

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: Well, hey, everybody, and welcome to Episode 287 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before. Guys, thank you so much. We are coming in on five years of the podcast. Yeah, that's happening next week. And we got something really fun that we're doing in your honor. One of the frequent pieces of correspondence and we love hearing from you is, I love this podcast. But man, I'm buying so many books. To celebrate 9 million downloads, we're pushing it on 10 now and in five years of this podcast next week, we are going to do a stack your library giveaway. We're going to choose nine winners who are going to get five books of your choice from any podcast alumni.

Carey Nieuwhof: We're pushing 300 episodes now. You can go back over the entire list and say, I want this book. I want that book. I want that book up to five books. Nine of you are going to win. How do you win? You win via the socials. Head on over to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, on all three platforms, we will be picking winners. All the details are there I am CareyNieuwhof on Instagram and CNieuwhof on Facebook and Twitter. If you Google even an approximation of my name at C-A-R-E-Y, by the way for Carey. You'll find me online. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, guys thank you. It's been a great journey. We're going to talk more about it next week. Very excited for that. Also, what's one area that will directly affect church visitors every Sunday? You know which one you're like, "Wow, the lobby, kids ministry." Actually it's your website.

Carey Nieuwhof: Nobody visits a church these days without first visiting the website. The question is, is it appealing? Is it updated? Have you looked at it in the last two years? A good website's going to directly impact your ministry. That's why our friends at Pro Media Fire who many of you are using now are launching something brand new. The Pro Web Fire subscription service this month. They're going to build you a custom website through it, updated weekly as per your plan. Yeah, more staffing you don't have to make they'll do it for you. Because they're partners of this podcast this month, the listeners of this podcast will receive a free custom website build for the plan you choose. That's right, a free custom church website to help with your church growth. It's an amazing launch special, it's brand new, time limited. Go to Prowebfire.com. Prowebfire.com, use the promo code, Carey2019. C-A-R-E-Y-2-0-1-9 at Prowebfire.com. That's Prowebfire.com promo code, Carey2019 and you can get started with your free custom website build with the plan that you choose.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, hey, a lot of people ask me, our team's always growing. Carey, who do you turn to when you need staff particularly when you need staff fast? And you know what the answer is? It's BELAY. BELAY is a virtual staffing solution. They have supplied me with several great high quality team members over the last few years. If you want to learn more, you can go to belaysolutions.com/carey.

That's BELAY, B-E-L-A-Y, solutions.com/carey and tell them I sent you. I got to tell you, I am so grateful for their partnership. If you're looking for a virtual staffing solution, they can help far more than you think.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, on to today's episode, I'm so thrilled to have JD Greear. He is the pastor of The Summit Church. Also the president of the Southern Baptist Convention this year one of the youngest presidents or the youngest in 40 years and Todd Wilson President and CEO of Exponential. A lot of you know Exponential and they are talking all about multiplying, reproducing churches. Multiplication is the future, not just I think in church world, but in business world. We know we have a growing number of business listeners. One of the things I think is fun about this podcast is as a church leader, I learn from the business space, but I'm running into a growing number of business leaders who are saying, guess what, we're learning from you too.

Carey Nieuwhof: These guys are brilliant. We have a full hour conversation on why reproducing churches, multiplying churches are the future of the church. And how even if you're not really growing that fast right now, or maybe even declining, you've got a stake in this. You got to listen to the end for that, but hang on. You're like, "Well, our church is small and not influential." "Hey, our businesses small, not influential." Listen in to what these guys are saying, it's brilliant. This is in partnership with Outreach magazine who has a full cover, I think a third of the issue, of the September issue is about reproducing churches. We do a deep dive on it now with the President of Exponential Todd Wilson and JD Greear, President of the Southern Baptist Convention. Whether you're Baptist or not, you're going to find this incredibly helpful. So here is my conversation with JD Greear and Todd Wilson.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, JD and Todd, welcome to the podcast.

JD Greear: Oh, thanks for having me.

Todd Wilson: It's great to be here Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Good to have you back. Todd and JD welcome, for the very first time. Do a real quick introduction. I gave a bio at the very beginning, but just a real quick introduction about who you are and what you do, and why you're so passionate about what we're going to talk about. JD, why don't we start with you because it's your first time here?

JD Greear: Yeah, absolutely. I'm Pastor at The Summit Church in the Raleigh Durham border, North Carolina. Been here since 2002. It was not a church plan. It was a, I guess you call it church revitalization. Of all the many things that God blessed our church with one of them, that was a mixed blessing, mostly positive was college students. The college students, they didn't bring a lot of money into our church. Now when college students first started to flood into our church, our

attendance basically tripled in about three weeks because college students travel in herds, and our average weekly giving went down \$13.

Carey Nieuwhof: The way to do it.

JD Greear: That's right. But we knew that we had a lot of people that were going to be there for four to six years. We started to kind of put this vision out in front of all of them of. Hey, instead of just getting a job somewhere that you can make money, why not let the kingdom of God be the largest factor that informs where you choose to pursue your career. We always tell them, "You got to get a job somewhere." When I get a job in a place where God's doing something strategic. And that vision really started to catch on and so it translated into a goal of planting 1,000 churches out of our church by 2050. I would say of the many things that God's blessed our church with, that might be one of the most exciting, is seeing churches that we planted.

JD Greear: I think our numbers right now are somewhere a little less than 50 domestic plants and about 260 overseas, that have involved sending out about 1,200 of our members who have uprooted their lives and gone to live over one of these places. I love seeing our church grow here, I love reaching people in the triangle. I don't know if I'm still called fairly young Carey, but I still feel fairly- But I've heard from grandparents that the joy that you have in your kids successes is even bigger than your own successes. I feel that way about our church plants. When I hear about the way they're going and where they're multiplying. It's amazing.

JD Greear: I really just did the study of the New Testament and the amount experience became increasingly convinced that the future of church planting, the future of the spread of the gospel is not found in churches that grow ginormous, because of the anointing of one individual, but it's through churches that know how to raise up leaders and send them out into the harvest.

JD Greear: That's kind of the experience and conviction I'm bringing to it. Now serving in this other capacity I serve in which is President of the Southern Baptist Convention, it's allowed me a place to take that vision and say, it has to be the norm for churches. We ought to also measure our success not by our seating capacity, but my our standing capacity.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's great. JD just to clarify because this is a pretty big vision and you went through it pretty quickly. You want to have planted 1,000 churches by the year 2050?

JD Greear: 2050. I felt like in 2050 if I haven't retired yet, somebody's just going to take me out. By that point I will have already handed it off. But yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's incredible. And you're well into the 200. It's like pushing 300?

JD Greear: Yeah, right. Just a little bit over 300 total is the number right now. Now we do count churches that our churches plant also. We count grandkids in that. We're set on the trajectory we're on. We've allowed for a 20% fail rate, just to be safe. We're set to hit it well before 2050.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's incredible. Wow. Then Todd give us, as president, CEO of exponential, Nuclear Navy alumnus.

Todd Wilson: I get excited about the things JD is talking about, the churches, the raise up leaders and send leaders out. I currently have the privilege of leading Exponential, we like to say we're activists for healthy church multiplication. We see less than 10% of churches in the United States with a scorecard of reproduction. We want to see that become the new normal on the scorecard. Sociologists say you've got to get to about 16% of a behavior for it to be the normal. We got long ways to go but things are looking up. It's really exciting what's happening with churches and glad to be here today to talk about things.

JD Greear: I'm looking, I don't know whatever I can see it. I'm looking right over Todd's head and there's Yoda. And there's just such uncanny. The wisdom coming out of Todd's mouth and then just the way he looks it's like I feel like I'm talking to Yoda. This is an amazing experience.

JD Greear: Perfect. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we'll have to change the episode to include Yoda now. Thank you. I didn't know he spoke. Todd, that's pretty impressive.

JD Greear: I'm going to have to move that I think.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome. Well, there's been so much written and I've been partly guilty of that on church growth, and everyone talks about church growth. But you guys are trying to draw a distinction between church growth and church multiplication and reproducing churches. I think in the exponential resources, and we've heard people talk about it, Yoda has left the building? It's good.

JD Greear: Yoda has left the building. He'll keep talking about every five minutes now I forget that he keeps coming back.

Carey Nieuwhof: We're saying the five levels of multiplication, right? Do you want to walk us through those real quick, Todd? Because I think you and Dave Ferguson came up with them. And then I really want to focus on the distinction between what is the difference between a growing church, a reproducing church and a multiplying church.

Todd Wilson: Right. The approach that we've taken at Exponential. The Bible gives us a lot of clarity on be fruitful and multiply. They added to their numbers daily. But we like to turn to just the pure math. If you look at math principles, you really have

five different categories of math that you can put just about the behavior of anything into. You have subtraction, and we all see that curve in our mind, a declining trend, plateauing, a flat line. Growing or adding, a line that's going up. Reproducing, is just an accelerated form of adding, and we'll talk more later about the difference in adding and reproducing. Then multiplying is that exponential up curve.

Todd Wilson: We just simply labeled those 5 categories, subtracting, plateauing, adding, reproducing and multiplying five levels. Now, really, for this conversation, the thing that's important is levels one, two and three, subtracting plateauing and adding. Those are the life cycle of any organization, any ministry, any church, the human body. If you think about the human body, it grows, it plateaus, and it declines. A 90 year old-

Carey Nieuwhof: Unless you're JD, who will be very vibrant by 2050.

JD Greear: At 2050, still, yeah.

Todd Wilson: There we go.

Carey Nieuwhof: But every business too, it's the cycle of life.

Todd Wilson: Every business has that life cycle. It's a cycle of life, Jim Collins wrote about it and how the mighty fall. You get the life cycle of growth, plateau and decline. Some of us get a couple of cycles of it as churches. But inevitably, for 2,000 years, every church's faith ends up in the same place. In both a negative and a positive way we die like the human body at some point. We can characterize levels one, two and three 100% of churches in the United States experienced the level one, two and three growth, plateau, decline.

Todd Wilson: Not all churches experience the reproduction multiplication, it's a much smaller set that are that way. We don't need to go into the business side. But even in businesses, businesses grow, plateau, decline, but not many actually reproduce or multiply. And it's the same way in churches.

Carey Nieuwhof: JD, can you walk us through what your definition of reproducing and multiplying our level four, level five?

JD Greear: Yeah, well, actually, I learned a lot from Todd and Dave, and those guys. I mean, it's been good. It was helpful to see them distinguish between reproducing and multiplying. And the way we've tried to translate it into our vision is using, you move in a language, which I know is a little bit trendy. When you start thinking about churches that not only plant churches but that plant churches that plant churches and building that into the DNA from the beginning.

JD Greear: We asked them all to commit to planting a church within the first five years of their existence. That way they can just kind of begin with that vision in mind.

We have churches that they're six months old, 250 people in them and they're already kind of meeting with a core group of 10 or 15 of them but think about going somewhere else and planting a church. I just think that has got to be part of the mentality. And honestly, it's difficult sometimes for a leader to think like that, because your people are your greatest resources. To give some of your best away is kind of, it just feel crazy. I always tell leaders is kind of like, we're being asked to believe and put into practice the same thing that most of us pastors teach their our people about giving.

JD Greear: Nobody says to their church members, "Hey, if you got 10% laying around in the end of the month and you can't figure out what to do with it." You say, "Give your first and your best and watch God bless and multiply that." Well, you know, I sometimes I think the reason that our congregation members don't believe that about their money is they don't see us believing that with our most valuable resource, which is the leaders. We've just tried to say let's open our hands and teach our church planters to open their hands and say we're going to be about the seed that multiplies and not just the one place that grows.

Todd Wilson: As an example, Carey, Andrew Hopper is one of JDs planters. Why don't you just tell us about Andrew because Andrew is to the second, he was a plant of you and they've planted and I think, aren't they about to see grandchildren themselves.

JD Greear: Yeah, that's great. I appreciate you bringing that up. I mean, because now we're at a place where it's no longer just The Summit network that was our own internal network of churches. Is it Andrew, in Greensboro, Mercy Hill, there's several thousand people big now. They planted churches who are now planting churches and they got their own network. The question is do we the Summit want to own that network? Are we trying to be a network of networks that just releases and keeps it multiplying?

JD Greear: I remember the first year, I think Todd it may have been four years ago when Outreach Magazine comes out every year with their hundred fastest growing churches and biggest. Every pastor will deny it but we all kind of get that and we can look to see who's on it? Were my friends on it? Being a vain person which whatever, I opened it up, I would see where the Summit church is. I think that year we were number, I don't know 61 or something like that. I was, "Okay, well at least we made the top 100." And then I look up and I'll see made in top 15. I look and I see Andrew Hopper's name he's number 11 on the list, and I felt two emotions one was, we've planted that guy now he's on the... I felt like the dad who's middle school kid has beaten him for the first time at basketball. I sent him a text I'm like, "I just saw this. Just want you to know punk where you came from. When we put you into this world will take you out."

JD Greear: But at the same time, it just a lot of joy in it. What I was saying about your kids success. Now on a given Sunday morning, there are more people in churches

that we planted in the United States that are a part of The Summit church. And that's trend that curve, that curve is just kind of skyrocket in the years to come.

Todd Wilson: Carey, I think it's important to note, in the idea of reproducing with the grandkids that a study was done last year, that 76% of church plants don't quickly get involved in church planting, meaning only one out of four church plants turns around and plants. That's one of our big problems. When JD is talking about wanting to see 1,000 churches in 50 years, and it's kids who have kids, who have kids. That's the key. That's where we're way behind in the US Church right now is we're planting kids or we're having kids that are not then having kids. And then that's-

JD Greear: I'm sorry, Todd, I was going to jump in there, say something really profound? I noticed that more and more insights from the International Mission Field for us, outside of the North American context are becoming increasingly relevant for church, growth and planting here.

JD Greear: I started my own ministry as a missionary over in Southeast Asia in a Muslim enrich people group. One of the principles over there was called the heresy of sequentialism. I think it was coined by a guy named David Garrison. He said, the heresy of sequentialism is that things in Christianity you learn like a one on one, two on one, three on one, four on one. That's not to say you never use that terminology, but you learn to share and multiply later like for six months, let's just do theology and... But from what you see from Jesus is from the beginning. He is saying, "Go home to your friends and tell them how great things he's done for you."

JD Greear: Multiplication is built into the life of the believer from, in some ways you could argue before he even accepts Christ. I think a lot of churches, like you're referring to Todd, they get into this idea of, "Well, we're not healthy enough to plant, we need to wait until we have 500 or 1000." Once you go to that it's not even part of your DNA anymore. It's got to be a discussion from day one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I'm glad you went back there because I want to pick up on that thought, when you were saying earlier, you have church plants that are a year in for argument's sake, they have 250 people, they're already meeting with 10 to 15 people they're going to send out. That's a little bit contrarian, because there would be some listening who would say, "Well, how do you know that 250 person thing is even healthy? What do you have to reproduce?" Almost every leader you talk to is like, "If I get 10 to 15 people in that context, I'm hanging on to them for dear life." Talk to me about that. How do you... Because I think you're right. I think that is really contrarian thinking. How do you overcome those fears and objections that you would naturally have? Or even criticisms that would say, "We barely know how to open the doors on Sunday? What are we doing reproducing?"

JD Greear: Yeah, well, Todd, I have a probably a very summit centric answer. But I would imagine you've observed this a lot. So I'll give mine and then I'm interested what you have to say.

Todd Wilson: Right.

JD Greear: I think for us, I want to be realistic, Carey because there are some considerations that, God does expect us to use our heads in this. There are moments and times where it's just not realistic, because there is unhealthiness. I'll give you just a very, hopefully not too raw of an example. But when God really began to grow our church in the area of diversity, you were taking a largely white church and we were on that that kind of curve headed up to 20%, non-Anglo. God really given us some strong African American leaders who were instrumental in that. Well, I thought that we have a full church planting residents every year, and we give them an open head hunting license and just say, "Whoever you can recruit, whoever you can convince it's open season, you can take them."

JD Greear: But I realized that because of how fragile this diversity thing was for us, that I was like, "But please don't go after in your top, kind of pick our diverse leaders, because right now, they're very instrumental in something we think God is doing here." If the circumstances are such that God puts it on their heart, that's fine, but don't don't pick a low hanging fruit. I'm using that as an example. Yeah, there are times that you got to be cautious, but I would just say for most pastors, they end up being naturally cautious, that comes instinctive. Where they need to push themselves is toward the risk the open of the hands. If you find somebody that's too open handed, you might talk him but... Same way about a congregation member that literally every time I took an offering gave their entire rent check, and I was, "Hey, stop being so generous." But most people are more protective and they hoard rather than open their hands."

Todd Wilson: Carey, I need to take a little bit of a path to get to the answer just to unpack a little bit more the difference between growing, adding, reproducing and multiplying. If we go back to that idea of growth, we can have growth in three ways we can have growth by addition, we can have growth by reproduction, we can have growth by multiplication and understanding the differences in those three, I think can help us answer the question you're asking too. Here's under the hood of addition, reproduction, multiplication. You can add without reproducing. I can take one pencil, but sitting on the table and take another pencil and put it on the table and I have added, but I have not really produced the first pencil. Now the corollary of that is you cannot reproduce without adding. Again, you got to embrace that idea, you can add without reproducing, but you can't reproduce without adding.

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you explain a little bit more about that what do you mean? How can you not-

Todd Wilson: Here's the example, if I take a pencil, and I've got a pencil sitting on the desk, and I want to reproduce that pencil, how do I reproduce the pencil? It's an inanimate object, it can't reproduce itself. A human egg or a human cell can reproduce itself when one becomes two, because one evolves from one to two, that's reproduction. If it takes an external action, if there's one pencil sitting on the table, and I go grab a second pencil, and I set it next to the first one on the table, I have added, I've not reproduced.

Todd Wilson: Now at the flip side of that is, if I've now let's use the human egg, if I've got a human egg that's fertilized, and it goes from two cells to four cells to eight cells. It's reproducing two become four, they're reproducing themselves. There's no way to reproduce without adding, you're guaranteed to add if you reproduce. But the message we've got to take away from that is what really matters is how we add. Growth is good, growth comes by addition. But the key is how do we add? Here's for me the tension I have with how we're doing church, we add programmatically, that's the operating system in the US church. We add programmatically. Let me ask you this, what program in the history of church has ever reproduced itself?

Todd Wilson: They're like pencils sitting on the table. Programs do not reproduce. Programs consume resources, they don't reproduce, only people reproduce. The form of addition that we need are disciple makers who make disciples, who make disciples. Its disciples that are reproducing themselves. That's the kind of addition we want. If I go back to your original question, how do you take a church at 250 that's only a year old and they can reproduce? Well, they're probably not ready to reproduce programmatically, if we take the normal approach. If we're trying to reproduce programs, they may not be mature enough. But are there 10 disciple makers out of 250 that have the ability to reproduce themselves? Absolutely. We're just not seeing it the right way. We're saying it programmatically, not from a disciple making perspective.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, that's really helpful, for really clarifying. Let's go back to top leaders what you were saying JD. It's like Open Season, take who you want, you want to take the top donor, take the top donor, right? That's what everyone's thinking, why you're saying that? You want to take my best elder, you want to take the best discipleship person we have? Go ahead. Obviously, that's an abundance mentality. And this keeps showing up in episode after episode of this show. I don't think scarcity mentality gets you to the top yet scarcity mentality is a very real thing.

Carey Nieuwhof: The person, the leader, whether this in business or the church, who's thinking, "Well, do you know how long it took me to get that top volunteer? Do you know how long I've nurtured these donors?" How has that played out in your context? How do you find... Because clearly you lead a church, how many people is The Summit in attendance?

JD Greear: About 12,000 on the weekend.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, 12,000 on the weekend, it's not like you're sitting there with four people left going, "Oh." It's turned out okay, for you. Can you just unpack that a little bit to understand how generosity fuels surplus?

JD Greear: Yeah, that's a great question. I do want to be clear, just because I don't want to set unrealistic expectations. I feel like for years, I went to conferences and heard things that were grandiose. We do teach our planters to not just go for low hanging fruit. We say that most of the people that they're taking out ought to have been people that grew up in their ministries. We try to inculcate that. I just want to make sure that's clear. But having said that, every year, it's usually second or third week in May, we will line up as many people as we can get in the congregation, who are being sent out that fall to leave membership and go outside the church.

JD Greear: Every year Carey, I wish I could tell you this is getting better. Every year, I have a moment of panic. Because it's usually 100, 150 people sitting across the stage, and that's usually the first time that it dawns on me who it is. I'm looking across the stage and I'm seeing worship leaders. I'm seeing elders and I'm seeing big donors. Not that I know who gives what, but come on.

Carey Nieuwhof: You have a rough idea and you're like, "No, not you, not you."

JD Greear: But it's one of those things that the first year I did it, I actually pulled my hands out. This wasn't even in front of the congregation. It was just me, a little moment by there with God by myself. I pulled my hands out, and I open them up. There's kind of this symbol that was like, "God, this is your church, not mine. If you're going to grow this church by adding to our number, then we're ready to receive that. But if you're going to grow the kingdom by taking things out, then it's not my church. I didn't die for this church, not my blood that gave birth to this church, it's your church. You show me the kind of instrument we're supposed to be." What I found is that that has led to not just a multiplying culture, it's actually contributed to our own growth, for a couple of reasons. One, I'll start with the spiritual one. It's a principle every pastor teaches, on giving Sunday or whatever. It's that you just can't out give God, God now play a game every year and he wins.

JD Greear: He's 50 and over probably, but it's just, give him. The same thing is true with our leaders is God takes the five loaves and two fish and all of a sudden, what we all talk about the 5,000 they got fed, but the little boy that gave it went back home with 12 baskets full. His resources were overflowing. That's the spiritual blessing, like a secular maybe. What they found in business is... There's a woman, a business guru named Liz Wiseman who wrote a great book called The Multiplying Leader. I don't know if she's a believer or not, but she didn't write as a Christian book. But she used this example of how, at one point in Jack Welch's leadership heyday, as CEO of GE. At one point, an absurd number of CEOs of other fortune 500 companies had come off of his upper leadership team.

JD Greear: You could look at that and say, "Oh, well, Jack just didn't know how to keep good talent." But she said, actually, on a deeper look, you find it's the opposite. It's that he had a reputation for not only developing talent, but he was so committed to them becoming their full potential that when it was time to let somebody go, he would not only allow it, he would actually facilitate it, he'd make phone calls for them. That created this leadership vacuum, this culture where leaders flock to be a part of his team. For everyone he sent out, three more would pop up in their place.

JD Greear: Well, we found that here as well. For every, I talk about Andrew Hopper, for everyone Andrew Hopper we send out, more just keep springing up around here. I think it comes from that leadership culture that happens to giving away.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anything to add to that Todd, I love that answer.

Todd Wilson: I happened to visit the Summit, the first time I visited, there was one of these Sundays they were sending out. It is a powerful moment. There were probably 80 people on the stage at the campus I was on that they were commissioning to be sent at one point. I'm realizing now you don't do that every week, JD?

JD Greear: It's true.

Carey Nieuwhof: This is not a law of attraction stuff at all. But I'm just saying is it that when you create that kind of culture, you attract a different kind of leader?

Todd Wilson: You do. I mean, my wife and I were there visiting, and there was a part of me that wanted to go up on the stage and be sent. We were just visitors to the church. There's something about the moment when you see something bigger than yourself happening with the people around you.

JD Greear: Yeah, I think Todd's exactly right. I also think it attracts to us, whether it's college students, or seminary students, or people to squeeze, I just met a guy today who moved here. He's like, "I'm in a transition point and I just felt like, this is a place I want to be." Because he even jumped in the resident track, he just jumped in the, one of the lower, we have interns and apprentices and he jumped in there said, "I'm going to be here for a couple years. And hopefully, at some point, I can be sent out." I was like, "Great. We'll see where it takes him."

JD Greear: But it calls for that every kind of leader, the thing you don't want to overlook is, is it also from so called regular people in your congregation? They start seeing people and they're like, "Wait, I know that guy, and he's not that amazing." It creates this kind of cultural expectation of them to.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, this is really good. This is really good. I love that. I would guess too, One of the problems with a lot of organizations, particularly if they have long term ministry, and you're certainly moving into the realm of 17 years long term ministry in one place. One of the challenges I think a lot of organizations face is

that they age with the leader. The leader starts at 25, 20 years later, everybody's 45, 20 years after that everybody 65. It also creates a glut at the top, where everybody is just, "You're my tribe, you're my people, we're not going to renew."

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you find that playing out at The Summit, in terms of creating senior vacancies? Is that actually a talent accelerator? Something tells me it would be or, alternatively, the six of us who started the Church or the six of us who are here forever and ever and ever, and eventually it's forever and ever and ever, and there's no young leaders in the place? Do you want to speak to that for a moment?

JD Greear: That's a great question. And again, I'm going to try to be honest, and not too idealistic. And some of the stuff Carey, I may end up maturing on later and say, I wasn't in the right mind to say it. But I mean, keep in mind, I started this church when I was 10, 17 years later, I'm 27, I'm still a young man.

Carey Nieuwhof: You're still 27, correct.

JD Greear: Still 27. Now, it's obviously, we've had some of our upper leadership that has gone, and that has created vacancies. Those are vacancies that were painful at first, but God abundantly blessed. But also, just to be realistic. I wouldn't say that it's not a ton of our senior leadership, at least on the staff level, that ends up winning on some of these churches. But what it provides is... I've got a chief of staff, this is, you think of him as an executive pastor, he and I are probably going to work together til the day that we do we die.

JD Greear: Guys that have the capacity to be him, young guys, they're probably not going to be able to stay at our church, because he's not going to go anywhere for 20-30 years. But the fact that he is able to mentor those guys to go on one of our church plants, it means that we get them for 5, 10, 15 years. Even though the spot is not necessarily my executive pastor, there is a spot and we're able to have those guys here. I don't want to create the expectation that you're just turning over your executive leadership team every two years. But there is ways that this can contribute to a healthy reproduction environment, even if it's not on your own church staff.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, I'm glad we've kept on this mindset thing a lot, because I think it is a mindset. And I think there's a lot of fear associated with sending and reproducing. Anything else on that before we move on, because I've got lots of other questions to ask, but anything else on sort of that abundance mindset versus scarcity mindset, releasing versus grabbing anything else on that, before we move on?

JD Greear: I have a couple thoughts about the heart of a leader that kept me from that. I don't know if... Are you going to dive into that later? Is this a good time?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, you go, you go.

JD Greear: Well, I think the biggest obstacle for me, Carey honestly, and looking back over the last 17 years, we probably it was kind of in our DNA from the beginning, because like I said, I came off the mission field. But for five or six years, it was nowhere really on my radar screen. I look back now and realize that the number one competitor, for us doing this was my own selfish kind of ego and my idolatry. Every pastor, thinks like, I want a great big church and a great big budget and great big attention for the guy behind it all, right? Because ministry is a great place for guys with the idol of success to hide, because you can cloak all your ambition in spiritual language. It's like, "Oh, I did this all for God." When it's really been a lot about me.

JD Greear: That's the place that showed up was my own attitude toward our churches' growth. And that kept me from giving. I was praying one afternoon, just for, I like taking a day prayer. I was praying that God would bless the triangle, the Raleigh Durham area, with the kind of revival, the awakening that you hear about the history books, I was, "Lord..." I remember thinking about, Lord 100 years now, and they tell the story of Raleigh Durham, then I want to see be a part of something that, they would talk about in a secular book. It was one of those moments, I don't have many of these, but it was one of those moments where the Spirit of God spoke to me not in an audible voice, but it might as well been audible.

JD Greear: The Spirit of God was like, "Okay, what if I say yes to this prayer, and I do something in Raleigh Durham that will change the trajectory of the city. But what if I don't use your church to be a part of that? What if I use somebody else's church and they get big and they make the history book and you don't even get in the footnotes?" I know what's the right answer there. The right answer was, "Oh, yes, Lord, you must increase and I must decrease." That's the right answer. But that would not have been the real, the accurate answer. I just remember thinking, "That is not, no. It needs to include JD Greear of The Summit Church."

JD Greear: It was at that moment that I think the Spirit of God really just, right in my face said you've been standing up in front of all these people saying, "Thy kingdom come." What you really meant was my kingdom God, or maybe our kingdom come. It was an area of deep within us.

JD Greear: Now I would love to tell you that I have licked it. It's in the bath. It shows up literally every, every month in some way in here. But it is an idol I had to wrestle with. Because only when I'd taken my hands off of my personal interest in the church, the big budget, the nice salary package for a pastor of a mega church, or when I taken off all my hands off of that stuff that God began to say, "Okay, now I'm going to start rolling the kingdom through you and not just your little fiefdom."

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you, for your honesty. I've felt that tension too, I still feel it, it's like it never really leaves you. Is that I wrote about that and didn't see it coming my last book, The Seventh Chapter is on emptiness. As I wrestled that down, writing that book last year, it was really, it's the difference between my kingdom and God's kingdom. On the days where I'm miserable. On the days where I'm, this is all about me, I realize, Oh, it's because it's all about me today. On the days where I surrender, and I release, there's more fullness there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Todd, any thoughts on that?

Todd Wilson: Yeah, it's interesting. Carey, we had a team a couple of years ago, that worked on these five levels of multiplication, national team. They actually came up with a list of internal tensions and external tensions, the internal being in the heart of the leader, things that hold the leader back from this reproduction of multiplication. They came up with 12 things, it's a bit overwhelming things like ego, and pride, and fear, and unbelief, and safety and competition. But then they also came up with a list of 20, external factors, the realities of once you've got a church up and running.

Todd Wilson: The reality is you got to feed the children's ministry with a certain number of volunteers, and those are the same people that may want to be sent somewhere. These 12 internal tensions, these 20 external tensions, really the common thing on both internal and external is the scorecard of the leader. What does the leader measure success by? This conviction that JD had that God says, "Hey, what if I'm going to do it through another church?" And the idea of seeing your scorecard not by how many you accumulate in the church you're in but by how many you send collectively to the churches you're reproducing? That scorecard changes at the heart of overcoming these internal barriers and the external ones.

Carey Nieuwhof: I appreciate that. JD can I ask you and this again, we have lots of business listeners as well as church listeners. You look at Jim Collins, who I think we've already quoted in this interview and you look at his level five leadership, the difference is humility, right? In other words, super talented, over talented but there's a humility that doesn't want to claim all the success. Can you just walk us a little bit deeper through how that heart shift, mind shift happened for you or how it continues to happen? Because I understand it's an ongoing journey. That's not easy. I was talking to Patrick Lencioni recently he'll be on the podcast again and his next book is all about motive the motivation of a leader. I cannot wait to get my hand on that.

JD Greear: One of my favorite things again I think Lencioni, I'm not coming on the faith journey of any of these guys because there's some of them are believers but they write in more of the secular workspace, but it's interesting how I love it when they, whether they stumble onto or it's intentional. They stumble on to the pattern that God wrote into creation. Because when Jim Collins again, I don't know if he's a believer or not, but when he's writing about the

characteristics of that level five leader you're like, this sounds like the Christ like leader that he's talking about. Liz Wiseman, says a similar thing. There's a book that I read years ago before, I think it was before Lencioni was at least really big on the scene. It was by the Harbinger Institute.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, yeah, I remember those guys. Yeah.

JD Greear: They wrote a book called Leadership and Self Deception.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, it's great book.

JD Greear: Yeah, it's like a parable about a guy who basically discovers the inward sin nature, and he realizes this has been sabotaging the whole time in his relationship. I was like, "Oh, this is great. This is Romans one and bearable for somebody that doesn't know the Bible." But it's a way that God just built humans to flourish. As he builds to flourish when word like Jesus. I think it's part of what Jesus meant was, when you hold on your life, you lose it. When you open your hands, you gain it. Yes, that is a principle given specifically for the believer, but it corresponds to a pattern in creation. What you find is that companies that do use Jim Collins word, are more about the purpose of what they're doing, and just the bottom line?

JD Greear: Well, they're the ones that start to fill a deep meaningfulness in there. And for us, it was kind of like, "All right, what is the mission?" The mission is not how big the Summit Church can be. The mission is God coming and blessing the triangle. I give you one other you asked about the journey for me?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

JD Greear: I was a missionary, when I started. I was actually in the region where the tsunami came through, if you remember that 2004.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I do, 2004, Christmas.

JD Greear: Hundred thousand people in my region died in that thing. I go back two or three months later, after the tsunami and I go back into this region. I pass underneath the gates of this city. As I did it, I had all these old emotions of... because I was literally the only gospel witness in that region. Me and my roommate, we were the only people that ever lived there with the, intentional purpose of sharing Christ. And I felt like a sense of ownership about that city. I'm like, "These are my schools. These is in my neighborhoods." I remember, just as I was going through this mentally, it was. The Spirit of God was like, "Why don't you feel like that about your own city that you live in now and you pastor in the United States." Because I realized that I kind of looked at it, "Our city was a host culture, out of which I was drawing people up into our church, but my church was the focus, not the city."

JD Greear: It was a small shift, you probably wouldn't even have heard it, if you'd have been listening to the sermons that I was preaching then. But the small shift was, "Okay, you couple of big things, one, if God uses us to reach our city by growing as big, fine. But if God uses us to reach our city by giving away our resources, and plant a bunch of other churches, then that's also fine. Because the point is not the Summit Church, The kingdom of God is not the Summit Church, The kingdom of God is what he's doing in the city, and we're going to be the servant of that and not try to be, the point of it."

JD Greear: The other thing that really changed was, we started to really develop a love for the city itself and say, "We want to bless this the city." I met with the mayor, and I was like, "Give me the five most broken areas in the triangle and we're just going to develop a plan for it." He gave me them to me, and till this day, the homeless, the orphans, the prisoners, the unwed mother and the high school dropout. I have really tried to build ministries around those so that we could just be there to bless. That was a fruit of a mind shift, a mind set shift that went from, it being about the church and being more about God's kingdom, if that makes sense.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's great. Just a little bit of trivia. I don't know that he rewrote about it. But I've heard him interviewed a few times, Jim Collins on that level five learning. He does a lot of research, this is all quantifiable analysis. He had his team in the lab, and they came back and they're, "Yeah, there's this one characteristic that we can't figure out exactly what it is. We have to call it humility." And he's like, "That's not scientific, go back and work on the data." This is like Collins, right? The more he looked at it, he's like, "Oh, my gosh, you guys are right." Sometimes when he talks about it, he's still like, "Yeah, there's just this humility thing and it is the difference between good and great."

Carey Nieuwhof: Just because you're a pastor, just because you're a Christian, there's no guarantee that you've got the market cornered on that, in fact, it's a struggling area for a lot of people.

JD Greear: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Todd I want to ask you, okay, not everybody's part of a growing church, they say, "Okay, great, nice." But all this reproducing and multiplying, but what about minus to static? Is there any hope for churches that are maybe in the subtracting or the plateaued? Or the merely growing stage? How did they become? Where's the little beacon of light for organizations that are not, obviously at the cusp of multiply?

Todd Wilson: Right. I'd say two things, we did a national study with LifeWay Research earlier this year to actually identify the percentage of churches at each of the five levels. Within the level one, two and three, subtraction, plateauing, adding 35%, subtracting 35%, plateauing, so a total of 70% of US churches are either subtracting or plateauing then 30% growing. We then looked at within

subtracting, plateauing, adding, what the percentages were of the reproducing churches out of that, how many of those churches were reproducing.

Todd Wilson: The good news is, you can be subtracting, and still be reproducing. You can be plateauing and still be reproducing. If you take the core characteristics of subtraction, plateauing, addition, 100% of churches have one of those three things. The characteristics of reproducing, planting churches sending people if you think about it, that's not linked to what your attendance is. You can be a missionary sending hub and be subtracting in your numbers. It's all about the sending impulse. Let me give you this example. The church that I became a Christian in was a small church under 150 people I became a Christian at 22. They were plateaued or subtracting.

Todd Wilson: And out of that church came Brady Andrews, the lead pastor at the church I met now that has planted 280 churches. Troy McMahon, who went to Dave Ferguson's church and then went and planted in Kansas City and has planted over 10 churches Pat Ferguson, who's leading a national ministry called Passion for Planting. You've got this small church of under 150, that's plateaued or declining. If you added up the number of church plants that have come out of that little church that was subtracting or plateauing, it's astounding. Exponential would not exist, if that church didn't exist, that was subtracting and plateauing.

Todd Wilson: There's good news for churches that are subtracting, and plateauing. It's not about how do we jump the level five multiplication, if we bring this back to it, it's all about how we add. Are we sending disciple makers, to take our community, our city to start new churches, it's about who we're sending, not what we're building or accumulating.

JD Greear: Just to give a second word, a testimony. What Todd was describing there at actually has reminded my own church I grew up in because I grew up in a... It was a small Baptist Church that you would never put on a list, talk about things, but it's a similar pedigree when you look around the country, and people came out of there. What I realized was that even though there wasn't growth, there was a mentality that they were inculcating in the members. It was through mission trips. We had all these mission trips and ministries in the downtown, it's just this mentality that, you should be... This is your responsibility.

JD Greear: I don't think God intends every church to mushroom to gargantuan size. But I think there's an area of faithfulness that they can have in developing or reproducing and multiplying mentality that may get a benefit elsewhere. The church I grew up in, is now getting the benefit, I think of what I'm seeing in the Summit Church. I will also say a little bit more of the pragmatic side, that, the late Peter Drucker used to say that culture eats strategy for breakfast. For the worst problems is that you go to one of these conferences, and you hear somebody like, Todd, get up and talk, and you're like, "Oh, I got to go do this in my church." You go back and you try a program, and it fails.

JD Greear: What you got to do is you got to inculcate the culture over time, then you're to use Jim Collins, that flower will get spin in the minutes. It's easy. Well, for us, these mission trips. We were just sending people overseas. It probably was not that good of an investment other than the fact that, it taught people this mentality of, here's what we're seeing around the world, it should also be happening in the triangle. That was what really started to produce the culture that ended up leading to the multiplication.

Todd Wilson: I think Carey in that culture part if we go back to the, be fruitful and multiply part of this. Let's just go back to Adam and Noah. If we looked at the multiplication chain that happened out of Noah and Adam, okay? They could have stopped after one or two cycles of reproduction, and there would not have been fruitfulness or multiplication. It was reproducing once, twice, three times four times, four levels of reproduction into the future, is what gives you multiplication. In order to get it four generations into the future, you have to establish the culture, you're not going to get there without it being a cultural thing if it's not embedded in the culture.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and I appreciate what you both said about smaller churches. It made me think about the church that I grew up in my formative years from 10 heading off to university. It wasn't a particularly vibrant last three decades. I think they're down to under 100 people in attendance. But I'm so grateful for the formation that that had on me. I think often, you look at these little churches that nobody would ever know the name of, and these pastors who will probably never make in Outreach Magazine. And yet, you don't know who's sitting under your ministry, you don't know about that 14 year old in your youth group or that 23 year old sitting in the back row looking like he's falling asleep.

Carey Nieuwhof: You have no idea what God is going to do with that life. I think if you're focused on quality, and being faithful with discharging the responsibility you have, it's amazing to see. You may never know. You may just never know who's passed through or the impact or the influence that you have. Let's go a little bit more into the study that you did earlier this year with LifeWay. What percentage? You said something earlier, Todd, in the interview, that really caught my ear, you said you need 16% of something for it to what? Catch on, be a trend?

Todd Wilson: Yeah, sociologists would tell you. What sociologist find. If you can get 16% of the population behaving a certain way, it becomes the new normal. Literally, if you could get 16% of the room quacking like a duck the rest of the room will quack like it. It's like you got to get 16%.

Carey Nieuwhof: So that's the tipping point?

Todd Wilson: That's tipping point. Just a handful-

JD Greear: Todd, would you lead off there [inaudible 00:53:41]?

Carey Nieuwhof: It's 33%, I'm probably out but you guys go ahead.

Todd Wilson: Just a handful of years ago, the best of our ability, we were at about 4% of US churches reproducing. A decade ago. This study with LifeWay found that we're at about 7%. We've got quite a ways to go. But the needle is moving the right direction, about somewhere around 80 to 85% of lead pastors under 40. That's the key, lead pastors under 40. 80 to 85% see multiplication, reproduction as a primary metric for the future. That is a significant shift from previous generations. Even though we're only at 7%, need to get the 16%, things are moving the right direction,

JD Greear: Not too hard.

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't want to be the wet blanket on that, because I'm very excited about that. It's a little bit like when Tim Keller went to New York City, something like 1% of Manhattan was in church. By the time he stepped out of the lead role, it was like three or 4%, I might have the percentages wrong. Sounds like nothing but that's actually herculean. If you think about the impact in the office bank, the average bank tower in downtown Manhattan, you got a company of 100, three of those people will now be in church rather than one.

Todd Wilson: It's astounding Carey, if just a 1% change in US churches only did one generation of church planting that's a big number. But now imagine if it's true reproduction to the fourth generation, that 1% of churches today, reproduce four generations into the future, that changes the spiritual landscape of America, 1% change.

JD Greear: If you want to nerd out for a minute here, a really unlikely source here. Rodney Stark is a church historian. He writes a lot about the first centuries of the church and one of the myths that he debunks is we have this image in the early church of when the apostles are done there being millions of Christians everywhere. He's actually go back to first century, it was dramatic growth, but not dramatic like you're thinking of a Billy Graham filling up stadiums. He said, but there was this, that what happened is every generation that was being produced was multiplying. By the time you get to 150 AD, 200 AD that's when you start to see this tipping point of explosion.

JD Greear: I know that we've got some new challenges in the Western world, nobody's writing the obituary of the church, but I'm seeing a new thing that God is doing, which is restructuring it. I love Billy Graham, and I love the crusades, but or the evangelistic crusades, and also my clip on that being like, JD loves the Crusades.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's right.

JD Greear: As we invest, 100 years of multiplication, maybe we'll get to a similar tipping point where we will see another massive gospel awakening that's similar to what they had in the first three centuries of the church.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because that younger leader fact in some of the background material, we're going to get to the Outreach Magazine cover in a few minutes. I'm pretty sure this is in the Outreach Magazine that's coming out around the time that this podcast will be released. But when you look at the vast majority of church planters under 40, church leaders wanting to reproduce churches back to what you were talking about earlier, JD. It almost feels like in the same way that lead pastors used to compare attendance, how big is your church? Well, how big is your church? How big is your church? Right? It's almost like, well, how many locations do you have? How many churches? How do you make sure that's not a vanity metric?

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you make sure that isn't... Or that it's just unhealthy. You're forcing something to reproduce, that shouldn't be reproducing?

JD Greear: Yeah. Well, I thought there were two separate questions there. I'm going with the first one because it feels easier to me. The first one that really obviously carry, there's no antidote for pride. The human heart is going to figure out anything to be proud of even how good it is at managing pride, it's going to figure out a way to do that. The Gospel's answer to pride is understanding more about the gospel itself, which is that, there is no good in you apart from about the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, and the more in touch, you become to the gospel, the more pride seems to not make sense.

JD Greear: The second answer is, my wife has this great statement, my wife is kind of the opposite of me in terms of how she's wired. If I tend more toward the ambitious, she tends more toward be very content. She's always warning me. She says, "JD fame, that you seem so bent on going after, fame is making yourself accessible to a bunch of people you don't really care about, at the expense of those few that you do. She's always saying you need to maintain real relationships, because especially as we watch, just with heartbreak, just what seems to be a litany of high profile pastors that are just falling by the wayside. It's those real relationships that ultimately keep... you're grounded with people that aren't really that impressed with you, because of what they read in Outreach Magazine and because of what they see you do on the stage.

JD Greear: Now, I had a chance to talk with Paul Tripp not long ago. He's the pastors' counselor. And wrote a great book called Dangerous Calling. Paul Tripp, we're backstage somewhere at some conference. I just said, it was another one of his stories that come out about somebody that I thought would never fall. I said, "Paul, what is like? What's the common denominator? He said, "Oh, there's always two things you'll find. Number one is a lack of peer community. I don't mean a community because all these guys are extroverts. People quit being able to look him in the eye, and say, "I don't like how you talk to your wife."

JD Greear: They don't have that kind of community where they live. They have this, network of guys that they call once every three months, as if they'll be able to see them.

Carey Nieuwhof: My accountability group. Yeah.

JD Greear: Yeah. And he said, the second thing is they forget the power in dwelling sin. They forget that you never really move past, a wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death. And he said, when those two things come together. He says, that's like Chernobyl, he didn't get the two right factors at once, and it leads to a meltdown. For me, it's, yeah, I want to reproduce as fast as I can and do all this stuff. But at the end of the day, I want to be so invested in this local community with a group of people that aren't that impressed with me. And hopefully, that'll at least help challenge some of the other [inaudible 01:00:23].

Carey Nieuwhof: That's good. What about the second part of the question where you're reproducing something... Can you reproduce something that shouldn't be reproduced? Is there a point at which you're... Is there a litmus test? Or how do you know, you're ready to multiply or reproduce?

JD Greear: Well, clearly, Todd's going to give you great answer here. Clearly the answer is yes. Because Al Qaeda and muslim terrorist networks reproduce. Unhealthy things clearly can-

Carey Nieuwhof: Hence it reproduces, yeah.

JD Greear: Right. I will say that in mega church world, it's harder for the wrong kinds of churches to reproduce, because they're usually so focused on one entity, building itself. Whereas reproduction naturally, even biologically, there's a generosity in the reproduction process, because you are becoming different organisms that don't all connect or feed into. Of all the churches that we planted, not one time, have I ever had one, come back and say, "Hey, we got a lot of excess money in our budget, and we'd like to give it back to you." Always say that church planter like teenagers, all they want is your money and your affirmation. And then for you to leave them alone. That's all they want.

JD Greear: There's a natural thing that makes healthier churches tend to reproduce more. But I think maintaining your doctrine, your [inaudible 01:01:46], all that stuff is going to be critical too.

Carey Nieuwhof: Tell us about the outreach magazine article. There's a whole cover story. It's the first time there's ever a list of the Top 100 reproducing churches. Did I hear you say? Maybe it was in our email exchange, Todd, that they couldn't even produce a list like this a decade ago, or 15 years ago?

Todd Wilson: Well, yeah. Let me clarify that. A decade ago, they did a similar, 25 top reproducing churches with LifeWay, and we helped in that and Ed Stetzer was behind it. It was difficult to find and validate the 25 churches a decade ago. Even when you looked at the list of the 25, by the time you got down halfway and beyond on the list, it wasn't necessarily anything to write home about. You

could easily argue 10 years ago that this idea of reproduction, multiplication, being a normative measure of success, was hard to find. Today, Outreach, and kudos to them. They've had their list of fastest growing and largest growing churches for years, their top issue.

Todd Wilson: They're now dedicating a third of the magazine to reproducing churches. Here's the good news. We don't need to try to find the top 100 churches, we had no problem finding 100 reproducing churches this time around, no problem. In fact, each of those hundred churches answered three or four questions, we turned that into a narrative document from those hundred churches. You want to talk about encouraging, the stories of these hundred churches, their scorecard, where they're headed, here's my prediction, if 35, 40 years ago, we were on the front end of the church growth movement giving us the mega church, we sit at the intersection right now that the next 30 to 40 years are the reproducing church movement.

Todd Wilson: I'm optimistic for the church just from the stories of these hundreds. Here's what we did. We didn't come up with the top 100, we came up with 100 reproducing churches. And now we're quickly taking that list to 1,000 reproducing churches and then to 10,000 reproducing churches. The goal is to try to take this viral to help the average pastor see that there is a better scorecard. There is a better way, this idea of a reproducing church, we really want to move this needle from seven to 10 to 12 to 16%. Kudos to Outreach for putting in this list of 100 reproducing churches.

JD Greear: Yeah, to have a change of conversation, I think in a very healthy way, which is great.

Todd Wilson: Right? They're going to start, it's really fun what they're doing. They've been focused on the largest and fastest growing in future issues now. Anytime they're featuring a church if they feature JD's church on something in the future, not only will they indicate that he's one of the fastest largest growing, they'll indicate that he's a reproducing church. Future articles about churches will indicate whether a church is reproducing or not. They really are going to help us change the conversation and the value proposition of what success looks like.

Carey Nieuwhof: JD anything about the lists or reproducing churches. This is the September issue of Outreach?

Todd Wilson: September issue, it comes out here, it'll be out by the time the podcast is out.

JD Greear: Yeah. The thing is, to circle back around to what you just said a minute ago is that, the one thing that God punished David for was for counting all the Israelites. I realize there's a book in the Bible named Numbers, so we're not wrong to count numbers. But there ought to be a sense in which, let's God grow His church get glory for His church. The limitations never in Him, it's always in us

as we just say. I wonder how many times James four has explained my prayers for our church have gone unanswered.

JD Greear: You have not, because you ask not, but you also ask and receive because you asked idolatrously. For something personal in this, that you really ought to find in me. Don't rejoice that you have a mega church or reproducing church, rejoice that your names are written down in the book of life, because that's far more than you deserve. If we can just receive this with humility and walk the way the cross, I don't know there's just a lot that's ... A book that I read along the way last year, is Kyle Strobel, The Way of The Dragon or The Way of The Lamb. I had our whole staff read. It was really good heart kind of analysis of are we doing the works of Jesus in the energy of the flesh.

JD Greear: Hear it with humility. I am incredibly encouraged by where the evangelism conversation is right now. Because I do think as we saw in the first two or three centuries of the church, you're poised not for the stadiums right now. But you're poised for your voice for multiplication, which has a much longer lasting effect.

Todd Wilson: Here's what fun with this edition Carey, The call to action in the Outreach edition this time is what's called the church multiplication challenge. If you remember the water bucket challenge a few years ago, where you take the water bucket, and then you tag 10 other people, that's what the call to action on this church multiplication challenge. The church will be able to go to reproducingchurches.org just to reproducingchurches.org and The Church Multiplication Challenge's there.

Todd Wilson: It's a simple three step, read and endorse the manifesto for multiplication. Take a short online free assessment to discover what level on the five levels that your churches at, and then share that you're making the commitment and tag 10 other people to take the church multiplication challenge.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's good. So It gives you really an assessment because I know, I think I'm level three, I think we're level four, but you'll be able to tell?

Todd Wilson: What we did Carey was that when LifeWay did the national study earlier this year, we literally took their survey questions and their protocol for scoring churches level one, two, three, four, five, and we turned that into a free online assessment tool. If a church takes the assessment, it takes 20 minutes and it's free. They will score level one, two, three, four or five to see where they fit if they would have been surveyed by LifeWay in the study.

Carey Nieuwhof: And that's reproducingchurches.org?

Todd Wilson: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay.

JD Greear: Can I throw one last thing here?

Carey Nieuwhof: Absolutely.

JD Greear: Maybe something helpful for guys is, you hear sometimes these things and you're like, man, I really want our church to do this. But I feel like we don't know where to start. We started as I mentioned, in my opinion, we'll late in the game. The first two, three churches that we... if you're listening in audible, you can't see me do air quotes, but we 'planted' was basically me finding one that was out there. That looked kind of sexy. I think the first three we gave \$10,000 to them each, \$10,000. I think it was one a year. And that was our church plan. It was us and 40 other churches that did that. But I kept saying there was a church we planted last year.

JD Greear: What it did is it got us in the conversation. People took a mission trip up there. I did what I always do in those situations, I go there and act like I know a lot more than I really do. Like, 'Oh yeah, yeah.' And the whole time I'm soaking it in, I'm taking notes. After about our third one, I was, "I think we can, I think we can do this." Then we took the lead on one other church that's contributed there. Then that evolved into, well, now we have resonance. We have people that raised their money and we fund them and they come and do head hunting. Rome was not built a day, you just start with something.

JD Greear: If you're looking, just find you a church plant another church planting church, reach out to Dave Ferguson church and say what you got in the Chicago area. And let me be a part of that. Let me give some money and be able to have a relationship with him. I promise you any of your listener call me I want to give \$10,000 we will make you a co-sponsor of the church.

Carey Nieuwhof: But you're right, you can start in the shallow end of the pool, right?

Todd Wilson: And that's exactly what the church multiplication challenge tries to do. It doesn't try to take you from zero to 60. It's from zero to a step. It's to engage the game and take the first step.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anything else, guys before we wrap up?

JD Greear: I appreciate what you're doing. I appreciate what Outreach is doing, Exponential has been a thought leader in this conversation. They've been sparking it. It's great. It's great to see what the Spirit of God is doing in multiple quadrants of His kingdom.

Carey Nieuwhof: And talking to you and Dave too Todd, when Dave Ferguson, this is the hill you're going to be planted on for a long, long time reproducing, multiplying churches, which is great. I think it's a conversation and a landscape changer. September issue of Outreach magazine, which you can get at is outreachmagazine.com.

Todd Wilson: Right.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. And then reproducingchurches.org. And of course, we'll link to everything in the show notes. JD you got a brand new book as well too. Continuing to write while we go along. We'll link to your latest book. All those things, guys. Thank you so much.

JD Greear: Yeah, thank you.

Todd Wilson: Thank you.

JD Greear: Carey, thanks for having me.

Todd Wilson: Yeah, thanks, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, guys, that was super interesting and stimulating and it was great to finally connect with JD Greear and Todd Wilson, has been a guest before. We do have show notes with all the links we talked about. You can go to Careynieuwhof.com/episode287. Or you can just type that into the Google's, my name and Todd's or JD's it will pop up. We have transcripts. We have some episodes now on YouTube, not this one. We're getting there. They'll all at some point, I'm sure be on video. But we got well, at least a dozen now of the archive and make sure, speaking of archive, we got 300 episodes in five years of this podcast, which is just exceptional.

Carey Nieuwhof: We're celebrating by stacking your library. Okay, so we're going to give nine winners, five books of your choice from any podcast alumni, you pick it, hopefully not the rare edition worth \$10,000. We'll stack your library with Henry Cloud, John Townsend, JD Greear, Todd Wilson, Ann Voskamp, Lysa TerKeurst, Henry Cloud, Erwin McManus. Who do you want? Andy Stanley, Francis Chan, Patrick Lencioni, my goodness, I've got all of his books. So yeah, who do you want? Just go back over the list, scroll through decide if you're a winner we'll give you five of those books.

Carey Nieuwhof: Details are on my Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and all the links are in the show notes as our transcripts for this episode. Don't forget the amazing offer of prowebfire.com. Brand new website service from our friends at Pro Media Fire, use the coupon code Carey, C-A-R-E-Y 2019, when you check out. You'll get a free website when you choose your plan this month.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well we are back next week with fresh episode. Really excited this time around for David Kinnaman. David is back on the podcast. It's been a couple of years. We did this one live and in person when he was in Toronto. It's going to be a fascinating interview. You don't want to miss it. In the meantime, thank you guys so much for listening. I so appreciate you. I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

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