

- 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. And now your host, Carey Nieuwhof.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, everybody. Welcome to episode 262 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof. I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. I am very excited about today's episode because we live in a fun age. I've been in leadership for a couple of decades now. That means I'm old enough to remember when we really didn't have at our fingertips the kinds of things, even like podcasting or social media or the internet. I had the internet back in the '90s before some of you were alive. I promise you, it was a shadow of what it is today, barely this tiny little thing that has become so big. The question is, how do we use it? Today, I've got Facebook's Nona Jones on the show. She's an author. She's a public speaker. She works with Facebook. She's also a church planter along with her husband. I think you're going to love this episode.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. We're going to talk about how to leverage social media and in particular community online. Is that actually community or not? Whether this is in your church or in your business, I think, you're going to find it particularly helpful, at least I did. Speaking of church, I've got something coming down the pipe this month that you might be really excited about. It's brand new.
- Carey Nieuwhof: If you head on over to Church Growth Master Class that's churchgrowthmasterclass.com, I've got right now for a limited time, a free church growth assessment. This will help you discover what's stopping your church from growing. It's absolutely free. Head on over to Church Growth Master Class and stay tuned because there's some really fun stuff happening.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, one of my favorite things about this podcast is first of all, serving you. I just love doing that. I love hearing from you. I love getting the stories. Handwritten notes, thank you cards, emails, social media feedback, just thank you, thank you, you guys are the best. The other thing that really makes me excited is when some of the guests and some of the partners that we have flourish. A lot of you gotten behind organizations like TrainedUp or Pro Media Fire. These were, when they started partnering with us, just small companies that honestly through your support and your partnership by getting behind them, have really started to flourish.
- Carey Nieuwhof: I want to give you an update on what's happening with TrainedUp. TrainedUp continues to grow and thank you for that. They've got all kinds of new stuff. They're now partnered or parented by ServeHQ. What is TrainedUp? It's about equipping your volunteers and leaders with simple online video courses, a growing library, I mean, they're growing huge for top quality training videos plus some really simple features to customize your training or create training for your own ministry.

- Carey Nieuwhof: Here are some of the new features on TrainedUp. They're growing. They've got an expanded library with more than a dozen new courses for kids and youth ministry, greeters, guest services and security teams. They've doubled their team size to serve churches with even better and more developed person customer support team members. They've released an open API which allows you to connect your TrainedUp account with your church database software. They've already seen people building integrations to Rock RMS and other church database software tools.
- Carey Nieuwhof: They have released a dedicated direct connection to Planning Center online to quickly and easily bring your volunteers to the training courses. Get this. They've lowered their prices and expanded user limits to give more churches of different sizes more opportunity to take advantage of online training. Plus, a lot of other features too. Here's what you can do, you can try TrainedUp for free for 30 days now at their website, [servehq.church](http://servehq.church). That's [servehq.church](http://servehq.church). Make sure you check them out and tell Scott Magdalein, their founder, we sent you.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Also, Pro Media Fire, man, this is an organization that I am using, that so many of you are using. Today, on the podcast, we're going to be hearing from Nona Jones, who's an expert in building church community on Facebook. Social media is a fantastic place to reach people digitally, but here's a question, what stops you during your Facebook or Instagram scroll? Is it good content that makes you take notice? Is it trying to reach people that you need to start with professional eye catching content and then work toward a personal connection?
- Carey Nieuwhof: See, this is where Pro Media Fire can help you create this custom content for your church. I think this is particularly valuable for smaller churches. Large churches use it but smaller ones do too, because you're like, "If I only had the staff for way less than you can hire staff." You can get Pro Media Fire. They make custom hotspot videos from your sermons. They add fire for your social media content. If you need some fire for your content, check out Pro Media Fire.
- Carey Nieuwhof: You also get 10% off plans for life just because you listen to this podcast, if you go to [promediafire.com/carey](http://promediafire.com/carey), C-A-R-E-Y. That's [promediafire.com/carey](http://promediafire.com/carey). Without further ado, why don't we jump into my conversation with Nona Jones. Nona, welcome to the podcast.
- Nona Jones: Thank you so much for having me.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Hey, tell us about the vision you have for church leaders and just for leaders in general. We have business leaders and church leaders listening when it comes to Facebook. Then, I'd love to drill on a little bit to the vision of Facebook as a whole.

- Nona Jones: Sure. Let me first provide a little context. I've actually never worked in technology or social media before I received a call quite literally out of the blue from Facebook to lead face-based partnership for the company.
- Carey Nieuwhof: They recruited you?
- Nona Jones: Yeah. Just a really quick snippet of that, I was in a job I loved for four years. I was at the chief executive level of a state-wide network of alternative schools. I thought I'd be there for the rest of my life. God literally spoke to me one day and told me, this assignment is over and gave me a couple of months to resign.
- Nona Jones: He told me to resign at the end of the fiscal year which was June 30th 2017 ...
- Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. I got to stop you. I got to stop you. Because whenever people say, God told me to, you can understand that there is suspicion around that. I had a handful of those experiences in my life too, but they're very rare. What was that like?
- Nona Jones: It was very specific and very clear.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Did you hear a voice?
- Nona Jones: It wasn't even a voice. Let me put it this way, I heard it in my spirit. What I heard was, this assignment is over. The reason I know it wasn't me is because I had planned to stay in that job literally for the rest of my life. I love what I was doing. I prayed some more and God told me to resign at the end of the fiscal year, gave me a specific time, June 30th 2017.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.
- Nona Jones: That day, I met with my boss. I met with her at one o'clock. I gave her my letter of resignation. I'll never forget, she said, "What are you going to do next?" All I could say to her is, "I'll tell you soon," but I wasn't sure. I left that meeting at 1:40, got in my car, I was driving home. At 2:05, 25 minutes later, I got a call on my cellphone from an unfamiliar area code. I never answer those. I just felt ...
- Carey Nieuwhof: Did you win a cruise? I'm kidding.
- Nona Jones: No. I just thought it was a telemarketer. I really did. I said, "What is this 650?" I picked up the phone, because I felt in my spirit to take this call. The woman on the other end, she said, "Hi, is this Nona Jones?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Hey, I'm calling from Facebook." I said, "That's funny because Facebook doesn't call people." I was like, "Who is this?"
- Nona Jones: She said, "No really, I'm calling from Facebook," and she proceeded to tell me how apparently the week before Mark changed the mission of the company to

focus on community building. That one of the communities that the company wanted to focus on was communities of faith and that my name was given as someone that they should talk to about leading this work.

Nona Jones: Twenty-five minutes after I resigned from my job in faith, I got a call from Facebook out of the blue for a job I didn't apply for. I lived in Florida, got the call from California. I tell people, I'm like, "I've learned that God meets our faith at our level of obedience," because I had no reason to just resign from a job I loved. Except that that's what I felt God told me to do.

Nona Jones: I like to start there because I think it's important to have that context when I'm answering the question, what do I see for churches when it comes to Facebook, because I believe that I've actually been assigned to Facebook for the purpose of ministry. When I look at the digital space in general, I really see it as the next reformation of ministry. I see it as being the next vehicle that God wants to use in order to fulfill the great commission.

Nona Jones: There is about eight billion people in the world and a quarter of those people are on Facebook. Many of them don't know who Jesus is. They've never been to a church. Statistically, two out of three churches are actually declining or plateauing in attendance. There is a need for digital faith communities. What I really am working to do is to equip leaders to take advantage of this tool so that they can actually do ministry in a digital context.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's fascinating. I'm curious, and maybe you don't know the answer to this question. Any idea why they called you? Because before we started recoding you said, "Yeah. I wasn't really huge on social. I know he's a mutual friend, but why did they not call Bobby Gruenewald at Life Church?"

Nona Jones: Amazingly, I had done a leadership program with one of the Facebook executives. It's called The Presidential Leadership Scholars Program. It's a joint initiative of President Bush and President Clinton. This was in my former life. When I met him, I said, "Hey, I'd love to one day launch the Facebook community foundation."

Carey Nieuwhof: Met him, who's that? Is that Mark?

Nona Jones: It's an executive. No, no, it's one of the executives there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Nona Jones: I said, "I'd love to lead the Facebook community foundation one day, but it has to be based in Gainesville, Florida because I can't move because my husband and I have a church in Gainesville. He laughed and he was like, "Yeah. That's really cute. We would never do that."

- Nona Jones: Apparently, when Mark started to have these ruminations about community and the role that faith and Facebook could play together, he basically gave my name as this is a person I think you should talk to. What's funny is he told me after the fact that he literally said, "I don't think we can get her to leave her job, because I know she loves her job. I think we should talk to her."
- Nona Jones: He had no idea that the day they called me I had just resigned. He had no idea.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That is quite a God story. It really is.
- Nona Jones: Yeah.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Having had a handful of those very specific moments in my life, I get it.
- Nona Jones: Yeah.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Facebook calls you and can you say a little bit more about Mark's vision for Facebook? I mean, we're going to talk about moving fast and breaking things and where Facebook is going and who knows, the day we're recording this Facebook is down. It could be the apocalypse. Nobody really knows what's going on.
- Nona Jones: It's so funny how life imitates art sometimes. To build on what I was saying about the mission being changed. We just celebrated our 15th birthday. For the first 10 or 12 years of our existence, our mission was to make the world more open and connected. It was all about connecting friends with friends and friends with family and families with family.
- Nona Jones: Then, I think, when we crossed that two billion user threshold back in February of 2017, I think Mark really had a moment of introspection. Because it was like, wait a minute, we've got a quarter of the earth's population on a platform that I built out of my dorm room just to connect people on my college campus. What is the next iteration of this need to be?
- Nona Jones: He began to study just society and social constructs and community. I think he found out that the fabric of community was really deteriorating. People aren't members of organizations like they used to be. I already said earlier, people aren't interested in church like they used to. Yet, we've got literally a quarter of the earth's population on our population, 75%, three out of four people in America are on Facebook.
- Nona Jones: I think he really took that as a mandate to say, "What does the next iteration of our existence need to be really anchored to?" That's community. It's making sure that when people are using our platform, it's not just about passively consuming content, it's about connecting to places and spaces that give you hope, give you support and actually make you feel like you belong, because that is, in our view, that is really the value that we can provide.

Carey Nieuwhof: What about your vision for connecting faith communities, building faith communities, really?

Nona Jones: Great question. The vision I have is really to see every local church equipped to make disciples in digital communities. I'd love to see every local church have an online church that's powered by Facebook, In particular, Facebook groups. That's a product that's really underutilized in communities of faith.

Nona Jones: I spend a lot of my time as I'm fortunate to speak at a lot of conferences. I spend a lot of my time really trying to raise awareness not only about groups as a product, but also how do you optimize groups as a tool for ministry. That's a very different lens. I think, right now, the paradigm of church is really what happens within four walls at an address on a day at a time.

Nona Jones: I believe that if you look at the life of Jesus, that wasn't his model. He didn't tell people, "Hey guys, come see me at the temple for my latest sermon series." He was out among the people, right? He was out among the people. Whenever he found someone who is in need of encouragement, he encouraged them. Whenever he found someone who is in need of exhortation, he exhorted. He did it among the people.

Nona Jones: Facebook really allows us to return to what I consider to be return back to a Christ-like model of ministry, which is meet people where they are and deliver the good news of Jesus where they are.

Carey Nieuwhof: What would one, or I'm sure there's not just one size fits all, but walk us through what a community like that would look like or feel like or how would you experience it?

Nona Jones: Sure. If you think about your Facebook presence like a house, okay. Think about the page like it's your front porch. It's the place where people can come. They can see what you're about on a surface level. There's really no commitment. They can just passively learn about you. Most face-based organizations, most churches use pages in that way to share information about the ministry.

Nona Jones: What groups allows you to is it allows you to create what I call a living room in the house. It's the place that you can invite people inside of your ministry. You can get to know them. They can get to know you. Most importantly, they can get to know each other. I think the power of ministry is not what happens when you come and sit in the audience and hear somebody teach. It's what happens when you connect with other people who are in the same life season as you are and you discover that you're not alone. You're able to mature in your faith relationally.

Nona Jones: What I just described is what we call discipleship, right? It's the relational maturation of your faith. The way that I typically will guide the churches that want to get into digital discipleship is leverage your group as a place for

conversation. Leverage your group as a place for structured teaching. Leverage your group as a place to actually give people the power to get together in real life. There are tools like literally get togethers. There's a tool in groups called get togethers where you can organize offline events.

Nona Jones: There's also a tool called social learning units where you can create learning modules that people take sequentially as if it's a class.

Carey Nieuwhof: Like a small group guide or a class course?

Nona Jones: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Something that my husband and I do, I think, I may have mentioned earlier, my husband is a pastor. Something that we'll do periodically is we'll go live in our church group. We call it our church campus, our online campus because that's what it is. We'll go live and we'll talk about the message that either he or I taught that Sunday and just go deeper. Spend 30 minutes, not a long time, answering questions, sharing more insights.

Nona Jones: Really, what groups allows you to do is there's 168 hours in a week and we may spend one of them in a building. It allows you to really build on the other 167.

Carey Nieuwhof: Obviously, this is new to me. I'm not part of one of those groups. When you say that, let's say, I have a church of 1,000 people, just typical, a larger one and an even number. Does that mean there's one group for the whole church? Does that mean that you have 20 groups of 50? Does it mean that you have 10 groups of 100 or 100 groups of 10? How does that work? Can you subdivide? The organizational guy in me is like, okay, how does this ...

Nona Jones: Right, like what's the infrastructure like?

Carey Nieuwhof: How is it not just that text chain you can't ever get out of? You know those text chains?

Nona Jones: I do.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do I do not get disturbed on this thing?

Nona Jones: Actually, I had to tell my nephew one time, I was like, "I love you. Please don't ever include me in a text chain anymore."

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, that is love, Nona, that is love, man.

Nona Jones: It's true. It's true. What I normally recommend and just to give you an example. I work with your Life Churches of the world, your Elevations of the world. These are very large multi-site type of churches. What I always recommend is you want to have a main church group. You would have your main group. Then,

from there, you can also have campus groups. You can have groups for your satellite locations and you can link them together.

Nona Jones: What I have found is that many organizations tend to use a page like it's a group. For example, let's take Elevation. When I first started working with them, they had I think 20 pages. There were pages like the parent's ministry, pages for youth and young adults. I was like, "No, no, no, no. Just have the main page for your location and then use groups as those subdivided areas where people can connect based on their demographics."

Nona Jones: They would have their valentine location page. Then, they would have Elevation kids, Elevation Parents, Elevation singles as groups linked to each other and to the page. That's what I would recommend is it's not as much about dividing it by number, it's more about dividing it by interest. Because what you see in groups are conversations which you don't see it on a page. Your page is pretty much your very broadcast-oriented tool because you're just sharing information out. Your group is really going to be for bidirectional communication, where people are actually initiating conversations as opposed to just a page.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you make sure that the conversations you're in are germane or relevant to you? I know you can turn notifications off, but how does your phone not buzz or your inbox not fill up with stuff you don't want to read, or does it?

Nona Jones: It's such a great question.

Carey Nieuwhof: You tell I spend a lot of my life filtering messages, which is basically what I do. I'm sorry. It's just the way it is.

Nona Jones: He's like take me off the text chain, turn off the notification basically, do not mind me.

Carey Nieuwhof: This is not supposed to be therapy. I'm sorry about that.

Nona Jones: It's all good. I'll talk about. I'll answer your question in the context of our algorithm change.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah.

Nona Jones: About a year ago, we changed our algorithm and there were a lot of people who are ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Which I need to talk to you about before we're done today because that really hit churches, but keep going.

Nona Jones: Yes. Here's the explanation of why we did that. There were a lot of people who were complaining that they were seeing a lot of page content in their newsfeed.

They felt like that content wasn't really germane to them. It wasn't relevant to them.

Nona Jones: The algorithm right now is anchored on something that we call meaningful social interactions, which basically means that you should see the content that you interact with the most. Whether it's from your family, from your friends and the way that the algorithm works is there are certain types of content that receives a certain degree of distribution which is essentially the probability that you will see it in your newsfeed.

Nona Jones: The people whose post you comment on the most you will see. What's interesting is in the algorithm, page content was down ranked while at the same time group content was up ranked. The reason for that is we believe that if you opted into a group is because you want to be a part of that community.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Nona Jones: You're mostly likely not going to be a part of a group that you just really don't want to be a part of. Whereas, you might like a page of a brand that you really don't care about you just like the brand but you don't want to see their post all the time. That's how the algorithm works. The more you interact with the group, the more you interact with the content, the more you'll see it. Conversely, the less you interact with the group and the less you interact with the content the less you'll see it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, okay. Great. Yeah. If you're on a pretty active thread, you will not miss anything. On the other hand, if you jump in every February, it's probably not going to show up very often.

Nona Jones: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Got it. What are people using these communities for?

Nona Jones: Many different use cases. The first of which is a lot of churches and even brands and public figures, they have a very large audience on Facebook. They make a live. They may have these great live streams where thousands of people tune in. Then, the live stream ends and it's like, all right now what.

Nona Jones: One of the features I was really, really blessed to work with our product team to build last half was a joint group button on Facebook live, which basically means that when you're going live, you can actually create a community that will allow you to continue the conversation after the live stream ends. People can join the community.

Nona Jones: Let's just imagine, we're having this conversation today. Let's just say it's live stream through your page. You can have a community, you can have a group that's linked to your page so that people can join and afterwards they can go on

the group and talk about, "Hey, Nona said this particular thing. Does anybody have any more insight on that?"

Nona Jones: I was really blessed by when Carey said this. It allows the conversation to continue after the fact. We've seen that as a great use case for churches where you'll have this incredible message that's preached or this wonderful worship. Then, the live stream ends and it's like, all right. That's it.

Nona Jones: We're really trying to build the types of tools within groups that allows ministries to do ministry after the stream ends. I will also say, we've seen a lot of success with ministries that are piloting groups as a method of not opening a physical location yet but just building a community in a community.

Nona Jones: Let's just say, you're like, "I wonder, I'm seeing within our group in our analytics that we have a pretty large population of people in San Francisco, who are in our group. Well I'll create a group for San Francisco and if we get up to 500 members, we may consider opening a physical location there because now we have a built in church." That's one of the amazing use cases that we're seeing happen.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's pretty cool. Is it just, at this point, big churches that can play in the space or is it open to a congregation of 50 or 100?

Nona Jones: Absolutely. Yeah. I'm seeing all across the board, churches of all sizes that are really experiencing the power of groups. Because again, even if you have a 50 member church, you're probably only seeing each other for a couple of hours on the weekend but there's 160 something hours left during the week. Any church of any size can use groups as a way to do ministry.

Carey Nieuwhof: I know this will change probably by the time this airs and will change again six months later, but this is fairly early adoption. It's fairly new technology. Who, in your view, could you point to and say, "If you want to see this modeled pay attention to church X or church Y and we'll link to it in the show notes."

Nona Jones: It's so cool.

Carey Nieuwhof: Are you able to do that or?

Nona Jones: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah.

Nona Jones: I will tell you there are several churches that I've been really fortunate to work with that are doing great churches like I mentioned earlier Life Church. Their Life Church online group is doing wonderfully. Elevation, we have a group called the Official Elevation eFam. That group is going really well.

- Nona Jones: There's also a church in Baltimore, Maryland called the First Baptist Church of Glenarden. They have a group that's really taken off. As an example, I think they launched their group one week. They have like, I don't know 2000, 3000 members like in a week.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.
- Nona Jones: People just were so excited of it. Also Relentless Church in Greenville, South Carolina, they're doing an amazing job. They've got around 8000 or something members in their community. Those are just four off the top of my head.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. Yeah. No, that's good. We'll link to all of that. Are those public links like can we link to the actual group?
- Nona Jones: Yeah. Let me provide a clarification. Yes, those links are public but their groups are closed. There are three different privacy settings for groups.
- Carey Nieuwhof: There you go.
- Nona Jones: This is another differentiator between a page and a group. A page is public by design, like it just is public. A group can have one of three privacy settings. It can either be a public group, which means that you still have to join the group, but you can see the content whether you're a member or not, which is basically like a page. Then you have a closed group where you have to join the group in order to see the content.
- Nona Jones: The third privacy setting is the secret group. These are groups that you can't even find and search. What I've always recommended to ministries is use a closed group because you want people to feel safe to be vulnerable in your community. We've seen churches that have dealt with suicide issues or issues of addiction in their communities. People feel safe sharing because they know it's not going to get out.
- Nona Jones: A secret group is also a really great asset that a church can use. Let's say, you have addiction recovery ministry. You can have a secret group that you invite those people to and only they know that they're in that group nothing can be shared out of the group. It's a way for them to stay connected during the week.
- Carey Nieuwhof: I've done secret groups before too, but it's just a way of not being discovered on the internet. It's not like it's clandestine or inappropriate or anything like that.
- Nona Jones: True, right, right.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Just in case people have never been part of that, it's not as bad as it sounds. With a closed group then, you would have to have an administrator approved people is that it?

Nona Jones: Correct. Yeah. It's funny because the privacy settings or the approval settings on groups are such that you can actually have it to where anybody can approve a member. That means any member can approve anybody. I normally don't recommend that. I would recommend that if you set to administrators approve member request.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. I'm just going to ask this question again and then I promise not to ask it.

Nona Jones: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: In the future, but I'm just thinking how does a group of 8000 members to pull the number you just gave us, not become overwhelming to average user sitting on their back porch saying, "I want to be part of this but I'm lost." How does that actually add meaning to their life? I'm just trying to get my head around that.

Nona Jones: Sure. It, again, gets into the content that people are interacting with because what you find in groups is much higher engagement than you do on a page. Because people will see page content and they'll just scroll pass it. In a group, if there's a post that says, "Hey, how can we pray for you today?" You're probably going to respond to that because chances are you have a reason to request prayer. Or, if there's a post that's really celebrating a miracle in somebody's life, you may chime on that. You're only going to see the post that you respond to. That's basically how it works, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's sort to self-filtering?

Nona Jones: Absolutely, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. That's good to know. Okay. There has been a debate for years that would say that online community is not real community. I think we're all trying to navigate the space. We have this conversation regularly on this podcast about the digital and the analog, the virtual and the real. What's your take on that? Is online community real community?

Nona Jones: I think the simple answer for me is if a community is filled with real people then it's real, whether it's online or offline. I look at it like I think about our church and how we have people in crisis all the time, who they'll make a phone call to one of our deacons or maybe they'll text me or my husband. That's real. It may not be them walking up to my front door and saying, "Hey, can we talk about this?" It's people that are reaching out and saying, "I need help. I need support."

Nona Jones: What you find online is you find authentic community. You find people who, in many cases, otherwise wouldn't have anyone to turn to. I'll give you an example. There was a guy who made a post in one of the churches I work with. He made a post and he said, "Hey, I need you to pray for my friend Amber, she's thinking about taking her life."

Nona Jones: In most instances, let's say he was in a church and somebody said, "Hey, does anybody have prayer request?" He would have written that down on a card and like turned it in and hopefully would have been prayed over. In that instant he had 350 people immediately comment, we're praying for you, praying for Amber.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Nona Jones: There were people who were specifically praying in their comment. It's like you see right before your eyes the power of social technology to actually immediately meet needs that sometimes don't get met in real life.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you think there are evangelism potentials to community groups like is this a place for outsiders to take their first step in?

Nona Jones: Oh, absolutely. One of the things that I love about groups and the way that I've been framing this is, I see groups almost as the first step to connection. Because there are people who they're not going to come to your church, they don't know you. They're just not going to come to your building. What if they got connected with your church online community and they found people who are like minded, who are supportive, who were encouraging.

Nona Jones: Eventually, what they're going to say is, "I want to check out this church." There was one church that I worked with in Jacksonville, Florida, where they launched a Facebook group. They launched their online church through the group. I remember seeing a post from a lady who was like, "Hey, I've really enjoyed connecting with people here over these last couple of weeks, is anybody available to give me a ride to church on Sunday. I would love to come check it out." Immediately like 15 people were like, "Where do you live?"

Nona Jones: I definitely see it as a first step. That's why I said, when you ask earlier like what is the vision that I have? It's really about changing the paradigm of what is church. Church has come to be defined as a building, when in reality, the church was never a place. It's always been a people. It's always been a body of people who believe in Jesus and the good news. That is something that you can experience whether you show up at a building or you show up in a group.

Carey Nieuwhof: Interesting, because if you look at the traditional, well traditional last 15 years, paradigm groups is sort of the ultimate destination. You come into the church, you gather for Sunday. Maybe you volunteer. Then, if you're really serious, you join a group but you're saying just the opposite. That group could be the first step in.

Nona Jones: That's it. Yeah, it's step one. It's step one. The beauty of it is it's not just a step, it's a community. It's like you're connecting with a community of the people, many of which, may not be in your physical location but you realize that you're part of something bigger. It's a tapestry of believers.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you think that the online church, whether that's in a Facebook group or let's say somebody builds their own software and does it on their own. I'm not sure whether they do it but let's just say they do it. That whole online space, do you think that has the potential to be the church? I'm interested in your answer because you and your husband lead a physical church as well. It's not like you just sit in your PJs every Sunday morning and engage. You've got a foot in both worlds, because that is a very active debate, like can that be church? Or, does it lead to, in real life, interaction?

Nona Jones: Great question. For me, it's not either or it's both and. I see online church as an important supplement to the real life connections that we make with brothers and sisters when we sit down and look eye to eye. I think that the challenge for many people has been this either or idea. It's like, if I launch an online church people are going to stop coming to the building. What I've said is, "Tell me how your attendance statistics are?" What they've said is, "It's declining." I'm like, "You mean to tell me you don't have an online church. You're worried about something that already happening? That's what you're telling me."

Nona Jones: I think in many instances, we view it as either or. Yeah, I think it's both end. Frankly, what I have found and this has been surprising is as we invest in online communities, we actually see an uptake in attendance because people are connecting outside of the building. In most instances, if they're not coming to the building and you don't have an online church, they're not connecting at all.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Nona Jones: A statistic that I read, which has really been ... what's fueled my passion is it said that 40% of Americans report attending church services on the weekend but actual attendance is 20%. What that means is if only 20% are showing up to the building 80% are not.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Nona Jones: The passion that I have is I want to go after the 80. I think it's awesome that 20% of the people are showing up but I really believe that the heart of God is for 100% of the people. If we're okay with only reaching 20%, then something is wrong with that. I see it as really being committed to what God has called us to do. That's to reach not just our local community and not just the neighbors, but also reach the nations with the good news of Jesus.

Carey Nieuwhof: Preach. That's good. That's good. I like it. I think that's where it goes. Okay. I want to talk about Facebook. One of the things that hit a lot of people and you already hinted on it was in, I think, it was January of 2018. Because as an online content provider, who for years, enjoyed the favor of Facebook's algorithm driving ridiculous amounts of traffic to my site overnight when Mark Zuckerberg announced that algorithm change, which would de-prioritize organizations and prioritize social interactions. I watch traffic drop 70 to 80% literally overnight.

Carey Nieuwhof: I had another strategy, it's back up. We grew last year. We grew again this year, actually dramatically. I know that actually killed businesses. A lot of people went into obscurity and it's like, "Man, we used to get so many likes on our Facebook page." "We used to get so many watches," or views I should say. Can you talk about the impact that that had on organizations?

Nona Jones: Yeah, yeah. Let me first acknowledge. We knew, as a company, we had a lot of internal dialogue about this. We knew it was going to hit a lot of people really hard. At the same time, we knew that it was something we had to do because we were getting just a lot of pushback from users. They were like, "Look, I'm just seeing too much content that I really don't want to see." We landed on this happy medium which was all right, what we need to is we need to create an algorithm that would allow people to really see what they wanted to see and that would then change the way the content is presented.

Nona Jones: That's where meaningful social interactions came from, which was it's not just about posting information. It's about driving conversations. That's what we felt like was most valuable to our users. Trust me, we had a lot of debate, a lot of debate. We just knew that in order for the platform to really serve the mission of building community that we just had to make that change.

Carey Nieuwhof: Years ago, I read and this is true for churches. It's true for businesses. It was true for me as a blogger and a podcaster. Build what you do on land that you own not on rented space and Facebook, Twitter, Instagram all the social, Snapchat, it's all rented space.

Carey Nieuwhof: Literally, the algorithms change daily, almost. Something that was really working for you two weeks ago doesn't work anymore. That said, it's really interesting because I had, in some cases, tens of thousands of likes on post or thousands of likes and lots of interaction and overnight it went away or got greatly reduced. Can you talk to business leaders and not for profit leaders who would say, "I don't even know how to get traffic online anymore? Now what do I do?" Can you coach them?

Nona Jones: Sure. Let me first make a distinction about what it is that we do as a company. There's essentially two types of media, all right. I mentioned this earlier but I'll mention it again. There's a broadcast media, which is really about throwing a message out to the wind and hoping it gets received. It's unidirectional, it's one way, it's me to you.

Nona Jones: Then, there's social media and social media is exactly that. It's social. It's meant to create conversations. It's meant to drive relationships. It's actually meant to create an experience. What I've coached people on is think about before you post to something, ask yourself the question, what is this going to do in the end? What is the result of this? Is this about driving traffic to my site or is this actually about enhancing a person's experience with my product or service? That's a very different framing for what you share on social media.

- Nona Jones: I think what I've seen work really well is number one, having a group strategy as part of your content contribution strategy. Then two, always approaching what you post with the question, what exactly is the end and how is this going to benefit the user as oppose to just me? That's how we're thinking as a company. I know that's super broad and super high level but I've just seen that framing help to drive some different decision.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Can you give an example of what the difference between the two approaches would be just whether you're selling shoes or a lot of this to say, okay, let's do shoes and then let's do the weekend message. Okay.
- Nona Jones: Okay.
- Carey Nieuwhof: I run a shoe company. I make shoes. I sell shoes. I want you to buy my shoes. How do I interact with Facebook?
- Nona Jones: In the past, you may have just had a post that said, "Hey, I got these great shoes. I got the sale going on. You should checkout my website." Now, what you might do is a watch party that actually shows how you make the shoes. It actually invites people into the process of making the shoes. It gets them actually engaged in your company as oppose to just watching your post. You're just passing the consumer that content.
- Nona Jones: What it does is it creates an interaction as opposed to just consumption. That's the difference.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. I'm going to do something right now that I never do, because I try to stay offline when I'm on. Okay, I've got options now on my screen when I go to post. It says write a post. Then, there is photo, get shop visits, poll, add a milestone, start a Q&A, watch party, advertise your business, support nonprofit, write note, check in, get messages, and I have to ... Okay. There you go.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Those are all the options available to me as a content poster. I'm going to, true confession time, Nona, I almost always just write a post.
- Nona Jones: I get it. I know. Most people do.
- Carey Nieuwhof: What am I missing? Tell us what we're missing.
- Nona Jones: What you just went through and I'm so glad you actually went through the menu of options in the composer. There are so many ways to create interactions now on post. You don't just have to do a text post. You don't just have to do a photo, or even a video.
- Nona Jones: Going back to the example I gave earlier about watch party, what a watch party does is it allows people to actually watch a video together and comment. Similar

to what you see often happen. Let's say, I'm not a Game of Thrones person but there are people who love Game of Thrones. They will watch it and they will comment on their Facebook profiles about what they're seeing.

Nona Jones: Watch party allows you to watch something together and comment together. Doing that creates meaningful social interactions, which means that content gets up ranked for distribution. It's, again, about how do I use these tools to create an experience as opposed to just sharing information.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. Let's go through the church because we do have church leaders listening who's like, "Okay, we do a Facebook live." We live stream service. Should they do a watch party instead? Should they do something different?

Nona Jones: I would say, you can do both but where you could really do some really cool things with watch party is make it again an experience. Let's say, it's going to be like an exclusive conversation between the pastor and a member who experienced something traumatic.

Nona Jones: Now, you're creating an experience where people can actually watch something that's relevant to them. You've already seen the live stream and it was great. It was inspiring. Now there's a watch party to actually make the message real to a person. It's using those tools in an innovative way to, again, create an experience.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think you've nailed it. I mean, we've all known this for years, but most of us at heart who create content were broadcasters. I mean we grew up in the area of era of TV and radio. The idea is that I broadcast my content while you passively listen and perhaps give me a thumbs up if you really liked it. We're still stuck in that mode and the reality is life's moved on. Is that what you're saying?

Nona Jones: That's right, yeah that's exactly right. I should tell you so, my undergraduate degree, I was a telecommunications major. I got my degree. I went to the College of Journalism. I totally understand the world of broadcast. I get it. That's also why I say this type of technology is so different. It's not just about me communicating to you, it's also about you communicating to me and then you having the ability to communicate with other people that are communicating with me. It's about social.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yup. No, I think we all get that theoretically. I'm not sure it's as hardwired into that.

Nona Jones: I get it.

Carey Nieuwhof: What I did and people are wondering just to save some emails is when the algorithm changed, it took me about a week but I'm like well, I have an email list of lots of leaders. I think it was 35,000 at the time. I was going to start emailing.

That's created a whole other kind ... in that space I own until Gmail changes the algorithm. It's certainly more directly owned.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's created huge interaction in ways I couldn't have possibly expected. Back to social and back to Facebook. A lot of people would probably, maybe I'm the last guy to know, about I would say, what, there are 15 buttons you can push when you go to create content. I think that is fairly new.

Carey Nieuwhof: Again, by the time we air this it will change. By the time whoever listens to this, two months down the road listens to it, there'll be another button and the watch party will be gone. Because that's the internet, welcome to the internet.

Nona Jones: Constantly evolving.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you stay on top of this stuff?

Nona Jones: Let me first let you know a little secret. Most people assume that because I work with Facebook that I just know everything that's happening in Facebook.

Carey Nieuwhof: Of course you do that's why you're on this show, right?

Nona Jones: I oftentimes find out things by reading TechCrunch. I'm like, "Oh, I didn't know they're doing that." Then thankfully, I can reach out to a colleague and be like, "Oh, this is so cool that we're doing this." A lot of times, I stay up-to-date through a lot of external publications. Of course. I'm in a lot of meetings as we're ideating and thinking through things. That's basically what you have to do is just subscribe to some of those resources like TechCrunch.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Can you give us a couple ones that we can link to just so if people are starting at 101 TechCrunch?

Nona Jones: Sure. Yeah. As far as Facebook is concerned, there's two that I would recommend. One is frankly our newsroom. We have a newsroom. It's like fb.newsroom.com.

Carey Nieuwhof: You do, seriously?

Nona Jones: Yes, yes. You can go to fb.newsroom.com. You can basically get the latest greatest whatever is like hot of the press. We release it there first. That's where most of these organizations get their information.

Nona Jones: There's also another amazing resource it's basically called Blueprint. It's Blueprint by Facebook. It is a course where you can get certified on all of our different products, all of our different tools it's designed for creators. It's designed for business leaders. It's designed for marketers and communicators.

It's the Facebook Blueprint's program. You can get a certification that you went through all of the different modules.

Nona Jones: It's just a great, great wealth of knowledge. We update that pretty frequently.

Carey Nieuwhof: I know you work for Facebook specifically, but Facebook also is on Instagram. Instagram seems to be in many circles high growth, it's my personal favorite platform particularly, stories. I just love stories.

Nona Jones: Don't tell anybody but it's my favorite too.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. We'll cut that part.

Nona Jones: Just keep it in.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just kidding. Is there an Instagram site? Obviously, TechCrunch will cover Instagram, but like ...

Nona Jones: Oh, it's integrated. It's integrated because Instagram is a subsidiary of Facebook, like we integrate everything. I think even in the Blueprint program ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, great so you can find everything for Instagram as well?

Nona Jones: Yeah, exactly. It's all integrated.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's funny because I ...

Nona Jones: In WhatsApp, in Messenger all of it.

Carey Nieuwhof: I work really hard to stay on top of tech stuff and every year I get older, but I feel like it was easier five years ago than it is now.

Nona Jones: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Is that me? Is that just me?

Nona Jones: The frequency and velocity of change just across the tech sector is immense and incredible. That's why I always like to set the expectation. Even when I speak, I always tell people, "Listen, you're probably going to ask me a question that is going to blow my mind because I didn't even know we were doing that. I will be back to you with as much information as I can."

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's fair. I think that's well said, frequency and velocity. Yup. It is. It is. I do my best to stay on top of it but yeah it is changing regularly. You just need smart people around you. Okay. You do work at Facebook, what are some leadership

principles you've learned at Facebook that would surprise leaders that would be like, you didn't expect to learn that or it's not widely known.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because I mean you've got some brilliant leaders that not only Mark Zuckerberg but Sheryl Sandberg, and so on and so forth, what surprised you?

Nona Jones: Yeah, great question. I will say, first let me say this, I work with Sheryl, I've worked with her quite a bit. As a person it's funny because people look at her and they see this really successful person and she's highly influential. The thing that I most admire about her also though is she has a way of being grateful even in challenging times.

Nona Jones: Many people may not know this or some may know this, but a few years ago, her husband passed away very suddenly. She went through a really, really dark, as you can imagine, just dark time in her life. Something she said has always stuck with me and that is that she was going through a lot of just grief and pain and she was like, "God, why did this happen? What does this mean?"

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Nona Jones: She said, it wasn't until she realized that it could have been worse that she actually began to come up for air. By that I mean, she said, "What if the issue that happened happened with her kids in the car where he had his heart episode and there was an accident and they all died." She was like having that as the reality that it could have been worse helps her to be grateful.

Nona Jones: I start there because I think one of the leadership principles that I've had to learn as I've navigated a lot of the challenges we've had as a company is as difficult as things are and as crazy as things can get, it can always be worse. You have to be grateful for the challenge because the challenge is not as bad as it could be.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes. Yeah, that's true. That's a good leadership principle actually.

Nona Jones: Yeah. That's something that I've definitely learned. I think that's probably the one thing that's pretty surprising.

Carey Nieuwhof: That is surprising. One of the very well-known mantras of Facebook and I know it's been revised in the last couple of years from my understanding it is, is that it has been, is move fast and break things.

Nona Jones: Yeah. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: That might have been slightly before your time?

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you want to talk about that culture?

Nona Jones: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm really interested. Let's just start there, move fast and break things.

Nona Jones: Yeah. I'll start, yeah, that's the old one. I'll give the new iteration in a minute. The old one was really about being willing to take chances. I think, especially in the context of ministry, we tend to be incredibly risk averse. Part of the reason why I think the church, the big C church tends to be lagging behind a lot of advancements is because we wait for somebody to try it first. Then, we're like, "Okay. If it worked for them then maybe we'll try it."

Nona Jones: I think as a company, our philosophy was, at that time is like, "Look, just try it. Just throw it out there, see what happens if it doesn't work at least we will have learned what didn't work and then we can either try it again and make it better." Now, our philosophy is move fast and build things up.

Nona Jones: Instead of being totally just like risk unaware, we are very aware of the risk because we are such an influential company. Because we have such a responsibility to society so we're thinking, "All right, it's not enough to just test something that might be cool, the question we have to ask ourselves now is, if we do this, will it adversely affect people? If adversely affects people then it's not building, it's actually breaking."

Nona Jones: That's probably where I would say the best intention and the best philosophy of our company is sitting right now is we're being super intentional about making sure that whatever we do is building towards something.

Carey Nieuwhof: Did some, and you may or may not know the answer to this question, but I'd love to ask it anyway. Did some of the rethinking around the break things part, move fast and break things, come from the fact that Facebook had gotten so big. I remember a story, I think it's accurate, where engineers were ... because you think of Facebook and I mean Zuckerberg, it's been years since Zuck has written a code. I mean, you've got hundreds, thousands of engineers working on Facebook. At any time, there are multiple iterations of Facebook.

Carey Nieuwhof: The Facebook on my phone might look different than Facebook on your phone because I've got version 72.1389621 and you've got 622 on your phone. The blue is a little bit different in the like button or something. I don't know, I mean, you're always AB split testing. Is that still the case where there are multiple versions?

Nona Jones: We're always testing. Another thing that we say internally is we're in a constant state of beta. We're always testing. For me, I have ... and this is where it gets a little bit different is I have the employee versions of our apps. We're tested on even more.

Carey Nieuwhof: I bet you are.

Nona Jones: It's funny because sometimes I'll say to somebody else say, "Hey, just click on this thing here." They're like, "I don't have that. What is that?" I'm like, "Oh, it's not released. Okay, I'm sorry. Never mind."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Nona Jones: We're in a constant state of beta. Yeah, I think we're always trying to test and build and make the best product possible.

Carey Nieuwhof: My understanding is under the old system is that, I think, this is a true story, I've heard it several times. There was an engineer who was given that ability to experiment like literally crash Facebook like all of Facebook and hundreds of millions of users offline. It's like, "Oh, we can't move that fast. We can't keep breaking things."

Carey Nieuwhof: When you have a couple of college campuses or you've got a small user base, you can break that much but has part of the success and responsibility been behind that in this idea of building? Or, do you know the philosophy behind the shift?

Nona Jones: I know the shift to change are right before I got there but I do know that it was basically anchored in our recognition of the responsibility that we have. I think, again, as the platform continues to grow, I know that at the highest levels of the organization, the conversation is always, "All right, let's make sure that we're living up to what's expected of us."

Nona Jones: I think some people, we realize mistakes are made, mistakes have been made mistakes and mistakes will be made. Because we're committed to doing the right thing, our goal is always to restore anything that was broken. That's really what's driven the idea of building as opposed to breaking.

Carey Nieuwhof: If you were advising churches and you do in your role, what would you advise them to move faster on and what would you encourage them as far as the break things part or build things part? What do you see? Because you do visit literally probably hundreds of churches and you talk to thousands of church leaders in the course of your work. You're like, "Hey, church let me preach." What are you going to say?

Nona Jones: I would say a couple of things. The first is, don't get so fixated with building your following that you forget that you're actually trying to build the kingdom. I think that many of the conversations I've had have all been rooted in how do I get a bigger platform? How do I get more people following me? The thing that I've said is, "One, you have to remember that we're just conduits. We're conduits of the gospel."

Nona Jones: I would ask churches, who are considering how they could potentially integrate this approach into their ministry is first start there. Just remember, you're not building, you're following. You're building Jesus is following. Secondly, I would definitely recommend that digital be prioritized online, be prioritized because that is not the next iteration of ministry, that's the now iteration of ministry. If you're not there, you're already behind.

Nona Jones: I will say this, the definition of online church today has really been streaming a service, that is not church, that's a program, okay. The church is the body of people. If you really want to have online church, it's about building the body of people in that community. I would hope that it would be prioritized as part of ministry.

Carey Nieuwhof: What would you say to the church and we have mega churches listening some of whom you named and we know that, but the vast majority are small churches 200 people or less, one or two staff and small business leaders who sub one million, don't have a big staff that's 96% of all businesses in the United States.

Carey Nieuwhof: For those who say, "I would love to hire a social media person, thank you so much. I'm 45, I can barely work my phone," not throwing 45-year-old over the bus but you know what I'm talking about.

Nona Jones: Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do I install this app? What would you say to them? Are they just left behind? Or, what have you seen in terms of best practices?

Nona Jones: Yeah, great question. I think when you don't necessarily have the staff infrastructure, I think, that's when you start to look to the plurality of lay leadership that you have. There are people within your congregation who are on Facebook pretty constantly. You might want to reach out to them and say, "Hey, we're thinking about leveraging this platform now for online ministry is that something you'd be willing to lead?"

Nona Jones: Let me clarify one important thing. When you start to get into online ministry, it's not just about a social media coordinator. There are some different camps like the way that I've said it is, if you wouldn't appoint that person to launch a new physical location or if you wouldn't be comfortable with that person leading a Bible study or a ministry in your church, they're probably not the best person to lead your Facebook campus. Because it's not just about content, it really is about conversation.

Nona Jones: What I've found is I worked with some really amazing social media strategists. Their thinking and their paradigm tends to be very much so around content.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

- Nona Jones: You're going to be dealing with people who are going to have crises and they're going to share them in the community. You have to have a team that's able to deal with that. That's why I always like to frame it not just as your Facebook group but it's your Facebook church campus. You need to have a campus pastor, someone who can actually lead and shepherd that community. It may not be a staff person. It may be just be a lay leader who has a heart for people and also knows how to use the tools.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Let me test this out with you to see if this is accurate. Am I right in hearing you say, it's better to have someone who would be a great small group leader or group leader who can find their way around the phone or a computer rather than the tech wiz who has no people skills?
- Nona Jones: Absolutely. That's exactly right is the person who really has a heart for people because you're creating an online church. You're not just creating another page.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That's really good to know too. What are some mistakes? We've talked about a few already but what are some mistakes that you continue to see churches may encounter with social, with Facebook, with Insta?
- Nona Jones: I think one of the biggest mistakes again gets back to what I said in the previous question is the goal. Goals tend to be, and what I have found is that results tend to rise to the level of your goal. If your goal is to build your following, then that's all you're going to do. You'll have a bunch of people following your page or a bunch of people who'll join your group but they're not getting anything meaningful from that.
- Nona Jones: It's really about planning. I actually wrote and I'll provide it to you. I wrote a resource it's called, Facebook for Churches. I wrote it because I was seeing a lot of churches who are like, "Oh, we want to do this digital church thing," but they weren't planning for it. They were just like, "Let's just do it." The thing that I've always said to them is, "Listen, would you launch a new satellite location without telling anybody, without staffing any leadership, without having any programs planned? Would you just go and invest it?" They were like, "No."
- Nona Jones: I said, "That's the exact same approach you need to take with your Facebook campus. You want to make sure that you have a plan."
- Carey Nieuwhof: Wow!
- Nona Jones: You want to plan at least 60 days out, get your leadership team bought in, get a leadership team in place for the Facebook community and then raise awareness about it. The way that you grow your Facebook campus is the exact same way you grow your physical location, you tell people. If you don't have a plan in place, it will just happen and you'll be like, "Nobody is here, nothing is happening." That's why.

- Carey Nieuwhof: That's very gracious of you. The resource is called?
- Nona Jones: It's called Facebook for Churches. Yup, I will share it with you and...
- Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you.
- Nona Jones: ... it's a free resource. Next year, I think in October but I'm not going to make you wait that long. Next year, I'm actually releasing a book with [Zanderman 01:02:46], it was called From Social Media to Social Ministry. It will capture a lot of what I'm sharing with you as well as a whole bunch more. I'll give you this free resource because I want people to have access to it now.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That's amazing. We will link to that in the show notes just ...
- Nona Jones: Awesome.
- Carey Nieuwhof: ... so listeners know. Thank you, that's very generous of you, Nona. Okay. We talked about best practices. We talked about some mistakes churches are making. When you look three to four years in the future, what do you see as possible? Or, what is your vision even beyond the immediate future?
- Nona Jones: Man, three to four years in the future, I see churches in the space. First of all, I see churches fully utilizing Facebook for discipleship, which means it's a whole different model than we're using it for now. Now, we're just using it for marketing. I'm really seeing as using it for ministry.
- Nona Jones: Three to four years from now, I would love to see more churches in the virtual reality space. We have Oculus which is our AR VR company that's really building the tools to help people connect in virtual reality. I have a good friend, shout out to Pastor DJ Soto, who leads VR church. It's an amazing organization. They do church fully in virtual reality. What's a blessing about this, Carey, is like in virtual reality, they're ministering to people who are atheists, people who are agnostic, people who are hostile to faith, people who would never show up to church ever.
- Nona Jones: They're finding Christ, they're finding God in virtual reality. I see us as a body, the big C church, maximizing all of these platforms in order to reach people where they are. Again, that's getting back to the Jesus model of ministry.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That's fascinating. I've got to explore more AR and VR and see where all that is going because yeah, it's not the future, it's also here, right?
- Nona Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yup, that's right.

Carey Nieuwhof: How is that different from, if you remember this and you may or may not, Life Church did a second life campus back in the day. How is virtual reality emerging and different from what we've seen in the past?

Nona Jones: The interesting thing about VR is it's basically fully immersive. It's not just about like a game. It's literally you're hearing, you're feeling your orientation. You are a different person in virtual reality. You're able to connect with people, talk with people who are all over the world through VR.

Nona Jones: It's a very different experience and you're basically in a space where people already are. They don't necessarily have to opt in to you. You're going where they are, so much of you in the VR doing whatever, and you're just able to walk over, "Hey, friend, how's it going?" I think that's the nuance there is you're immersed completely in this reality.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. That's going to be fascinating. I wrote a piece recently that where it's like theologians need to catch up to technology.

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do emphasis, like we are so far behind. In some cases, decades, a century behind in our thinking and that's too bad. Any other aspects of Facebook or Instagram that are not as well-known that leaders should be paying attention to?

Nona Jones: Yeah. The one other piece that I will share and this is getting out of the community side but it's definitely into the efficiency side, is the use of bots, messenger bots.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

Nona Jones: A lot of churches haven't been using these but they are really great because you can actually build them or have them built for you. You have them be built for you where let's say you go live on your page, a messenger bot will actually send a message to people who follow your page to say, "Hey, so and so church just went live, tune in." Or, it'll be an automatic, "Hey, we're so glad that you stopped by our page, how can we help you?" It's just a great way to create more operational efficiency. I've been recommending them pretty heavily to the churches I've been working with.

Carey Nieuwhof: Bots aren't entirely automated, is that correct? I have some on my site particularly in the course area where sometimes the initial two or three messages will be back and forth with AI through the bots. Then, a real person takes over, is that right?

Nona Jones: Exactly, that's exactly right, yup. It's designed to be more efficient because sometimes, there are questions that'll stop at the first question. They got the

information they needed and you don't necessarily have to take your time. Then, there are other times where it's like you actually need to talk to a person. Yeah, it'll triage.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. It avoids that online feeling we get when you call some place and you get the if you want so and so press one, then press three then enter your password then do this then do that.

Nona Jones: Let me tell you, I always presses zero like immediately. As soon as I hear the, "Hi, thank you for calling," zero. I don't even, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Sometimes, it doesn't work anymore which is sad.

Nona Jones: I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

Nona Jones: Like zero doesn't take you anywhere, like what do you mean?

Carey Nieuwhof: I got to ask you this. This wasn't in the questions.

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean, I followed you on Facebook for a while. You talked about the number one request you get when you meet people in real life is like, how do I get more followers? How do I get more followers?

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I would love for you to speak into all the leaders who are listening about the difference between your personal profile and your organizational profile. Because I've got a blog post that I'm going to write. It'll be probably be out by the time this airs, just about pastors in particular, leaders in the age of social media that sometimes ... I would just love to see what you would say about that and what some of the warning signs of the cringe factor might be in some of that because we're in really interesting territory.

Nona Jones: Before I even get into that, I'd love to hear just a synopsis of what you're sharing if you're willing to share like I just want to ...

Carey Nieuwhof: You know what? Once again, I'm going to break my rules and let me just go into Evernote without killing this and I will find it and see. I don't know it's just, it's more of a soul thing. Okay. I'll take you up on your challenge. Here we go.

Carey Nieuwhof: Social media pastor, see if I can find it at Evernote. Maybe, I started composing in ... but you know what? It was that concern about your personal platform as

oppose to the organizational platform and that whole idea of trying to get followers. I often think by just writing notes. I'm just going to pull that up for a minute and see if it's actually ... oops, wrong button.

Carey Nieuwhof: Pastors in the age of social media. Oh, here it is. Maybe these are terrible thoughts that's what happens with drafts, right?

Nona Jones: No.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, no. It's got a picture. It has to be it. Oh, yeah, here we go. You're tempted to ignore your congregation in search of a bigger audience. I think that's a temptation. You spend more time with the people you don't know than with people you do know.

Nona Jones: Wow.

Carey Nieuwhof: You're trying to impress people you'll never meet. You'll focus more on optics and less on substance. Your sense of success rises and falls with likes and shares. That's a soul post. I might totally change my mind by the time this goes public but that's where my head is on that stuff, Nona. I'd love to know and it's called right now it hasn't been published, five challenges with being a local pastor. Or, I'm thinking leader because I think you could be a shop owner, you could be whatever in the age of social media. Those are some of the concerns I see.

Nona Jones: The reason why I wanted to hear what your frame was is because this is something that's such a deep passion of mine. It's funny, April 1st my manuscript is due for the book I'm writing and it's really about success from the inside out. It's really about starting with the parts of you that are insecure. The parts of you that feel inadequate. The parts of you that are broken. Because if you don't start there, you're going to look to all these external indicators of whether or not you actually have value.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow!

Nona Jones: I personally suffered through some of that but mostly because I had experienced a lot of trauma as a child that wasn't resolved. Thank God it has been but it wasn't. What I have found is that with the advent of social media, social media has a way. If you haven't become whole and if you haven't become securing yourself, it has a way of sometimes feeding the worst parts of us, which is those insecurities, those feelings of inadequacy.

Nona Jones: One of the things I didn't say earlier is when I first got into my role, most of the people that I talked to, the first thing they would ask me is, "How did you get that job?" and I answered it. The second question, the very next question was, "Can you get me verified?"

Carey Nieuwhof: That was a good question.

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Nona Jones: It is a good question. I wonder because I didn't know what verification was. As soon as I got to Facebook, I got verified because of my public figure status with Facebook. I didn't really know what the big deal was. What I started to find out is that there were people who wanted to be verified not because of the intent of verification, which really is about issues with impersonation and trying to make sure people know your profile is authentic but it was because it was like a validation ...

Carey Nieuwhof: Status symbol.

Nona Jones: Status. I've got the blue check. To your point, I think, you have to be careful as a leader is one, it's not about building your following first of all. In fact, we are talking about pursuing the work of Christ. It's not about building or following. Two, know that you are enough like you are enough, if you never get another follower, if you never cross that 10,000 followers threshold on Instagram that everybody is vying for, it's okay. It's okay because God has called you and he's assigned you.

Nona Jones: If you lead a group of 10 members, whether you lead 10 people or 20,000 people, God has given you a unique assignment. He's counting on you to fulfill that assignment. I think that sometimes, to your point, we can get so wrapped up in this idea of building our platform and building our brand that we lose sight of the fact that we're building God's kingdom. That's the thing that every day, like I pray. Every single morning, I'm up at 6:00 AM for prayer and devotional.

Nona Jones: I always say, I say, "God, I don't care how many opportunities you give me. I don't care how big my platform gets. Help me to always stay rooted and grounded in your calling, in your will, in your ministry because none of this is mine." I think, if we keep that in the forefront of our eyes then we won't have those challenges. It really is about what has God called you too as opposed to building your name and building your platform. That's challenge in this generation I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, it is. It's really hard and I think the younger you are, the harder it is.

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because I spent most of my time, I mean, social is only for most of us, a decade old. I know Facebook is 15 but reality for the point where it was more than you and eight people. It's about a decade old.

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: I still remember when they called it web 2.0, right?

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: All of that stuff. I did over half my leadership to date in the pre-social media era. You're used to nobody knowing you. You're used to not being able to do this from the basement of your house. I mean, you're used to those days and things are different now but I wonder what it's like to be 21 and in this world or 28 and in this world when this is all you ever knew. I think it creates great social questions, ethical questions, spiritual questions that we're not ... I don't know that we're really ready to solve them.

Carey Nieuwhof: This has been so, so rich. Man, okay, people are going to want to know more about you and we will link everything in the show notes. Can you tell us where to find you and also on the socials as well. By the way, for the record, I'm only verified on one out of three platforms. Not Facebook, only Insta and I had a friend help get me verified.

Nona Jones: I'm the reverse. I'm verified on Facebook but not on Insta yet. We'll see.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really? Yet, you would have an in for that. There you go.

Nona Jones: Yeah. We'll see.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. I know, I know. Everyone thinks we're more connected ...

Nona Jones: I know, everybody does. No, this has been such a pleasure. Thank you so much for having me. People can reach me in my website is just [nonajones.com](http://nonajones.com). I would love for people to join my email news list because I will be releasing more information about my book there. I'm really excited to connect with people. Instagram is actually the best platform to connect with me on.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. You can follow there.

Nona Jones: Yeah, it's @Nonanotnora, that's my handle. It's the same for Facebook, Nona not Nora but I will tell you my Facebook is a mess. I have so many messages in the Messenger. It's a mess. Instagram is the way to connect. Yeah, I'm so, so thankful.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. I walked away from Messenger a while ago too. It's just like I can't keep up. Then you have all the message requests and it's like ...

Nona Jones: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... I don't even know what to do there.

Nona Jones: I'm so sorry guys.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, all right. Nona, this is awesome. We're looking forward to hang out at Rethink Leadership as well ...

- Nona Jones: Definitely.
- Carey Nieuwhof: ... in Atlanta, that'll be great, so honored to have you there this year.
- Nona Jones: Thank you.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you so much.
- Nona Jones: This has been awesome.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Man, she's articulate, is she not? There was a lot of insight in that episode. If you want to drill down, head over to the show notes. You'll find it at [Careynieuwhof.com/episode262](http://Careynieuwhof.com/episode262). Also, just Google Nona, N-O-N-A, Jones and my name and you'll find it there too.
- Carey Nieuwhof: We've also got transcripts for those of you who prefer to read or want to do some team study with that. Those are downloadable all free to you. That's thanks to partners like TrainedUp, if you haven't checked them out lately. They are so much bigger than the last time you probably went to their website. They have so many more features.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Plus, they've dropped their prices. The first 30 days is free. Go to [servehq.church](http://servehq.church) where you can learn more. Also, head on over to [promediafire.com/carey](http://promediafire.com/carey) get 10% off for life and get your social media working for you not against you.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Finally, if you haven't checked out the free resource I uploaded to [churchgrowthmasterclass.com](http://churchgrowthmasterclass.com), do that now because it's going to disappear real soon. We got some really exciting things happening over there. That's [churchgrowthmasterclass.com](http://churchgrowthmasterclass.com). Hey, we're back next week with a fresh episode. I've been waiting for this one for a long, long, long time. The founder of the Ritz Carlton, Horst Schulze, is my guest. You are going to get schooled on customer service. I love this interview. He is just a fun guy. Here's an excerpt.
- Horst Schulze: The first thing I would have done, I would have sat down and cried. I would have cried for a while.
- Carey Nieuwhof: It's like not on my hotel, right?
- Horst Schulze: Yeah. The next thing, I would have called you personally and said, "Please forgive me. I'm trying to make sure, please forgive me. I'm embarrassed. Obviously, you don't pay for your breakfast. I tell you what, in order to show you that we're not that bad, next time you come here complimentary room." I wouldn't have given the money back for the room.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

- Horst Schulze: I don't want to bring it back to show you that we're not that bad. Next time you come back, I want you to be my guest next time you come back. Please, please forgive me. Here's my name, call me personally for the reservation. I'm so sorry, please forgive me.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, my goodness. See, that's brilliant.
- Horst Schulze: In that moment I got you, I got you, your money come down.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Hey, you do. Subscribers, you get that all for free and you can subscribe anywhere you get your podcasts, iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, TuneIn, wherever, it's all free. I only listen to the podcast I subscribe too. If you just happen to stumble into this episode, you liked it, you enjoyed it, you're ready for next week, subscribe for free. For all of you who continue to share on social, on Twitter, on the Instagram, on Facebook, thank you.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Take a screen shot, share the link, tell your friends. Thanks for helping this podcast grow every single month. We are past eight million downloads heading for 10. We're going to celebrate along the way and just want to thank you guys so much for everything. In the meantime, what a good time together this week. I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.
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