're really glad to have you, to die and take up your cross and follow Jesus. Can you do that transition in your view? What makes for a successful-

Ed Stetzer: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Transition?

Ed Stetzer: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because, the classic criticism, every time I open my mouth on that is, "Jesus didn't call us to make consumers, he called us to make disciples." I've heard it a million times. And I agree with that. On the other hand, I think the idea of making church attractional, even if that model has peaked, was that church was incomprehensible, or church was hostile, or church was weird, or church was inaccessible to those who came in.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, it's a tension to be managed for sure. I'd love your thoughts on that, how do you make that journey?

Ed Stetzer: I think it was unhelpful when people started to say, make a contrast between attractional and missional. And I think it's unhelpful, and I don't believe and I don't say that if you find ways to have your church be friendly to people who are outsiders, you wanna call them seekers or whatever, that necessarily that

means you created consumer-driven mindset. So, 'cause I heard those things definitively stated like you did, and it was, you know, so I mean obviously I'm a little bit, I mean just preached at Saddleback, so, if there's a church that in many ways personified that seeker sensitive approach ... I mean so I'm preaching there, so obviously I am not, I don't think they are bad or whatever, but on the other hand, last we got preached at Moody church, which I can assure you hasn't asked the question, "How do we make seekers comfortable," for about 150 years. It's just a different kind of experience.

Ed Stetzer: And I think, so I think in both of those cases, there's some things you have to recognize, right? So, when people come to Saddleback, maybe they've appealed to their modern sensibilities, right? It's contemporary church, it's relaxing, whatever else it may be, but when people come to Moody church, a whole lot of people come to Moody church because they're in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. We have several CSO members there or whatever, and they want an experience that's dignified and thoughtful. We have an orchestra and a choir, and robes and more.

Ed Stetzer: But, in both of those cases there's still a sense that some attractional connection was there. So for me, attractional's not the problem. I would say pandering is a problem in any of those cases.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Ed Stetzer: But 1 Corinthians 9, "All things to all men, by all means possible I might save some," to me, the how of church is in many ways determined by the who, when, and where of culture. Now I think there are marks of a biblical church, I read about six marks that I think every church should have, you know, in the Poken in Africa, in the Ebon in Malaysia, and in the GTA, Greater Toronto Area and Chicago where I live. But a lot of that is locally ... I'm a missiologist by training, it's missiologically determined, and twice in the letters to Corinthians, Paul actually encourages us even to take into account that there might be unbelievers among us.

Ed Stetzer: So I think that's a bit of a straw man, and a lot of times by the more theological crowd, which I hang with, they kinda create the straw man that, you know, "Don't do that, just preach the gospel and love people."

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah.

Ed Stetzer: And I'm always fascinated by people who say that, 'cause I really don't think they believe that. Because, 'cause when they train missionaries, they don't say to them, "Hey listen, we know you're going to another place, and you don't know the language, but just preach the gospel and love people." No, they actually teach them to engage the culture where they're going.

Ed Stetzer: So, we can't forbid North American churches to do the very thing we require international missionaries to do, and so, I think that ... But I would say I think we should both be aware, you and I are friendly to more seeker, I like to use the word seeker comprehensible, I want them to comprehend what's going on. But I do think there are times that you and I would need to say and probably should say and maybe have said, I have said, you know, I think in your desire to be so relevant and engaged, you may be creating culture in your church that's actually working against where you want to take them, which is some life transforming reality. 'Cause you've gotta move people from sitting in rows to sitting in circles. Those things take effort and you don't wanna create a culture that is so, we're not gonna bother you about anything, that you don't actually move people to deeper maturity.

Ed Stetzer: I just think on our side of the movement, sometimes we gotta say that that's true.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah. I think that's absolutely true. And we've done some self correctives over the years where we call Audibles and go, "That was too much consumer language." People are gonna get the idea that the goal is to sit back, relax and enjoy the flight. That is not actually our mission at all. And I think in the way we welcome people, I think in the way you preach, I think in all those things ... On the other hand, everything's a reaction to the previous generation. A lot of us grew up in churches where we're like, "I wanna bring my friend to church but this will end in disaster. I know where this is going."

Carey Nieuwhof: And so, we modernized, we improvised, we changed, and it's interesting, so even at Moody, there's an argument that people have that say younger adults, people in their 20's and 30's, they're looking for the mystical, they're looking for the traditional, they're looking for the transcendent, what do you see in trends in churches among younger adults that almost in some way, I heard a voice in my head that said, and this is no offense to Saddleback who's doing incredible work to this day in California, but you know, Saddleback would be a boomers church and millennials would be way more interested in say Moody and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are your thoughts on that?

Ed Stetzer: Okay. So, my thoughts are, you know, before we did this interview, I was with my daughter, my 20 year old daughter, who came to me when we moved to Wheaton, she'd actually decided to go away to college, we lived in Nashville. She's very excited about being eight hours away from her family to go to college at Wheaton College, and then a couple of months after she decided I said, "Hey guess what? We're coming too."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll be...

Ed Stetzer: She's a little ... Exactly. So she was a little stunned, but she likes it now. But one of the things she said when she got her and she said, she sat me down, it was a very serious conversation, I didn't know what was coming. She said, "Dad, I just want you to know I love you, and I think you're a great pastor and I really I love that you've been my pastor my whole life, but I want you to know, I'm gonna not go to the church you go to or a church like yours here." And part of me is like, "What does that mean? I mean you're not gonna go to church like mine are you're joining a Wiccan coven? What does that mean?"

Ed Stetzer: So, she tells me that she wants to go to ... She's tired of the, her words, four chord rock and roll worship, done poorly but loudly. So, she's an opera singer, and so, I mean whose sung at symphony halls. And so, she loves Moody church's music. She's actually now on staff at the church nearby, but College Church is near Wheaton, and it's a very traditional church, and she loves choirs and anthems and the things that I as a young church planner moved away from and encouraged people sometimes move away from.

Ed Stetzer: Now, but here's the thing, that's not the trend.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes. Your daughter is a minority, not the majority.

Ed Stetzer: Exactly. Really there's only ... Well only one trend inside evangelical Protestantism across the entire English speaking western world, and that is the trend to large contemporary churches, non-denominational, it's a large non-denominational contemporary churches with smoke machines. Actually the last thing wasn't true.

Ed Stetzer: But, so, it's not a true thing. But it is a large, non-denominational, contemporary, and I actually, having heard ... I mean you ask this question because you, you know, you hear people say it, and so, I actually decided, there was a formerly evangelical author who had moved away from evangelicalism and in her book about it, and sorta said that young adults are attracted to-

Carey Nieuwhof: Smells and bells.

Ed Stetzer: Smells and bells, mainline Protestantism. And so, I wrote an article in the Washington Post about it. Now, I recognize that the church that I cited, may be triggering for some people, but it was a ... So, actually what it is, a friend of mine runs the research department for the Episcopal church. And the Episcopal church would be a place where these kinds of smells and bells would be more evident.

Ed Stetzer: By the way, I came to faith in Christ in the Episcopal church. And so, so I called up the researcher there, and I said, "In the entire Episcopal church, how many adult confirmations," so there's not an apple-to-apples you can do here, but there were 12,000 adult confirmations in the entire Episcopal church in 2013, with an attendance drop of 27,000. Now, so then I called up at the time, Perry

Noble, who was NewSpring Church, and in 2013, they actually increased, they baptized more than 6,500 people and their worship attendance grew by 10,000. So ...

Carey Nieuwhof: One church versus a whole denomination.

Ed Stetzer: The whole denomination. So, what's happening is, and again, I recognize that again the NewSpring church may, 'cause, you know, people know the story-

Carey Nieuwhof: But they've recovered very well. I talked to some of their team a few months ago. It's amazing.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. And so, so what I would say is, that's the trend. The trend is to, you know, the Life Churches of the world or to whatever, whatever that church may ultimately be, and it doesn't mean there aren't counter-trends. So, at Wheaton College there are students here who are becoming more liturgical. That's, you know, and I came to Christ in a liturgical church so I'm not anti that. So, there's always movement within, but the big trend is actually not towards traditional or liturgical for young adults.

Carey Nieuwhof: Ed, it's so good to hear you say that, because in those conversations, I found them interesting but frustrating because I think we all know somebody who wants a liturgical, stained glass type thing and they're 25 and they're burned out on rock and roll church or whatever, but my next question is, show me where that is attracting hundreds or thousands of young adults. And that's where it all goes silent. And then people go, "Well, I still know that's a trend." I'm like, "I'm glad to hear you say that, that you've actually done some research in that area, and that's what you found."

Carey Nieuwhof: And that doesn't mean that ... If you got 20 of those in your church, awesome! Those are 20 people who may not be reached, but if we're looking at what is gonna be most effective as we move forward, it's better to look at what ... I mean, I'm a utilitarian, the greatest good for the greatest number. How can we get this moving forward?

Carey Nieuwhof: You hold the Billy Graham Chair at Wheaton, so you are front and center with the next generation of church leaders, what do you see in the next generation of church leaders that you love?

Ed Stetzer: Well I think there's a deeper sense that they acknowledge that they start their, because if they're younger, they start their faith journey with a world that is going to not as readily accept them. And I think when you start at that point, I think this is one of the reasons Pentecostals grew so much in the 20's and 30's 'cause they, they just kinda said, "You know what? We're kinda odd, we actually think that we're speaking in another language and that God's miraculously intervening in the world. So, we're odd. Let's tell everybody about Jesus and change the world."

Ed Stetzer: So, I think that, you know, Pentecostals included, now I think all Christians sort of acknowledging that to be the case, and I think the starting point that you are indeed a stranger and an alien, and this world is not your home, is a good place because there may be respectability. I mean I guess I mean am at a respectable institution? But there may be respectability. But it doesn't come because you chase after it, you live faithfully for Christ, you be the best whatever you are, truck driver, banker, doctor, lawyer, and in doing that, you still acknowledge that your faith is now out of the mainstream and you're gonna live it because it's true and it's real, and your life's been changed.

Carey Nieuwhof: So you see that real sense of calling and that willingness to be outliers, which is encouraging. Are there enough next generation leaders? I mean I've heard stats from denominational leaders about the number of retirements that are coming up in the next 10 years, you know, people stepping out of ministry and the number of seminarians in the next few years. The numbers do not add up. What do you see?

Ed Stetzer: Well I think, I like the way you asked the question, I actually think there are not a lot, there are not nearly enough leaders. There are a lot of people who are professionally trained or theologically trained, but one of my concerns for this next generation is the over-reaction against what might become, be seen by some as kind of the obsession with leadership literature in the 90's, that everyone was, you know, Drucker was the fourth member of the trinity, et cetera, et cetera.

Ed Stetzer: And what I would say is, don't throw the baby out with the bath water. I mean you're a leadership podcast, I create leadership courses, I teach leadership at a graduate level, and I will tell you that one of the things that concerns me is that the younger leaders right now ... Again, remember, you said it earlier, every generation kind of has to reinvent everything for themselves. Okay, so reinvent it for yourself, but at the same time recognize that leadership is a skill, it can be learned, it's also an art, and if you don't take leadership seriously, you can know a lot and not go anywhere with it. And I think it really matters that we think more about leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's good to hear you say. It's funny because I've always just been interested, just the way I'm wired in leadership, and I'm shocked at ... 'Cause it wasn't exactly like the leadership space was vacant when I started writing books and blogging and podcasting. But I'm just shocked at the raw appetite there seems to be for our resources, particularly the majority of listeners to this podcast are young adult Americans between 25 and 40.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. Yeah and I think it's interesting too, as I put together ... 'Cause I teach here at the graduate school, and we actually have in our title, leadership. It's evangelism and leadership. So, we're stunned to how many people wanna study leadership, and we're actually looking to the future, we got processes to go

through, approvals, but we may even create a degree in Global Leadership specifically.

Ed Stetzer: But even through mission group, you know, I created a leadership course, Strategic Leadership For Ministry and Mission, and I have been just shocked by how many people, having gone through the course and watched it, who say to me, "I've seen people intuitively do some of these things, but they now know what they're thinking." You know, one of the things, he's talking about like Kotter's Change Management, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: So I can talk about ... I mean that's so ... I mean I say that and you're like, "Yeah." But, most people and most pastors or church leaders, what they don't even think about the idea that you have to start by establishing a sense of urgency. And when they think, and they think, "Oh wait a second? So, I shouldn't just make change, 'cause I wanna change?" No, no, no, no, no. And so, I wanna say to them no, no, just stop. You've got to establish a sense of urgency, and then get some people on your team with you, you know, create a guiding coalition.

Ed Stetzer: And yet, you could literally say, if you would just do these, you know, few steps, you'll be so much ... And, I kinda feel like ... I was talking to a pastor in Florida, that kinda went through my course. And he said, "It's all of a sudden I feel like all the things I wanted the church to be, I just realized that I just wasn't leading them to be that. I was preaching and teaching and assuming that they would evolve," he didn't use the word term evolve, but they would, it could become, it just would emerge. Can we use, emerge, I can't use any words today.

Ed Stetzer: And what...

Carey Nieuwhof: Quoting something less loaded. Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: Exactly. What he said to me was, "When I actually thought about how to lead people to this, it actually happened." So, I gotta tell you, we see in the bible, God uses leadership. Now, the bible's not a leadership handbook, the bible is a story of God's redemptive purposes, but we see in the bible people being used by God and the leadership lessons are evident there, but then we can learn from our culture as well. And I think we're better churches, ministries and more when we have healthy leaders.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and you mentioned John Kotter's Leading Change. I was so desperate as a 30-something pastor when I started out, that book had come out a couple of years earlier, Harvard Business School. I'm like, "That's what I'm doing." And I just read that book and I followed it. I mean I read it over and over again, and then I few years ago I wrote Leading Change Without Losing It, which took Kotter's principles and put it into church world.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah so, how is that not like, I mean your book, I read your book, how is that not issued? So, I went through, I have four graduate degrees from Seminary, four. Two master's, two doctorates. Nobody talked about Kotter. And, Kotter is like, junior management. I mean if you're like an ROTC in the military, you're gonna engage Kotter, if you're in the junior management program, if you're gonna have read Kotter, and yet, and again, some of you are thinking, "Is this like magic Kotter?" No, it's just simple, here's steps to take to bring about change.

Ed Stetzer: And so, it's kind of stunning to me, 'cause I really think it's hurt, I think a lot of people who say, "Well my church just didn't respond, or their carnal or whatever." No, it wasn't the church, it was you. You didn't lead well because you didn't value leadership enough to learn how to lead well.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I could not agree more. And I mean, nobody in Seminary taught me any of that stuff, and you know, this was almost pre-internet, in the late 90's, yeah we had dial-up, but you couldn't watch videos, free concerts-

Ed Stetzer: CompuServe right there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. CompuServe, that's exactly it.

Ed Stetzer: You got those AOL CD's in the mail.

Carey Nieuwhof: CD's in the mail. It's like, well, how many hours of internet do you have left, right?

Ed Stetzer: Yup, exactly. Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: But, you know, it was like, I'm gonna grab on to anything I can and I realized that how you do it is so critical to accomplishing what you're called to do. And, there's a way to blow the whole thing up, and then there's a way to help, you know, leadership's hard, you're really requiring people to do something they wouldn't do ordinarily, but for the leader.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, we're gonna go across the wilderness and into the promised land. Come with me. Nah, we're going back to Egypt. Right? Anyway, what do you see in the next generation that might concern or alarm you a little bit Ed?

Ed Stetzer: You know, I don't. Part of it may be where I am to be perfectly fair.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: So, you know, all these are like the students at Wheaton, are kind of the best and the brightest, and I don't think anybody would disagree with that, just to statistically, these are the best and the brightest. So, I see in them a deep desire to change the world, and I love that. Of course, you know, I mean I remember in college I had a deep desire to change the world as well, but in here I see that

sense. They've made a choice to come to a Christian institution like Wheaton, this is what's called The Covenant School, you actually have to testify of your faith in Christ, and sign a covenant about what it means to be in community.

Ed Stetzer: So, when I see that, it's hard for me to be discouraged. I think if there's any place where it may be, is I do think that for many people, or let's just say some, for some, that the concept or the idea that something is going to be difficult and painful has not been I think adequately communicated to people.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Ed Stetzer: And, first of all, leadership in general is often just your willingness to lean into the pain that other people refused to lean into. But, I was kinda struck by, I know this is gonna seem like a strange tangent, but Josh Harris', I Kissed Dating Goodbye, has been in the news. He's done this documentary and it's kinda been in the news and more. And, and I thought it was interesting, kind of how he, the NPR did a story on this. When NPR does story on your documentary, that's a pretty big deal.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: And what was interesting was, I mean he's sort of the normal, you know, the normal kind of regrets some of the things about what others would call purity culture, but I really liked the closing ... Actually the reporter who wrote this is actually a graduate of Trinity International University, now she works for NPR, but here's how she ended the story, just quoting Josh said, he's reflecting back but whatever, but just the line is so key, "I think it's made us realize how there's heartache and there's pain no matter what pathway you choose in life. There's no path you can choose that can protect you from that."

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Ed Stetzer: And I know he was talking about dating choices. But I Tweeted this 'cause I was struck by the fact that I think a lot of people ... I grew up poor, and our family received public assistance and things of that sort, so I just knew that life was gonna be hard and difficult, and I had to fight my way through things at times. I think sometimes there's a book called, Our Kids by Robert Putnam. It's a very important book, he's at Harvard. He wrote, Bowling Alone, everybody knows Bowling Alone.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Stetzer: So this is his newest book. And I think that there's been a scissoring in society and you notice the people that'll be listening to your podcast are in the upper scissor, and they haven't experienced some of the pain and difficulty that people in the lower scissor have, and you still could, 'cause socioeconomically, I think in terms of a split, socioeconomically, and I do think that we've gotta

acknowledge that everything is painful. Working hard in school's painful, marriage is wonderful and I have a great wife, but it's hard sometimes, leadership is hard sometimes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Parenting is hard.

Ed Stetzer: Oh, parenting got ... You know, you ever notice that there's a 100% correlation between parenting and death? Everybody who parents dies. So I think there may be something to this correlation between the two.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm gonna text Reggie Joiner right now.

Ed Stetzer: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Get on this before it's too late.

Ed Stetzer: Exactly. But if people don't realize that, and when you're not ... So, even back, this is a leadership podcast, one of the things, when I mentor some of my leaders here, I say to them, "A big part of leadership is being willing to lean in to the pain."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: And so, Wheaton College is a very old and established institution, very state institution, but there were some things that I needed to change so we can be successful. And, and I said, "We've gotta change these things." And people said, "Well, they're not changeable." I said, "Well, we're gonna lean into that pain."

Ed Stetzer: Well, you know, just today I talked to one of my key leaders and they said, "You know what? There was a lot of pain, but that's changed now." So ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Ed Stetzer: Nothing good happens without some pain in the process.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's really good. Well also we should link to Sam Chand's book on leadership pain, if leader's haven't read that. That is an incredible book on just that subject, spends a whole book talking about it.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, Ed, hypothetical for you. Young leader, you deal with them all the time, comes to you, uber gifted, and he or she says to you, "Here's my choice." And, let's say calling is open, there's no angel at the edge of their beds saying, "Hey this is what you have to do with your life." But, should I plant a new church or there's this church of say 500 that's plateaued, it's in a great neighborhood, they're not reaching the neighborhood. So, my real choice is, do I plant something new or do I transition this church? I have an opportunity to do either. What advice might you give him or her?

Ed Stetzer: Well, it is my requirement that I would give the caveat that you would expect me to give, that you should pray and fast until the Lord makes it clear, 'cause both of those are great opportunities.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Stetzer: That being said, I do think that it is easier to birth a baby than it is to raise the dead, and thus, I tend to exhort people that church planting would be an opportunity that you will more than likely reach more people, you will have the opportunity to grow yourself and your leadership more in a church planting environment, so I would tend to ... But you gotta remember, so I started, I was 21 years old, man, I moved to the inner city of Buffalo, New York, and I planted a church among the urban poor.

Ed Stetzer: But what I would say is, and I know I answered a question, I'm gonna caveat it again, is that I fell in love with church revitalization when I was a seminary professor and I wasn't ... My professor experience years ago wasn't the greatest experience. But this little church of old people, 35 senior adults, the median age was 68 years of age, I loved journeying with them for two years through a revitalization. It was amazing. But I will tell you, it's harder, and sometimes harder things are good. Sometimes it's okay.

Ed Stetzer: And so, I've actually written more today on church revitalization than I have on church planting. And, I think that's partly indicative because I think there are ... As you look at the whole, there's actually more opportunity in revitalizing churches than we will be able to see through the planting of churches. 'Cause there's 300,000 plus churches, a whole lot of revitalization needs, and we're planting a little over 4,000 a year.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's exactly why I asked the question. Because you're kind of an expert, you're known both, and you know the planting world and the revitalization world, and there's so many existing churches compared to church plants. So, no, I appreciate that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, your latest book is about your voice in an age of outrage, being the church in an age of outrage, and I know you've been very vocal on that. But you are also a very active and vocal during the whole Me Too movement that's been happening over the last year, year and a half. Curious, I'd really like to explore that, and I really, I just wanna say I appreciated your voice in the midst of that-

Ed Stetzer: Well, thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: As one of the men who was speaking out. I'd love to hear what you observed, what you felt, and what you've learned through that whole process.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. So, you know, one of the things that I, I really love Andy Crouch's book on power a lot.

Carey Nieuwhof: I just read an excerpt from that, it is powerful.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. Oh my gosh, I hate Andy Crouch 'cause he can just write like that. But I realized when I first ... I mean I read an article first, that I have a lot of power for, sometimes institutionally, I was the Vice President of LifeWay, speaking platform, whatever. And when people hear that they, people who don't like you will say, "Well, that's arrogant," or whatever. Power just is and sometimes we have more because of our organization or our persona, whatever else it may be.

Ed Stetzer: But I love that one of the things he said is that, "Power is given for the benefit of the flourishing of others." And so, what I found is, is that, now there's some areas that Christians maybe haven't found a way to engage in, and they need somebody to say, somebody that they trust, that they see as, I don't even know, what you call mainstream, and certainly as evangelical, I'm a mainstream evangelical, I'm on the board of The National Association of Evangelicals. So, what I try to ask sometimes is, "Is there something that I could," I mean I'm not starting the conversation, they already exist, but so what I did, we actually had a summit in December at Wheaton, the Billy Graham Center sponsored along with our School of Psychology and here at Wheaton College.

Ed Stetzer: And, a reporter came up to me, and she's a good reporter, and actually came to the meeting which was helpful, and she said, "Can I ask you some questions?" I said, "Listen, I would rather you talk to, you may have noticed, basically what I'm doing is I'm holding the mic for other people." And in the summit we had the majority of speakers were women, the majority of speakers were survivors, we had pastors there, we had ... And what I wanted to do with this reporter, wanted me to comment, and I'm like, "I want you to hear from Beth Moore," who shared or or someone, you know, Jeanette Salguero, maybe is not as well known as Christine Cain, who was also there, or Laurel Bunker.

Ed Stetzer: But, and even to the point where Kelly Rosati actually there said for the first time publicly identified that she had been a survivor, what they call CSA, Childhood Sexual Abuse, and so did Max Lucado. I mean Max Lucado at our summit shared, I mean how many millions of books has Max Lucado published? And we've all heard his voice. And so, he shared that and it was a very powerful time.

Ed Stetzer: So, the reason I wanted to do that was, is that, I think this is a bigger issue than people realize, and churches don't know how to address it. 'Cause they kinda see, you know, well Me Too is a Hollywood thing, and maybe we're not like Hollywood or maybe we don't agree with everything that somebody says. But at the end of the day, if you have these numbers of people who have been abused and harassed and more in their church, I think it's really important that they have space and place to speak up and to heal. And might I add we make some changes in the church that address some of these issues.

Ed Stetzer: So, for me, it's having a place where ... You know, we planned this in two months. And I texted some friends. And so, I recognize I have some of that power for good or for bad, so I just wanted to use it to say, "Hey, there's a conversation going on that a lot of people in your church are hurting through and in," and that's why I wanted to do that. And so, well actually, you know, we've been following up some series, writings at Christianity Today, on this as well. I just think that it's important. We need that human flourishing, I think that really matters.

Carey Nieuwhof: What do you think, like when you think about using your voice, what are some really helpful ways to use your voice as a leader? Because all of us have influence. Most of us don't hold distinguished chairs or whatever, but we all have power of some kind. Whether that's in a church of 50, a church of 50,000, whether that's through a podcast, et cetera. Whatever it happens to be. We all have a voice.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some really good ways to use your voice these days? And then what in your view are like just, please don't go there, please don't misuse your voice that way.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. This is part of what I ... In Christians in the Age of Outrage is that, that this is kind of the theme. And I think for evangelical Christians, now in the States it's a little different than Canada. We have a different political reality where evangelicals are still a pretty prominent cultural and political force.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Ed Stetzer: No one really is worried about evangelical power in Canada. And so, yeah it's just, it doesn't, you know, I mean there are...

Carey Nieuwhof: There's five of us here. So ...

Ed Stetzer: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's fine.

Ed Stetzer: And do, so Trudeau, you know, is ... By the way he attended an alpha course, so there you go, he's got some-

Carey Nieuwhof: I didn't know that.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah, he's an alpha graduate and it's fascinating to see what took or what didn't take with that, but you kind of know that people don't see, they don't see in Australia either, just as a threat. Matter of fact I think, I'm trying to remember the last, who was it, Tony Abbott, in Australia, was a very devout Catholic, and nobody cared. Because he wasn't going to do anything that was gonna be a problem as well.

Ed Stetzer: So, even in your nation you see similar, Stockwell Day, characters in the past, but here evangelicals are still seen as a someone that could threaten the liberty of other people. So, here's what I would say, I think again, I think it's really essential that we would acknowledge that we have lost in many ways the privileged position and culture, we've lost our home field advantage, and we need to speak about and on what it looks like to live more as missionaries and less as kind of guards of the culture.

Ed Stetzer: 'Cause I think in Christendom, we were sort of the moral guardians, who make sure people don't step in or step out of line. Here I think we're missionaries, this is not our home and we think ultimately that we want to live in that way. So, a big part of the framing of this, and so, for example, one of the examples, matter of fact I spend a whole chapter on digital discipleship. I think people's social media really doesn't help them if they don't have it under the lordship of Jesus Christ. And I gotta tell you, I've seen people, I've seen some of the most horrible things said on social media, that I click on the link to just look at the bio and it lists follower of Jesus, disciple, pastor, whatever. And I'm like, "Are you kidding?"

Ed Stetzer: And so, what I would say is, is don't be disciplined by your cable news choice, don't be spiritually shaped by your social media feed, but instead, interact in ways that build bridges as Jesus would have you ... Let me give you an example. And again, in the US there's very much of a bipolar reality, there's Democrats and Republicans, and it's different in Canada and other places.

Ed Stetzer: But even so, if you're in Alberta, which is very politically different than Quebec, but anywhere you are, you have people who differ than you. All Albertans don't vote one way, and all people in Illinois don't vote one way. So, but what happens is, is because elections matter, you should care about elections, is people, I've seen neighbors start posting, you know, you become friends with Facebook, on Facebook with your neighbors, 'cause you saw them at a picnic or whatever. And then as elections come they get more and more angry, and basically what they're posting is how stupid people who disagree with them are, and in doing so, you're basically saying to your neighbor literally one door down, "You're an idiot."

Carey Nieuwhof: Or anyone you're gonna reach in your church. You're an idiot.

Ed Stetzer: Exactly. And so, how would you successfully seek to engage them when they just read how stupid you think they are. Now I think you can say, you know, I think it's better in Illinois, I can certainly say for Illinois, we have some of the highest taxes in the US, though it doesn't look like anything compared to Canada, but we don't have nationalized healthcare. So, I think I could say something that even my neighbor might disagree with. I might say, "You know, I really, I hate to see the slow business growth in Illinois that's not providing opportunities for people through work because our taxes are so high."

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Ed Stetzer: I think that's a statement that somebody could make and, but it's not the same as, these are a bunch of liars, cheats, and idiots. Now for me, I actually am a little even more cautious, as pastors I would say be even more careful, because you're gonna have to ... I wrote an article, again I keep using US examples, and most of your listeners are US-

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, it's 90%, don't worry about it.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah, yeah. So, like North America, 90% US and then Canada is the hat. And it's a great ... I love the maps that have the US an island surrounded by water, and there's no Canada or Mexico.

Carey Nieuwhof: I have not seen that.

Ed Stetzer: You haven't seen those? Oh I got to send you some.

Carey Nieuwhof: No.

Ed Stetzer: I'll have to send you some of these. American separate maps. But, we had these hearings between, I mean not between, so now Justice Kavanaugh in our country-

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah.

Ed Stetzer: There was some accusations, credible accusations that came forward, some later recanted, but not some of the most important ones. We saw Professor Ford testify to this, and I gotta tell you, I watched this, I think a lot of Americans did, I believed Professor Ford. And I watched it and then I believed Judge Kavanaugh. And I watch these things and what am I supposed to do? And here's the great thing that I wrote: "You don't have to do anything. It is not, you're not in the Senate, you are not gonna vote on this, and if I got up and said that," 'cause I had actually written beforehand, I've been quoted in The Atlantic before these accusations came forward, that I was glad that Judge Kavanaugh was nominated, 'cause I do, you know, I'm an evangelical in the US, I think a more conservative Supreme Court I think is good.

Ed Stetzer: So, I apologize for being a little political on your podcast, but just to lay that out, 'cause then all these accusations came out, and people said, "What do you think now?" I said, "Here's what I think now. I'm gonna pastor a congregation with people that have different views on this, including a lot of women who feel that they wouldn't be believed if they came forward with a claim. I'm not in the Senate, I don't have to make this decision. I decide to pastor people who differ on both sides of this issue."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: And there are times and places it's okay to do that and to say the Christlike thing is for me to be able to say, "I don't know. I don't know enough to say." But, if you have been in a situation where you feel you are harassed or abused or whatever, come to me and we'll go to the authorities together, we'll go to that person together. So, I can still walk through that, 'cause again, posting stuff on Facebook, you are not changing the world. I know this is like big news, but you are not fixing everything with your Facebook and your Twitter posts.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. No, that's very very true. And, I think Keller, you mentioned him earlier, has done a phenomenal job, if you'll listen to the body of his preaching over a few decades. He's got Republicans and Democrats sitting next to each other in his church in New York City, and does a wonderful job of basically saying, "God is neither, get along. And here are the things that we agree on." Fascinating.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I gotta ask you before I let you go, and this has been so helpful, you're a prolific writer, I sense you're a voracious reader and also consumer of content, everything from current affairs to studies to research to current books. I mean all those books you trotted out, how do you make time for all that?

Ed Stetzer: Fair question. So, first of all, it's a little smoke and mirrors. I have I think including part-time people, I have 62 people who work for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really?

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. So they do most of those things. So, when I write an article, I might even record an article, and then someone puts it in print, and then somebody edits it, and then somebody ... So, one of the things I've done for example, every article now that I publish at Christianity Today, I actually say at the bottom, the exchange team helped with this, 'cause I'm trying to give ... I have such a great team, and people assume that I'm, you know, writing by myself from beginning to end a thousand words a day, and I'm not.

Ed Stetzer: I mean I don't publish, I mean these are my ideas, and they're my shaping of it, but I have great editors who help me get across the finish line consistently. So, when I walk to a meeting, I just hosted, a group of missiologists, The Send Institute Missiologist Council. Well I have Daniel Yang, who leads me out, tells me, "Here's what you're gonna do and this is the time." So, when you have people like that ... And then, I was a meeting years ago in Tulsa nevertheless, I was just thinking of Tulsa 'cause I'm speaking there in a few weeks. And, the last time I was there, I was with Leonard Sweet, this out of 10 years ago, whatever.

Ed Stetzer: So, Len, we're doing this Q&A, and someone asks Len this question, the very question you just asked, and how do you keep, what do you suggest I read? And so, he starts going through this list that is ... 'Cause Leonard Sweet is, he's a genius. I mean just so brilliant. And so, so then he answered the question and they said to me, "But what would you add?" And I would say, "Well I would

actually say do the exact opposite than what Leonard Sweet just told you." And Len looked at me and we all laughed.

Ed Stetzer: Because my job and Len's job is to be informed on these things.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: And there's a Yiddish word, it's maven, so my job is, and your job too, you do this, but I think when people see ... Let's say a pastor sees that we're quoting from the New York Review of books or we're quoting from Christian Sensory or we're quoting from whatever, they kind of assume and maybe try to emulate that. And I think I would much rather, you know, the hearts and struggles, the fears and joys of your people, and read them than you know all the cutting edge cultural realities that I am literally paid to know, because I'm a professor.

Ed Stetzer: So, I'm a professor with 62 people, so that carves out time for me to know things and to write things. And, most of our listeners are pastors and staff members who don't have researchers and editors, but they have people that they love and they have a community that needs Jesus.

Ed Stetzer: So, what I would say is, read to the degree that you can't always be, you know, reader's or learner's and that's key, you know, learner's are leaders, all the cliches and they're all true, but what I would say too is also rely on mavens like you to give you and help curate some of those ideas so that we can also not think ... Our job is not, my job is not to be as smart as Leonard Sweet, because his job is to be smart so that he can help the rest of us.

Carey Nieuwhof: Interesting. Okay, that is a refreshing answer. One of the challenges I've had, and I mean you get to a certain level where it can get overwhelming to have the responsibilities that you have, and this is a pretty active issue for me. I write all my own stuff, except the show notes which is run through an editor for this podcast, but I still write my own stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, the challenge of course is to find someone who writes and thinks like you. Obviously when you write in your blog The Exchange, if it has Ed Stetzer in the byline or you're writing something for the Washington Post or The New York Times that has your name on it, you don't wanna be scrolling through one day or looking at your social feed going, "Oh my gosh, I didn't say that. Whoa!"

Ed Stetzer: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: "That is not me at all." How do you ... 'Cause this is good for research teams, for content creators, how have you ... Obviously you probably have final say, but how do you curate a team to think, look, and collate in a way that you are confident it contains the essence of your thinking and your approach and your worldview?

Ed Stetzer: Well, I think the key is, I both start and finish. And so-

Carey Nieuwhof: Gotcha.

Ed Stetzer: So, what I typically do is ... So, you have an iPhone, I got an iPhone.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Ed Stetzer: So, someone will ask me a question and they'll ask me a question and what I'll say to them is, "Hold on a second, I'll turn on the recorder," and I'll say, "Here are three things that I think about that." And so, so that's the start. And then, you know, we have a transcribe, you can use rev.com, is what we use.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. We do.

Ed Stetzer: It's a dollar a minute. Yup, same thing. And then what happens is, it goes to our editor who then puts that together and cleans it up, 'cause nobody talks in proper grammar. They interrupt themselves, they redirect their thoughts. So then they fix it, but then my job is, I would never let somebody just ghostwrite something that and boom put it here.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah.

Ed Stetzer: So, I'm a-

Carey Nieuwhof: That's what I figure.

Ed Stetzer: Right. I'm resistant to that. And I think you need to be careful because it's not just even your voice, I mean there's an integrity issue as well.

Carey Nieuwhof: A hundred percent.

Ed Stetzer: So, for me, it starts with almost always an audio file. So, literally I can, I mean you people can't see, but I'm actually looking at my voicemail, I have 42 voice memos over the last week or so, where I've stopped and thought something and recorded it. So, basically from there, they edit and then I try to bring in ... 'Cause I like to tighten sentences and pan transitions, and I think I have a certain epiphany style, whether it's good or-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, but there's a signature way that every author writes. Yeah, and every speaker speaks. I get it.

Ed Stetzer: You really can't have people, well I guess people do it, but I can't have people write for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: I agree.

Ed Stetzer: And I mean, when someone says, "Let's write a letter to the Governor asking to use so and so," that's a different thing, right? You'll have assistant do that or whatever. But if you're making an argument, I can't have somebody else make my argument. I have to make my argument at start and ultimately bringing it to finish.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. So you have help in the middle, and that makes sense, because otherwise you're at the point where, you know, like Tony Morgan has done a good job at this, he has five or six writers, but they write under their own name. So today you're gonna hear from Tiffany Deluccia, tomorrow you're gonna hear from me, day after you're gonna hear from X. So, that makes sense. Okay. And that's really-

Ed Stetzer: And if I think, let's say I did a recording, and I see it on the other side and I'm like, "You did more than content edit, you didn't just reframe this, you've added things, significant things." What you'll find is, is that person, Ed Stetzer and that person is, and so, I'm very comfortable giving away a byline and sharing a byline. And if someone writes something on their own, that's great too. But yeah, I think it's key.

Ed Stetzer: Again part of that is, because I've written so much, I don't have to take all the credit at that point. And I'm not, you know, I wanna be clear, I'm not saying that people haven't written a thing that was helpful and we'll use for this or for that, as researchers who can gather this data for us, it's more just about how can you ... For me I just wanna elevate others, and I'm at the point and space where I can do that in a way that's very easy, simple and positive.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, that's good to know. So, in your reading, in your content consumption, do you do BlinkList or that kind of thing where you just get a summary of a book or do you just read books-

Ed Stetzer: Nope.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you read the whole thing, do you speed read, what do you do to get through that much content?

Ed Stetzer: I speed read and then I slow down at places that are find are significant. I find that most authors really have a book that should be about the third of the size of the book that they wrote. And so, I can kinda get a feel for that quickly, but some of them don't. I mean your books, every word matters.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, thank you. You can come back on the podcast now.

Ed Stetzer: That's right. That's what I was going for, that's what I was going for.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you.

Ed Stetzer: But I do think that, that for others is, there's just sometimes, and that's ... You mentioned the summaries. Some books really just should have been a summary. And it shouldn't have been a whole-

Carey Nieuwhof: Or it was an article, right, that should-

Ed Stetzer: Yeah, exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: It was a 3,000 word article that's now a 40,000 word book.

Ed Stetzer: Exactly. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. And you can get through that fluff. Your rhythm of your day, you a morning person? Evening person?

Ed Stetzer: Not a morning person. Not a morning person. Evening person. Yeah. I don't like mornings, don't like getting up early. My wife is a morning person, one of the many ways that God laughs at us, but ...

Carey Nieuwhof: So, what's-

Ed Stetzer: She's a-

Carey Nieuwhof: What's a typical wake up time for you? Because this is refreshing to a lot of leaders who are listening, because the majority of people who end up doing what you do and I do, end up being morning people, so they're going, "Yes, thank you Ed. Please."

Ed Stetzer: So, you're a morning person aren't you?

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah. Stupid early.

Ed Stetzer: Oh, I hate you. How early do you get up? How early do you get up?

Carey Nieuwhof: In the summer it's really early, like 4:45, 5:00 AM.

Ed Stetzer: Oh my gosh. Oh my.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's between 5:00 and 5:30. I know you're probably just going to bed. But what's early for you? 8:00 AM?

Ed Stetzer: There's not even a four on my clock in the morning. My clock just turns off. No I guess, you know, I'm sixes, somewhere in the sixes, you know, part of it is because of family life, we just kinda do our thing. If I had my druthers and I didn't have kids and a wife, and responsibilities and office, I'd probably stay up till two and three and get up at eight. But it doesn't work that way when I've got three dogs and my daughters are up and about and our house is 2,300 square

feet, it's not ... Some people, you hear each other. So, probably in the sixes is when I'm, or getting up at some point.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's good. You just made a lot of people feel better. And then will you work till after midnight or be up till after midnight?

Ed Stetzer: It depends. I'm not one of those people who get four to five hours of sleep and it's okay. I sleep a normal amount of time. And so, if I'm getting up at six, I'm going to bed at 10. And so-

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh yeah.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. And I think there are really people, you know, and people debate this, and there's even scientists who debate this, no one can really get four to five hours of sleep and I know people, maybe they're lying to me, I know people who can. I am not among them.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, me neither.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. I wanna be rested.

Carey Nieuwhof: I need seven.

Ed Stetzer: Yup. Seven or eight.

Carey Nieuwhof: Minimum.

Ed Stetzer: I can do seven or eight. But, you know, if I can have more than eight, I'm actually, I don't like it, I don't like to sleep more than eight, but if I don't get ... Like I know now, and I think it was one of those Jason Bourne books, one of those spy books, and in there he says sleep is like a weapon. I'm like, "How is it a weapon?" He said, "Well, if you don't get sleep, you're totally affecting everything else."

Ed Stetzer: I actually think that. Now when I'm planning a flight, I'm thinking, "Man, I gotta get there early enough so I can speak the next morning. If I get five hours I am not gonna be as an effective speaker as if I get eight hours."

Carey Nieuwhof: Ed do you find that, I will slur my words if I'm not well rested.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah. Yeah. For me, it's I'm as a speaker, I'm kind of very spur of the moment, you know, some might call me, Attention Deficit Disorder, it's like squirrel! You know, but I bounce around a lot. And, but in my bouncing around, that's where my wit comes from, which people really like when I speak. But if I'm not rested, I don't have the quickness to kind of be that.

Ed Stetzer: And so, basically I revert back to more of a manuscripty kind of thing, and that's just not good. I just need to get the rest.

Carey Nieuwhof: I hear you too. My comedy comes in the spontaneous, and if I'm not rested, if I haven't eaten properly, if I haven't taken good care of myself, it's just not as good. That's good to know.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well Ed, this has been awesome. We could have done three, three hours, easy.

Ed Stetzer: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, we'll have you back. But I know people are gonna wanna know more about you, tell us about a couple of projects you're working on and then the easiest place to find you online.

Ed Stetzer: Well, the couple of projects I'm working on now, is I'm writing my next book, which will be on evangelicalism and its future. It'll be with InterVarsity Press, and in some ways a manifesto of what that's gonna look like as we kinda walk through the cultural challenges we're in. You know, I think of myself as kind of a cultural navigator in the midst of a very aggressive storm.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes.

Ed Stetzer: So, that's what I'm working on now. We of course here at the Wheaton College graduate school, we're very excited to see the growth. The program that I was leading last year, I'm now the Dean, but last year I was leading our program, we've quadrupled in three years. Excited to have students like-

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Ed Stetzer: Canadians like Ann Voskamp, you know, Matt Chandler's a student here now.

Carey Nieuwhof: Awesome.

Ed Stetzer: We've got just a ... And lots of people you've never heard of who are brilliant and smart and just great. So, 'cause we offer, our classes, people fly in and fly out, so it's not fully online. We find people wanna be in some learning community and we get that, we're not anti that, it's just not...

Carey Nieuwhof: You Skyped me into one of your classes. Once or twice.

Ed Stetzer: I absolutely do, and exactly, I loved having you.

Carey Nieuwhof: It was great.

Ed Stetzer: And, I'm so excited about that, and then the Billy Graham Center, we're just trying to help people show and share the love of Jesus. We've got our annual

Amplify Conference, that has been such a key thing for us. It's the largest gathering every year now in North America, focused on outreach and reaching people.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Great.

Ed Stetzer:

And that takes place in the summer time. People can find me at edstetzer.com, pretty easy to find, edstetzer.com, and it's, just a little fun, S-T-E-T-Z-E-R.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thank you.

Ed Stetzer:

See? I speak Canadian.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Z-E-R. I got it. I got it. I'm bilingual. Hey, you got a couple of courses too. You and I both released a breaking 200 course around the same time.

Ed Stetzer:

Yeah, that's right.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And I always encourage people to buy yours and you always say nice things about mine. But you got a leadership course as well, tell us more about that.

Ed Stetzer:

Yeah. That's been the one that I really see making a lot of impact on people too, and just a level that changes them. You know, breaking 200 barrier, both of ours, people break the 200 barrier. And that question could be settled, just things they learn for the future, but leadership is something that is an ever going experience of growth and so, I have a course called Strategic Leadership For Ministry and Mission, where basically I take what I teach at the graduate level, and it's a video curriculum with 50 bonus items, all those different things, so that people can really increase their leadership capacity.

Ed Stetzer:

And I've had, you know, Deans, I had a seminary use it, I've had the head of a Christian corporation use it, and hundreds of people use it in churches, and yeah, so that's one, and kind of a space that you and I are in. I am one who believes, and you know, people might not know this is debate, is leadership, you know, their nature or nurture, can you learn it or not? I think that even people who'll think that some people are natural born leaders, and I think there probably are, everyone can be a better leader with some training and that's what we try to provide.

Carey Nieuwhof:

And you know what, and I think that's true. Many people would say I'm a natural born leader, but I've become a much better leader because I've sharpened the skill saw. And then there are other people who really maybe don't have the natural gifting, and they may never lead something huge, but that doesn't mean they can't lead, and that doesn't mean they can't get better at it.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, I love that. We will link to all of that in the show notes, the books, everything we talked about. Ed, thank you so much, you've been very generous with your time today.

Ed Stetzer: So great to see you again and I'm sure I'll see you somewhere speaking on the road.

Carey Nieuwhof: You betcha. Thanks Ed.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well there was a lot there. I mean wouldn't you say? And if you want to drill down more, there are transcripts. Head on over to the show notes which you'll find at careynieuwhof.com/episode237. If you can't spell that or remember it, just google leadlikeneverbefore.com or head on over there, and then type in Ed's name and you'll find the show notes to this. Pretty simple.

Carey Nieuwhof: And, everything is there available for free, including transcripts. So, I know a lot of you use this to discuss with your team. Hey, if today's episode has helped you, would you share it with people? Just put it on your socials, message a few friends with the link, and that helps us get the word out there. We had the best year ever last year, we're looking forward to an even better 2019. And if you want a better 2019, I'm giving away The High Impact Leader calendar for free. It's the exact calendar that I have used for the last 13 years to help me maximize my productivity, and frankly enjoy my life. It has easily 10X-ed my productivity, plus I got a training video for free that you can look at on how to use it and how I use it.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, head on over to thehighimpactleader.com, download the free resource now. It is going to go away as a free resource very soon. And once again, you gotta jump in the digital game, this actually is 2019. And, the people who can help you with that are Pro Media Fire. So, even if you have staff, we have staff online in our creative department, but we still outsource a chunk of it. And I want to encourage you to explore that this year. So, head on over to promediafire.com/carey, and you can save 10 to 40% off their unlimited plans for churches, for really cloud-based creative teams. They can produce socials, graphics, videos, all that stuff for you, for one very reasonable monthly fee. And you can save 10 to 40%, promediafire.com/carey, and that'll get you right there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, next week we are back with a fresh episode, we have a great lineup for January. And what have we got for you? That is a great question. We have Lysa TerKeurst, powerful, moving interview, personal, vulnerable, raw. I'm sure most of you, if you're in the church base have heard of Lysa, if you haven't, you need to get to know her. And one of the themes I'm gonna develop on this podcast this year, is that a lot of us as guys, just speaking as a guy, we're like, "Oh yeah, you know I have this big audience," et cetera, et cetera. You know what I learned last year? That there are so many female leaders whose audience size would just boggle the mind of most leaders. It's just crazy. I have a long

conversation actually with Annie F. Downs about that later in the year. That's coming up in February. But Lysa would be one of those people.

Carey Nieuwhof: Six to eight million people access her content every day. And, she has been through the wringer and back over the last three years, and I talked to her about leading and living through a personal crisis, through disappointment and even trying to figure out what parts of your life should be personal, private or secret. Well I'll let her, here's an excerpt from next week's interview.

Lysa TerKeurst: God, God placed me in ministry knowing what I would eventually walk through, but not just for my sake, I believe it's because he heard the cries of so many people, and he knew they would drown in their own tears if not for seeing a glimmer of hope in my tears. So, God didn't cause this, but he did allow it. And, yeah, I would have never been brave enough to choose this journey. I would have never ever done it on my own. So, God allowed it though. And I really feel like God has not cursed me with this, he has entrusted me with this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, even though I would never ever want anyone to have to walk through this, I will be a faithful steward of even this.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, that's next week right here on this podcast. Again subscribers you get that automatically. Jon Gordon is also coming up, energy bus, you know Jon, powerful story. Ian Morgan Cron, Gary Chapman, Frank Bealer, Rich Birch, Annie F. Downs, John Ortberg, so many more. Lots of good reasons to subscribe, and we're just gonna bring this to you every week for free.

Carey Nieuwhof: And thanks to our partners who help us do that. Guys, I hope it's been a great first full week of 2019 for you, can't wait to hang out again soon. And, I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

Announcer: You've been listening to The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. Join us next time for more insights on leadership, change and personal growth, to help you lead like never before.