

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 339 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, I am so thrilled to bring you today's episode. Every once in a while, you think, wow, if at some point in my life I could actually meet and perhaps have a conversation with somebody who's made a huge difference in your life, really toward the very top of my list would be today's guest, Tim Keller. Tim really doesn't need an introduction if you're at all familiar with the church space, but he's been one of the most influential writers, thought leaders, pastors in my life, and I had an opportunity to actually travel to New York City a few weeks before the Coronavirus hit, and sit down with Tim, and we spent a couple of hours together, and I'll tell you the interview was bucket-list stuff.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We talked about how to bring the gospel to post-Christian America, how he'd preach today if he was starting all over again, why founders get addicted to their churches, and even we got into why he left Redeemer when he did. As far as I'm concerned, Tim could be writing, and preaching for the next 40 years, every day, and I would be the beneficiary of that, so why did he go? How did that happen? And, this is a very, very amazing conversation. One of those that, I woke up the next day in New York, and thought, "I could just go back and do like eight more hours of it." Tim is one of America's most renowned preachers, authors, and thought leaders. He is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. He started it in 1989 with his wife, Kathy and three young sons for 28 years. He led that church to grow to over 5,000.

Carey Nieuwhof:

These days he's spending his time as chairman and co-founder of Redeemer City to City which starts new churches in New York, and other global cities, and publishes books and resources for ministry in urban environments. He also teaches at seminary, and well, his books have sold over two million copies, I have, I think pretty much all of them. I'm so grateful for this. I know a lot of you have been waiting for this episode for a long time. If for some reason you don't know Tim Keller, you're in for a treat. Hey, thank you. We have just come off the biggest week ever in podcast history, so if you're a new listener, welcome. We are so glad that you've joined us. You can subscribe wherever you're listening to your podcast these days, and if this is helpful, please, please, please share it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Also, want to thank the folks at Barna Group, my friend David Kinnaman who helped set up this interview. We are working together on another podcast called ChurchPulse Weekly, and if you haven't discovered that one yet please head on over there. And, we're all in the middle of this disruption, and most churches have websites, and social media accounts, and if you didn't have one before, guess what? You just started one, but only about half, actually, that number has dropped a little bit in the last few weeks are growing in this moment, and so, the question is like why? One reason is strategy. When Netflix thrived, Blockbuster died, and that's because they never really saw the new strategy. So the decisions that you're making right now with your digital and creative methods will either make or break

you in the future, and that's why Pro Media Fire is helping churches with digital strategies that are working right now through something they call the Church Growth Program.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Church Growth Program provides your church with a digital coach, a creative team, a web team, and a social team for less than the cost of a staff hire, so people are hurting right now. You have an opportunity to reach them with hope online, you can book a free strategy session today at [ProMediaFire.com/ChurchGrowth](http://ProMediaFire.com/ChurchGrowth). That's [ProMediaFire.com/ChurchGrowth](http://ProMediaFire.com/ChurchGrowth). Well, as damaging as COVID has been to American, and Western nations, what about the rest of the world? With COVID now impacting everyone, many indigenous pastors have seen their churches closed, and they have fewer resources than most of the people listening to this podcast, so International Cooperating Ministries has been helping pastors in the developing world with the tools they need for over three decades, and I sat down with Tim Dammon, their Chief Advancement Officer, and I said, "Tim, we live in an era of disruption. What do Millennial leaders who see mission a lot differently than Boomers and Gen X, what do Millennial leaders need to know about mission that maybe they don't know?" Here's what Tim had to say.

Tim Dammon:

You know Carey, I think the thing that they probably need to know the most is that even though we do live in a time of change and disruption, that the message for missions is still the same as it was 2,000 years ago. We believe that the local church is God's distribution system for the gospel. That's the way it was when Jesus was here, that's the way when he sent out... And, that was Paul's missionary journeys. He didn't go preach a bunch of crusades. He went around, and planted, and strengthened churches, and so, we believe that, that is still God's distribution system, his distribution plan for both the gospel, the good news, and for the ministry of the church, the work among the poor, the transformation of lives. We believe that happens in a local, healthy indigenous church, and that's why our vision is a healthy church within a walking distance of everyone in the world.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That is a powerful vision, and I know you've been impacted by the virus, but you can help, and sometimes the best thing you can do when you've been hit is help somebody else, and ICM would love to partner with you. For \$35 a month you can equip four pastors every single month with the training, and the tools they need to lead. That's 48 pastors you can help equip this year for \$35 a month, that's a great opportunity, and you can learn more about how to help or just go direct to [OneMillionPastors.com](http://OneMillionPastors.com). That's [OneMillionPastors.com](http://OneMillionPastors.com) and why don't you help somebody who's got more needs than you do through ICM. Just head on over to [OneMillionPastors.com](http://OneMillionPastors.com). Well, we also have today's interview with Tim Keller on YouTube. My little YouTube channel keeps growing, and thank you for those of you, if you want to study this as a team, or you want to just watch what we did in New York. We had a film crew there, right downtown in Manhattan, and wow, I got to tell you, this is one of the highlights for me. Here is my conversation with someone who has profoundly influenced me and my life, Tim Keller.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Let's drill down a little bit further, Tim. When you look back on the last 10 years when it comes to the church in America, so just think about the last decade. What do you see changing? And, let's start with things that you can celebrate. What have been some bright spots in the last decade?

Tim Keller:

Well, there's not a lot. Let's put it this way. Certainly, there are a lot, but I mean there's probably more areas of concern than there are on bright spots, honestly, but bright spots I think is the growth of new multi-ethnic churches by and large. There's a lot more of those. I do think that the future of Western society, and Western culture is multi-ethnic. There's a lot of reasons why that's true. I'm not so much celebrating it or denigrating it at all. I'm just saying that the percentage of white people in the West and in the world will be smaller and smaller. There'll be more multi-racial marriages, there'll be more multi-ethnic communities, and cities, that's still not true for parts of the heartland like Iowa, and New Hampshire, are still 90% whites, and so on, but by and large, that's changing, and the church is changing there too. That there really are more efforts to create multi-racial churches, especially in cities, there's more of them, and I think that's to me maybe the biggest bright spot, because that's keeping up with the changes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What are some of the challenges you see over the last decade?

Tim Keller:

Well, I just see exactly what Lesslie Newbigin saw, so this is nothing, but don't give me any credit for this at all. I'm just channeling him. He would say that for a thousand years the Western church assumed a mission model in which most people in the culture would feel some social pressure, or at least see some social benefits of going to church, and the culture created people that had the basic furniture for a Christian worldview, that is, they usually believed in a personal God, they often believed in an afterlife, heaven and hell, they believed that they should be good, and they weren't perfect, and that therefore they did need forgiveness. You could call those the religious dots, believe in God, believe in an afterlife, believe in the moral law, believe in sin, and so, the church could assume that people would just show up in church if they were invited, or they would show up in church maybe at Easter and Christmas, or maybe for weddings and funerals, and if they came they would have a general respect for the Bible, and they would have some basic understanding of these things.

Tim Keller:

Evangelism was just waiting for people to show up, and then, connecting the dots, but what do you do if people don't come to church, and won't come to church? Why should they? And, don't have the dots? You can't evangelize by saying, "Oh, you want to go to heaven when you die." Right? And, "You know you're not perfect, but Jesus Christ died for your sins so that you can be sure if you believe in him that when you die you'll go to heaven." So, that's assuming all the dots, and what if the dots aren't there, now what do we do? And, Newbigin's basically saying the entire Western church for a thousand years has assumed a Christendom culture, and now that it's gone, it has no way of reaching people, doesn't know how to talk to people, get their attention. It doesn't know how, even if they do show up, they don't know how to share the gospel in a way that makes sense to them. Is that a cause for concern? Yeah, that's why I'm saying to me that is an overshadowing concern.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. How do you see that show up in the model of church that you see in America today? What do you think? You think a lot of evangelicalism, or even mainline evangelicalism is still waiting for people to show up-

Tim Keller:

Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... and, connect the dots.

Tim Keller:

Yes, and now the Willow Creek seeker model did take one step in the direction of saying people aren't going to come to church unless they have great production values, so they don't feel the same social pressure to go to church, but even that seeker service model kind of assumes that people would see a social benefit, and that they have somewhat of a traditional mindset that they would say, "Church is good, and it's good to be talking about these moral issues, and it's good to be talking about how do you handle anxiety." I would still say that they are assuming still a fairly traditional kind of person that would come in the door. I don't think they're reaching people who feel like the church is an agent for injustice, I don't think they know what to do with people who say, "You can't make me feel guilty, because the meaning of life is not to be a good person." So, that's what my family, my parents' generation, whether they're Christians or not, the meaning of life is to be good.

Tim Keller:

Today, the meaning of life is to be true to yourself, and I just don't think that our church today has any way of dealing with that, and they certainly don't know how to answer somebody who says, "I'm just being true to myself."

Carey Nieuwhof:

When you look at your ministry at Redeemer, how did you respond to that? How did you attempt to say, "Okay, we're going to turn the dial on that a little bit different."

Tim Keller:

Well, the 30 years ago there wasn't yet that... My parents' generation, whether they're Christians or not believed the meaning of life was to be good, and the way you preach to them was to deal with their guilt, and say, "You're never going to overcome your guilt with moral effort. You're going to have to get forgiveness from Jesus." That sort of thing is what you did. By the time I came along to New York, and New York, it was further advanced than the rest of the country toward [crosstalk 00:12:57]. When I got here, the meaning of life was to be free to discover your true self. That's very Rousseau Jean, and that's very much like what Rousseau would say, which is society kind of screws you up, but there's an inner child in there, a kind of perfect inner being, and the world makes you feel very guilty about it, and you just need to be free to discover who you really are and express that without guilt.

Tim Keller:

It was very Freudian. It was very psychological. When I got here all the talk was about dysfunctional families, and enabling behavior, and getting free from people making you feel guilty, so that's the reason why if you assume people are guilty, and then, they know they ought to be guilty, and then, you give them the relief through Jesus, you try to do that with the people that were in front of me in New York, they would just walk out the door. They said, "That's what I don't need. I don't need that." And so, the way the gospel worked with my parents' generation was you know you should be good, but you're not

as good as you would like to be, but Jesus Christ can forgive you, and in him you can be accepted by God. With my young people that I came to here in New York, basically, I said, "You think the meaning of life is to be free, but you're actually not as free as you think you are. You have to live for something. Everybody has to live for something, and whatever that thing is you're living for will enslave you, and you will feel guilty and shameful because you'll never feel like you can live up to it."

Tim Keller:

So, let's just say, well, I've left my little Bible believing church back in Hot Coffee, Mississippi, and I've moved up here to be an actress, or to be an actor, or to make it on Wall Street. Well, guess what? You've got a new God. You've got a new master, and when you say, "I'm going to be free to discover that my true self." Now, you're going to have to live up to that, and you're actually still a slave. You'd be a slave to your work, you'd be a slave to your figure, you got to keep your weight down, you'll be a slave. You think you're free, but you're not, because if you're living for anything but God you are a slave, and Jesus Christ is the only master who if you get him will satisfy you, and if you fail him he can forgive you. Your career can't die for your sins, and so, that's how I did it with them, and it was okay, and I assumed their cultural narrative, and showed how only in Christ, you might say their, their storyline have a happy ending, just like I did that with my parents' generation.

Tim Keller:

Today, it actually has changed again, because there's not that same feeling like I just need to be free to find my inner childhood path. Now, the emphasis is not psychological and sociological, it's all about justice, it's all about creating your own self. If I say I'm this, that's who I am, I can do that, and it's all about including marginalized peoples, marginalized identities, and the change was happening just as I was stepping out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, literally in the last six years?

Tim Keller:

Yeah. In the last five or six years, and therefore if I was starting a church now, I'd have to retool again.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Really?

Tim Keller:

Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What do you think... Like, just off the top of your head?

Tim Keller:

But, I haven't done it. You're saying, what would you do? I say-

Carey Nieuwhof:

What would you do? Even a couple of broad strokes?

Tim Keller:

Yeah, a couple of broad strokes would be to say the Christianity gives you the only identity that is... because it's all about identity now. Christianity is the only identity that is received, not achieved. If you say, "I can create myself." That's a lot of pressure, and you can see it online. You can see people, they come up with an identity, and then, they just scream at each other. If you don't support my identity, or then you get screamed at if you're not true to your identity, you know what I'm saying? You say you're this, but you're hurting the rest of us who are like this, and I said Christianity is the one identity that's received, or the fact is that because of what Jesus Christ did, Jesus Christ is actually a person who lost his glory, and his power, and his privilege, and came, and died on the cross for us, paid the penalty for our inhumanity to God, and to each other. Other words, he took the penalty, and because of that, when I believe in him, I can actually know that God loves me unconditionally, forever.

Tim Keller:

I'm righteous in Christ, and what that means is the minute I become a Christian, the minute I believe in God, God loves me as perfectly as he will love me five billion years from now when I'm perfect, and he loves me that well right now. Now, what that means is, it's the ups and downs of my performance, and see all postmodern people say that identity is performative. They say power is performative. They say identity, it's a role that you play. That's horrible pressure. I said we've got an identity that's received, not achieved, that it's not up and down depending on how well I perform, and also, this as an identity that doesn't exclude, because if you have an identity that's based on being an open minded justice oriented person, then you're going to despise the biggest, and one of the reasons you despise the biggest it's a way of you bolstering your kind of flagging sense of self worth, by basically saying, "Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men, including this tax collector right here." And, that's how you bolster an insecure identity by excluding other people, and looking down at them saying, "I must be okay because I'm not like these horrible people over here."

Tim Keller:

With a Christian identity you don't have to do that. You will not do that. In fact, in James 1:9-10, it's interesting, it says that, "The rich Christian should think about his low position, and the poor Christian should think about his high position." Now, what's beautiful about that is the Christian identity says you're a sinner, and you would go to hell if it wasn't for Jesus Christ, so it's got the lowest, it makes you come all the way down here and say, "I can't save myself." So, you give a low position, you're a sinner, you deserve nothing but judgment, and yet in Christ, I am loved more than I dared hope. I'm accepted. Jesus Christ says, "The father loves you even as he loves me." Now, what's interesting is if you're a poor person, and look how brilliant the Christian identity is. If you're a poor person, and all of your life you've been told you're nothing, and you become a Christian, you should dwell on your high position, dwell on who you are in Jesus Christ, and that will overcome all of the crap you've gotten for so many years from people.

Tim Keller:

But, what if you're a rich Christian? What if your person that you've gone to the right schools, and you've gotten all these? All your life people are telling you how great you are. You become a Christian, you need to remember your low position. You need to remember that you are a sinner saved by sheer grace, that you are no better than anybody else. What's brilliant about the Christian identity is it doesn't

exclude people, and actually, it's an enormous equalizer, and it takes all the pressure off. Now, that's where I would be going. I would be saying, "I don't care how you guys are forming your identity, there is no identity like the one that you can find in Jesus Christ." So that's not the same quite as 30 years ago, I said, "There's no freedom like you get in Jesus." And, it's not like what I would have preached on Hopewell, Virginia, which I did in the 1970s when all the people out there were like my parents. You've got to connect the gospel with... Gospel is that Jesus saves you, you don't, and you have to connect it to the cultural narrative.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, just exegesis of the culture?

Tim Keller:

Yeah, right, but then you've actually got to find a way to take the plot line of the culture, and give it a happy ending in Jesus. For example, 1 Corinthians 1, it says, "The Jews want power, and the Greeks want wisdom, but the cross is weakness to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but to the Jews and Greeks that are being saved, the true wisdom and true power of God." What is Paul doing? He says, the cultural narrative of the Jews is we're pragmatic, we want to know how you get things done give me power. The cultural narrative of the Greeks was, they're the artists, we want contemplation, we want wisdom, we want beauty, and what he's saying is the gospel confronts the idolatries of both of those cultures differently, but also, fulfills them differently. The cross confronts the idolatry of power and of wisdom, but then it says, but the cross is the true wisdom, the true power of God.

Tim Keller:

In the cross you actually get or culture what you want. It's not just cultural acts of Jesus, it's a contradictory fulfillment. It's subverting it, and fulfilling it, and that's what you have to do, and every culture, that's the missionary task.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We live in a disruptive age, and the State of the Church report talks about a lot of elements of disruption. What else have you seen disrupted over the last few decades in New York City and in culture?

Tim Keller:

Well, one of the things of course is that the most disruptive thing is that there were always the kind of, how do I say it? There was a small number of evangelical and maybe conservative Catholics who were very devout, and they were very devoutly Christian, but they also had Christian ethics, so Christian view of morality, and sexuality, and things like that. That's maybe 20%. Then there was 80% of the population who are nominal Christians. They maybe went to church on Christmas and Easter, they said they were Methodist or Presbyterian or Catholic, but it wasn't very deep, and yet they actually held the Christian views too, and the reason I'm making these strange gestures is they were like an umbrella. They were a shelter, because to be an Orthodox, Evangelical or Catholic, and to have all these views of things didn't look that weird, because 70, 80% of the population had the same view of marriage, and sexuality, and things like that.

Tim Keller:

But, when that has gone away what's going away is inherited religion is dying, not chosen religion, not religion based on conversion, but inherited religion where you're born into it, my family is Methodist, I went to church growing up, that's just going away, and young people say, "Unless I choose it, nobody can choose my religion for me." The idea that you're born into a Catholic family, or a Presbyterian family is going away, and that's the reason why the main line and the Catholic church is just collapsing, and so what you have is these devout people are pretty much the same number of really devout Christians, but now they look really weird, and they in fact live up dangerous and strange, because you see what I mean? That protective covering's gone, and that means more ostracism, more strangeness, more strangeness from the culture. That's the big thing that's happening I think right now.

Carey Nieuwhof:

When you look into the future, is there anything that you can see on the radar that you're like, "Hey, leaders pay attention to this?"

Tim Keller:

Well, the political polarization, yes. Okay. Here's where I would go. The political polarization that's happening now is a major challenge for churches, because here's my reading of the Bible. My reading of the Bible says that Christians ought to be sold out for racial justice, that all races are equal on the image of God. They should be deeply concerned about the poor, and the marginalized. They should be pro-life, and they should believe at least for Christians that sex should only be between a man and woman in marriage. Now, those four things. The early church was marked by them, we know that. Two of those look very conservative, two of those look very liberal, and so, right now what's happening is since those four things are never combined in any political party, they're not combined in any other institution other than Catholic social teaching, and biblical Christianity.

Tim Keller:

And so, what happens is there's enormous pressure, enormous pressure everywhere in the country for churches to major in two of them, and get quiet about two of them. Here in New York, huge pressure for the churches in New York City to talk about racial justice, and caring about the poor everybody applause, but if you say we're pro-life, or we think sex should be only between a man and woman in marriage is the people are going to pick at you. I would say in the middle of Alabama, if an evangelical pastor starts to preach about all four of those things, a lot of the people are going to get nervous about the racial justice and poverty things, so that sounds kind of liberal, that sounds kind of like, "Wait a minute, what are you doing here?" And so, I don't know anywhere where it seems to me that there's a kind of red evangelicalism, and a blue evangelicalism, and almost everywhere I see people like play up two of those, and play down two of those, or even actually stop believing in two of those.

Tim Keller:

And, that's because these are packaged deals. The political parties say you can't have them together, you have to in other words to be a Democrat, or be a Republican for example, be Fox News or MSNBC. You just can't keep those things together, and so, that is to me the biggest challenge for Christian leaders. How do you be committed to the whole range? So, that's the early church, it's biblical.

Carey Nieuwhof:

All four of those, Tim, have been, I think hallmarks of Redeemer at least to the extent that I've been able to access hundreds of your sermons over the years, and your writing, and your preaching, how have you held that tension in New York?

Tim Keller:

Well, it hasn't been easy. It means, there are occasions I have definitely seen people get up in the middle of sermons and walk out, which is always a little bit satisfying, because when you see that you do say, "Alright, okay, I'm not a total coward here." Because see, here's the thing. I do think you have to care about context, which means for example, is you don't want to pat yourself on the back, and say, I'm valiant for truth, because I'm preaching against abortion every month. There are certainly people who criticize me for not preaching about abortion constantly, and I do say, "Alright, look, if I have a non-Christians coming to church, I don't want them to get hit over the head with something that I know that they're going to be offended by within the first two weeks they come." So, am I going to be careful about my context? Am I going to realize what offends people, and what attracts people? Yeah.

Tim Keller:

I would say that if I was in Alabama, I'm in the middle of New York City, I wouldn't preach identically. I wouldn't be reaching non-Christians the same way. Nevertheless, what you have to do to your leaders constantly is, at least your leaders, you have to say, "We can not get cold feet on any of this." There is no biblical warrant. Here I'd have to say, y'all get excited about what the Bible says about justice, and you don't get excited about what the Bible says about sexuality. At that point you're really not letting the Bible animate you, here you're letting the culture animate you, and you've just got to immerse yourself in the word, because they go together by the way. There's one, I think it's Amos 2:7 where it says, "A father and a son go into the same woman, and they sell the poor for a pair of shoes." One verse, sexual sin, and economic injustice, the Bible sees it as a whole cloth. They go together, and we live in a culture that just tries to rip that apart, so important safety tip for leaders.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I know you're committed to human flourishing, and the State of the Church report has an awful lot to say about it, and so, I want to share five categories with you of human flourishing. This is some of Barna's research that David Kinnaman has done. It's Harvard and biblical concepts of spiritual formation, and as I share them, I just like you to kind of riff on it. Just talk about what that means to you, why it's important to the church in your view, but we'll start with relationship, and the definition in the report is how biblical community in relational health impact human flourishing, so just relationship.

Tim Keller:

Give me all five.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay, so relationships, spiritual health, fiscal and material stability, vocation and career, and wellness and behavioral health. Those are the five components that contribute to human flourishing. I know this could be a book.

Tim Keller:

No, well, yeah, obviously. Well, that's a great list because it is comprehensive, it is true that as a church, if you're caring about people's flourishing you really cannot ignore any of those. There's no doubt that I think probably most churches would say the first two, we're going to talk about that, the last three, not so much. Of course, the one about giving yes, as long as it's giving to the church.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, fiscal stability, my fiscal stability as a church leader.

Tim Keller:

Most churches, most evangelical churches they're not very good at talking to them about money in general. They talk about, give us some money. The fourth one is not mentioned much at all.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Vocation and career.

Tim Keller:

No, I think part of that is because we pastors are not trained on how to help people there. You see if somebody comes and says, "I want you to help me study the Bible, and pray." Got it. I've been trained to help you. Let me give you these books. I'll meet with you, but somebody comes in and says, "I'm an actor, and I don't know which parts I should take as a Christian, and which parts I shouldn't, and I got some questions about certain roles and what does it mean to be a Christian actor?" As a pastor, I don't know what to do, and I would say, "You have to figure that out yourself. I don't know." See, what happens I think when it comes to that one is there's an equality between the pastor, the minister, and the lay person that we don't have in the other areas. I may not know much about acting. He doesn't maybe know as much about the Bible, and we have to sit down, and kind of work together, so it's not a matter of him coming, and me telling him.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, you're the expert.

Tim Keller:

Right, and the last one, I actually do feel that we have a tendency to outsource that-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Wellness and behavioral health.

Tim Keller:

Yeah, and not talk about it, and say, go to a psychiatrist, or go to a doctor, or a medical doctor. I do think that there needs to be better ways for maybe Christians who are medical professionals inside the church talk to people about it. All that stuff though is fruit of the spirit, all five of them. See, this is my take on the fruit of the spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, integrity, humility, faithfulness, self-control. So love, patience and kindness is largely about relationships. Joy, peace, and humility is largely about spiritual disciplines. And self-control, faithfulness, which is faithfulness, integrity, those things actually have a lot more to do with the last three. Basically, the fruit of the spirit covers it. It does, and the fruit of the spirit are a God spirit created character, and so, if you went to the fruit of the spirit, and you went

to the book of Proverbs, they're all covered, because Proverbs talks about all those five areas in a way though, sometimes... there's other places in the New Testament that don't, but if you go to Proverbs and my wife and I did a devotional [crosstalk 00:34:15].

Tim Keller:

Well, there's nothing that Proverbs doesn't talk about. It talks about every single area of human flourishing. I would say if you went to Proverbs, and you went to the fruit of the spirit, you basically could preach that, and I do think that's a great way of telling people you really can't ignore any of these areas, and you've got to make sure that you're honoring Christ in each of the areas.

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's interesting because you raised it. Hamilton's playing right down the street. We're right in the heart of New York City, and you picked an actor as an example. How would you approach that? Actor knocks on your door at Redeemer and says, "Hey Tim, what part should I take? What part should I not take?"

Tim Keller:

I would probably create a little, I got this idea from John Stott years ago. It would be good to get a couple of other Christian actors, maybe a little more experienced both in Christianity, and in acting. It would probably be good to maybe even get an academic. We do have, by the way, people who used to go to Redeemer and moved to other colleges and taught acting. I know one woman who teaches acting at a secular school in New England, another guy who teaches acting at a Christian college, and so, these are people who've not only done it, but they've actually had to do reflection on it. He would say, "Get an academic, get a practitioner, get a theologian, get a pastor and come together, and generate questions, and then, have a meeting over a period of year, maybe meet every month, or every two months, and work on the questions together." And, it's kind of egalitarian, because no one person has got all the answers, and have somebody take notes, and it can be-

Carey Nieuwhof:

A great idea.

Tim Keller:

Yeah, I know. I've done that in other areas. I wish I had more time to do it, yeah, that's [crosstalk 00:36:19]

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, that's a really good idea, and I know vocation's really important to David as well. David Kinnaman. We talk about it a lot. Also, in the report Barna asked pastors what are the top concerns for the church? And, these are some of the top findings, watered down gospel teachings, the culture shift to secularism, poor discipleship, declining attendance and reaching younger audience. Kind of touched on a lot of those already in different ways, and we've kind of touched on your top concerns for the church. Anything you want to add to that before we move on?

Tim Keller:

Well, that's an interesting list. Watered down gospel. I do think that what they're getting at there is we may be over adapting to the identity narrative. The identity narrative is you got to be true to yourself,

and you've got to feel good about yourself. It's possible that you start to adapt the gospel, and turn it into something where Jesus just makes you feel good about yourself, and by the way, what I did there a minute ago or few minutes ago about how you would talk about the Christian identity, unless you're careful it can really sound like Jesus is here to boost your self esteem. You have to say that when Christ's love becomes your identity it reorders all your loves. Which means, that's Augustine, what he would say is, "When Christ is your supreme love, he's the source of your love, but he's also your supreme love."

Tim Keller:

What that does is it demotes other identities without effacing them, which is another way of saying, if you're Chinese, and you become a Christian you don't start being anything else. You're still Chinese, but your greatest pride isn't who you are in Christ, and therefore what it does is it takes racial pride, it takes vocational pride, it takes those things down a notch, and that has to be said. I've seen youth groups where people are told you find your identity in Christ, which means God loves you even if you screw up, he just loves you all the time, and you should feel good about yourself, and not hate yourself, and it actually just becomes not an understanding of how your whole life is reordered by the gospel. It's like Jesus basically makes you feel better about yourself as you [crosstalk 00:38:43].

Carey Nieuwhof:

Regardless of whether you change, regardless?

Tim Keller:

Right, yeah, and that's watered down gospel, which is more of a self esteemism, and I think that's right, and I think that's probably what they're getting at. That's a concern of mine too.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Sure. Barna has a partnership with Gloop, big data is really making up... Yeah, we live in a very different age. You've done some work with Barna over the years where you've done studies for your work at Redeemer in New York City. What is in your mind, the line between being data informed, and data driven?

Tim Keller:

Well, the German philosopher, not a Christian, by the way, Jürgen Habermas is famous for saying, well, he's famous for more than this, but he said that while science can tell you what you can do, and how to do it efficiently, it can never ever tell you whether you should do it or not. In other words, you can't get at ought of an is. You can't get an ought out of an is, so if science can tell you what is, it can never tell you what it ought to be, and you have to be careful. When I have people saying, "Well, the data shows that you should do this." The data can't show you what you ought to do. The data can inform you about what is, and on the base of what is, I can make decisions, but I make decisions on the base of my moral values, which I get from the scripture. There is a little danger that you say, for example, my church does not have to grow.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What do you mean by that?

Tim Keller:

It doesn't say anywhere in the Bible your church has to grow. Ordinarily, if people are growing spiritually, and they're sharing their faith, the church will grow, but that's a byproduct. The church must grow spiritually, the church must grow in joy. It must grow in worship. It must grow in those things, and if it's going to grow numerically, then it ought to be a byproduct of that, and therefore, I don't want to just do something that kind of does, and run around those things, and just gets more people in the door, and sometimes data can look like it's saying, if you do this, you will grow. Anyway, I would say the data can tell me what it is, but it can't tell me what I ought to do, and if it looks like it is, then I think it's overstepped its bounds.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Anything else on the State of the Church today before we switch gears? I want to talk about preaching, but anything else on what you see, what worries you, what excites you?

Tim Keller:

What confuses me.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Okay.

Tim Keller:

You didn't ask that, but-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, that's still-

Tim Keller:

... what confuses me is I'm not sure how hostile the culture will get, so should we assume that all the evangelical colleges will lose their accreditation, for example? Should we assume that Christian radio stations will lose their FCC licenses, because they'd be considered bigoted, or hateful, and that kind of thing. I think that's at least possible. We should not live in fearfulness of that, especially, as I've traveled around the world as a speaker in the last few years, and everybody's got it worse than we do. Everybody's got it worse than we do, and certainly Americans, you're in Canada, certainly Americans have it even better than Christians.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... tighter where I am, for sure.

Tim Keller:

Yeah, nevertheless, I would say that we have to be not afraid of that, but we also should be ready for it. We should be not afraid, but ready, and not be shocked if it happens.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Do you mourn that?

Tim Keller:

No, not necessarily. Here's the thing, to me it's win-win, believe it or not. The win is if it doesn't happen, hey, that's great. There's great advantages to being able to keep your accreditation, your FCC license, and to keep on moving, and have your endowment funds and it's better for institution building. On the other hand, if it goes away, it's probably better for spiritually. It probably is.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Even like the whole tax question?

Tim Keller:

Yes. If it goes away, it's better for spiritually. If it stays, it's better for us institutionally.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Would you fight it?

Tim Keller:

Oh, I would fight, fight. What do you mean?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Like, would you petition governments and that kind of thing?

Tim Keller:

Yeah, sure, I'm not sure they'd listen. I'd be very happy to sign a petition for sure. Otherwise, I wouldn't, yeah, lightly.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Hold it lightly, but you wouldn't...

Tim Keller:

No, go to the mat, or say this is the end of the world, or how can you do this? Other parts of the world you don't have the minister's tax break, you don't have the nonprofit status.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We still have that in Canada, but every time I get mail on that, I'm like, "Wow, this feels like the first century more, and more all the time."

Tim Keller:

Yeah, I would not make it easy, but on the other hand, like I said, it's a win-win, I think.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Let's talk about preaching. What have you learned? Again, we've touched on this, but I think you're masterful at communicating to a post-Christian culture, and New York has been more post-Christian than a lot of America, and America's becoming very checkerboard. You go up the coasts, you

go into the cities, it's much more post-Christian. I spent a lot of time in the Bible Belt, and there it's generational. You look at Gen Z, and Millennials, they're very post-Christian.

Tim Keller:

Yeah, and what's sad about those areas is a lot of times the older people don't realize it's happening.

Carey Nieuwhof:

100%.

Tim Keller:

Yeah, for example, if you go to the center of some of these conservative cities, if you go to the center of Houston, or you go to the center of these Bible Belt cities, the younger generation is definitely walking away from faith.

Carey Nieuwhof:

They could be in California or New York.

Tim Keller:

That's right, that's right, and very often the parents aren't as completely aware of it as they would be, so yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof:

What would you say to those kids?

Tim Keller:

Well, I think, I would say that Christianity's better resources for what they're trying to do. You're looking for freedom, you're looking for meaning, you're looking for satisfaction, you're looking for identity, you're looking for a basis for doing justice. You want a basis for doing justice that doesn't turn you into an oppressor yourself? Do you want to have an identity that's not performative, that is not exclusive? I said, "I got better resources for you." Now, here's why I would start there with them rather than start with what I'd call heart apologetics, and here's the evidence for the resurrection. There's a pensee by Blaise Pascal, he says, "Bring people to the place where they wish Christianity was true, then show them it's true." There's really no reason for me to get out the guns on the evidence for the resurrection stuff like that, which is trying to show them that Christianity is true if they don't it to be true, but if they get to the place where they say, "Gee, it'd be great if that was true, but is it?" Then I can do your more traditional [crosstalk 00:46:16].

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, speaking to the identity pieces?

Tim Keller:

Right, identity, freedom, meaning, satisfaction, justice. You speak to the values they have, and that they're trying... you have to have an operational way to get those. You can't live without those things.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I think you've made the argument, others have made the argument that in some ways the culture still has the values of Christianity without the faith of Christianity to some extent?

Tim Keller:

Yeah, especially, in the area of morality and justice. We have a questionnaire that in my evangelism class I ask people to go talk to a non-Christian friend, and they have a set of questions to ask them, and one of the questions is, how do you determine whether something is right or wrong? How do you make a moral judgment? He said, "Almost all the secular people actually tie themselves into pretzels." Because I said, "Look, the assignment is not to actually get into a debate, but you can if you want ask a follow up question." The follow up question there is to say, how do you tell somebody who doesn't feel that what they're doing is wrong, and his culture tells them it's not wrong, that they're doing something wrong. What would you say to them? They just have no idea because on the one hand they're relativist, and they say, "Nobody can tell me what is right or wrong for me." But then, on the other hand they want to tell other people not to live unjust lives, and that is deeply incoherent. That would be one of the things I would be talking to them about.

Tim Keller:

The fact is that they don't have a sufficient moral source for their moral ideals, but that would be still not the heart apologetics, that's still saying Christianity has better resources for the things you're seeking than you have, and if I got them to the place where they said, "Oh, that's interesting, but how do I know this is true?" Then I can say, "Well, let's read the gospels, let's talk about the claims of Jesus." Then you get into more traditional apologetics.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, it's interesting. You've written a lot about apologetics, and spoken a lot about apologetics, but I was listening to a talk you gave years ago, and I'm sure you've written about this as well, and I'm paraphrasing here, but you said, "The place to start with apologetics is not with hard logic. Like, there are so many codices in the New Testament, et cetera, because people don't actually respond to logic. They respond to emotion." Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

Tim Keller:

Well.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Is that accurate?

Tim Keller:

Yes, and I was trying to say this, they got to want it to be true before they're open to an argument that it is, and they can only want it to be true is if you actually, in a sense, do emotional apologetics. There's actually a book, I can't recommend every part of it, but a book by Francis Spufford called Unapologetic. He's a very cheeky British writer who is a professing Christian, not a full, and certainly not evangelical, and not an Orthodox one, but the subtitle of the book is, Why in Spite of Everything Christianity Still Makes Great Emotional Sense. That's the subtitle, and I thought that's pretty brilliant. That's what I was trying to talk about, is that if for people to think Christianity makes emotional sense, that it gives you a

workable approach to identity, or it promises a happiness, or a love that you find desirable, or it gives you a basis for making moral judgments that doesn't turn you into a Pharisee, but at the same time gives you a basis. It says when people start to emotionally want that, because that's not hard logic. It's more like saying, look, I have better resources than you do for the things you're dealing with.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There's part of that pointing out the problem, anticipating the objections.

Tim Keller:

Yes, I'm trying to show them that Christianity makes emotional sense, and if it makes emotional sense, there'd be open to a argument that it makes rational sense, that's what I was trying to say.

Carey Nieuwhof:

... an example just to make it crystal clear?

Tim Keller:

Well, I'll give you an example. C. S. Lewis, when he does his argument from desire in his famous chapter in Mere Christianity on hope, and he starts off by saying, "If you're young you may not have experienced this, but as you get out in life, you're going to realize that all the things you thought were really going to make you happy don't do it." And, he does a wonderful job of saying, "The job you thought would make you happy, the marriage you thought would make you happy, the travel you thought would make you happy, at first, it seems like this is finally going to do it, and it goes away in the grasping of it." And then, he says, "I'm not talking about bad marriages. I'm not talking about bad jobs, I'm talking about bad trips." He says, "I'm talking about the best possible ones, and you're going to find out that nothing actually satisfies. There's still a kind of emptiness." And then, he says, "Now, once you decide that there's only two or three possibilities, one is you could say, I need a better wife, I need a better trip, I need a better job, and out there that happiness is out there in this world. The second thing you can do..."

Tim Keller:

He says, "And absolutely, it's going to make you driven, it's going to make you anxious. The second thing you can do is say there is no happiness, there is no satisfaction. I just have to harden myself. Stop crying after the moon. Just get cynical." He says, "Well, that might make you less of a nuisance to people, but it also is going to dehumanize you. It's going to kill the part of your heart that really wants love, and wants happiness, and satisfaction." He says, "The third possibility is this..." He says, "Ducklings want to swim, there's such a thing as water. Babies want to suck milk, there's such a thing as milk. Desires don't exist unless satisfaction for those desires exist, and if you find in yourself a desire for something that nothing in this world can satisfy, it probably means you were made for another world." Now, that's logical and yet it's basically working on emotion. It's not the evidence for the resurrection, it's not saying there's the existence of God. It's trying to say there is an emptiness in you that you can either say, I'm going to find it in this world, or you can say I'm going to kill my desire for happiness, and then become a real cynic, and a snob.

Tim Keller:

Or, you can say there's actually something else out there. There's another way. Now, if I was preaching this, and I do actually preach it, I would add the Buddhist approach, and the Eastern approach which is to say that the world is an illusion. It's a little bit like hardening your heart, but it seems more spiritual, but ultimately, it does make you detach, and I could make a case against it, so what I would do is I'm actually doing argument, I'm doing apologetics, but it's trying to make Christianity make emotional sense, and only if it makes emotional sense would people want eventually to sit, and listen to an argument why it makes intellectual sense.

Carey Nieuwhof:

I don't know whether you would think this has changed a lot, but a lot of people would see a surge in the new atheism. Everybody from Sam Harris, to Christopher Hitchens, to Yuval Harari and people like that who have written a lot of books, and some of their arguments are fairly strong. You could make the argument that perhaps we're not doing very well on that front as Christians these days with a few present company excepted-

Tim Keller:

Well-

Carey Nieuwhof:

... go ahead.

Tim Keller:

I'm sorry, I cut you off.

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, no, no.

Tim Keller:

... think of that?

Carey Nieuwhof:

Well, I'm saying what do you think their best arguments are? That was going to be my question. What do you think the best arguments of the new atheists?

Tim Keller:

I actually think that the older new atheists like Sam Harris, and of course, Hitchens is dead. Obviously, Richard Dawkins, I think actually they're stridency has actually faded. I think they're still striding. It's faded because they're-

Carey Nieuwhof:

It's got a little muddy you mean?

Tim Keller:

No, no. They're old and even Harari, he's a more recent one, but that's not where kids are. The new atheists are saying science will solve everything. It's sort of an old enlightenment approach that sort of sees everything rationally, and younger people today are all about justice, they're all about identity, and I actually don't think that, that kind of very detached, intellectual, scientific enlightenment thing that science has got the answers to everything. I don't think younger people resonate with that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

So, back to what we talked about earlier.

Tim Keller:

Yeah. I don't think that they're in ascendancy anymore. I think that they're fading. They also do come across just as fundamentalists and narrow-minded as fundamentalists.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Oh yeah, Harari, especially at the end of some of his work.

Tim Keller:

The books are still selling.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Very well.

Tim Keller:

They're still making-

Carey Nieuwhof:

Very well.

Tim Keller:

When I said they're not in ascendancy it doesn't mean they're not making a good income.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, so we got a lot of preachers listening who are like, I think I'm stuck in Christendom. Do you want to give them some tips on how to move out of that mindset? Whether that's generational in the Bible Belt, or they're in a city, and they're not having the impact that they wish they would. What are some starting points for some preachers?

Tim Keller:

Oh boy, that is so-

Carey Nieuwhof:

... To connect better? Yeah.

Tim Keller:

Okay. Well, you want the cigar as the hardest question. He gets a cigar for the hardest question.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Thank you.

Tim Keller:

Because, there's not a lot of great examples. What worries me is I already told you I think that the secret mega church I still think it's not the place a lot of the younger justice oriented, postmodern people are showing up. I still think it's not the way of the future, I don't think. I would say if you can find a multi-ethnic church in a city that's growing, and it's not compromising on any of those four things on the sex, the pro-life, the justice, the racial, if it's multi-ethnic, if it's really equally evangelizing people, calling to repentance, and doing justice, calling people to be a sexual counterculture and work on being anti-racist. If you find a church like that, that's growing, and Orthodox, and true to the whole, panel of those things, they're probably doing what they ought to do, probably, probably, go there, but, if you mean a movement, a book, even-

Carey Nieuwhof:

No, I just mean like they're stuck in an old mindset, how do they begin to detach from that, and move on?

Tim Keller:

You could realize with Newbigin. Newbigin died in 1999, and so, he's already somewhat dated. He's already looking at a post-Christian West that has already moved from he saw it, and yet he was just ahead of his time, and so, if you could read Foolishness to the Greeks, and The Gospel and The Pluralist Society, I think, that's right. Those two books would be great starting points. They'd be really good starting points.

Carey Nieuwhof:

That's good. Anything else on the mega church movement that you've seen over the last 40 years develop? A lot of them are listening.

Tim Keller:

Obviously, I planted a mega church by anybody's standards, and at this point I feel like I think it was the right thing to do to let it get that big. There wouldn't be a Redeemer City to City, there wouldn't be a counseling center, there wouldn't be Hope for New York. They wouldn't be all sorts of stuff, and I do think that for New York to grow an evangelical mega church was a good thing for the whole ecosystem, I think. It is breaking up. I broke up my bell. We were already three, and eventually four, five, six churches. Not there is no 6,000 person Redeemer Church anymore, there's a whole slew of them, and I think that's good, because generally speaking, when a church gets over a thousand people, it really becomes much more bureaucratic.

Tim Keller:

I'll give you two real quick, that sounds kind of negative about big churches. The pastors can't know everybody. I always say to a pastor, if you can interview every single new member personally then your church is still small enough, and if you can't do that anymore, it's too big. Secondly, what happens is,

listen, if you run a pharmacy, you start a pharmacy, you're probably a pharmacist. You probably know how to stock the shelves, and then, maybe you grow your pharmacy, and then, you form a second pharmacy, and a third pharmacy even. Generally, the people running those pharmacies are still pharmacists. They actually know what it means to make it a good experience for people to come in the door, and buy things, but when you have 50 pharmacies in a chain, the people running it know almost nothing about pharmaceuticals. They're just looking on ROI, return on investment, bottom lines. They're just operating like they're basically financial people.

Tim Keller:

And, what ends up happening in a very large church is more and more, both the staff, and the lay leaders become people who are not so much doing the ministry at the bottom. They're not the pharmacists anymore. They're people who are looking at systems, and doing all these things, and I don't think that's healthy. I actually have been saying frankly the city would be better off with 10 churches of 500 people in general than one church of 5,000. Having said that, I think almost every city needs a of mega churches, because they can do things nobody else can do, a couple, but I wouldn't aspire to be the pastor of a mega church. I just want you to know that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

There you go.

Tim Keller:

For the reasons I just mentioned, it's a discipleship problem, a lot of passivity, and there's a bureaucracy problem where people spend an awful lot of time in just looking at systems instead of doing ministry. I would say looking forward, I think, basically, I'm not a big house church fan in spite of the fact that Francis Chan, and other people think it's the solution. I would say moderate sized churches, 100 to 800 is the way forward.

Carey Nieuwhof:

You're speaking to most of the people listening to or watching this. I've got a list of questions that, and you've been so generous with your time, but I'd love to close with this one.

Tim Keller:

Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof:

A lot of leaders listening in right now are discouraged, personally. It's been a tough season, it's hard at home. I'm sure you've had seasons of discouragement. Do you want to just tell us about a time where you felt discouraged, and how you got yourself through it?

Tim Keller:

Just so many. How will I ever choose them? If you're talking about leadership, the hardest time was there was a period from about 2001 to 2005 or so that was tough for me as a leader, because 9/11 happened, and that's a whole big story. 9/11 in New York City it's a world of discussion as I can't go there. The whole city got depressed, and everybody burned out. The day after 9/11, day after, a Christian minister from Oklahoma City who had been through the Oklahoma City Bombing called and

told me, "You're going to have a lot of trouble in your church for the next three or four years. You're going to have people burning out, you're going to have people grieving, you're going to have all sorts of trouble." He kind of gave me the list. On top of that, I got thyroid cancer. On top of that, my wife had Crohn's disease, had a big flare up, and had multiple surgeries on her body.

Tim Keller:

I stayed the pastor, but basically really let the staff kind of go, and when I actually came back to health after about two years basically, I was still preaching and all that. I came back to health, and I sat down with my staff, and I found that they were all bitter, because I had left them on their own, and they also formed these little silos, and they were actually all having turf battles, and it was a wreck. It was a total wreck, and so, I said, "Oh my gosh, are we ever going to get out of this?" Basically, I did hire a new executive director, Bruce Terrell, who was probably the single biggest help at cleaning all that up, and reintegrating the staff into a community, but about three years before that, I'm not sure how we made it other than to say, you got to keep going, you got to pray. My wife was so sick that at certain point there I thought maybe I should leave the ministry, but I couldn't tell her about it, because then she would feel guilty, but I couldn't tell anybody else about it because I felt I would betray her, so I didn't tell anybody.

Tim Keller:

I lived with that for a couple years, and never really resolved it other than God never gave me the freedom to leave, so that is when my prayer life really kicked in, in a new way. My prayer life changed drastically right during that period of time, just deepened, it got stronger, and pretty much worth it. The whole thing was worth it just for that, but no key, God sent in somebody who was important, he deepened my prayer life. That's how you get through it.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Tim, this has been rich, deep, and such a privilege. Thank you.

Tim Keller:

Thanks for the thanks.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah. Like, I said, I could have gone back the next day and done another eight hours, and hopefully that won't be the last time that Tim Keller, and I get to have a conversation. One of the things I really appreciate about Tim is I think of all the people alive on the planet, Tim is one of the few in the church space that will be read a hundred years from now. As long as there're humans walking the earth, people will be reading his work, and he continues to produce new content, including new sermons, new books, and helping plant churches around the world. If you want more we do have show notes. You can just head on over to [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode339](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode339). This is also on YouTube, and if you found this episode helpful please do share it with your friends, post it to Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, wherever you are. We try to interact with all of you who do that, and make sure you tag Tim Keller as well when you share that.

Carey Nieuwhof:

We have just a growing number of episodes. We are recorded well into the summer because we took the entire spring catalog, and moved it into the summer, and are re-recording for the most part crisis

based episodes, and I have Joel Manby coming up who talks about the difficulty at SeaWorld. Ian Morgan Cron, Scott Harrison from charity: water. Who else is coming up? Danielle Strickland, John Eldredge, Patrick Lencioni is back. Henry Cloud, so many more, but coming up real soon, Annie F. Downs. Man, I tell you, I just think Annie is incredible, and we had a pretty honest conversation if you know Annie F. Downs about what her lockdown was like, about pivoting, and about so much more, and if you think you need a lot of money to make a big impact, well you're going to love next episode, so here's an excerpt.

Annie F. Downs:

What people want, what I want Carey as a person who's taking in content is, I want content that makes me feel like the person on the other side understands that I'm stuck, and understands that I do not know how to do tomorrow, and understands that I haven't put on jeans in some time. Everybody wants to feel like, you said it earlier, we've all been equalized to some degree. Now, that is a privileged position as well because we've not all been equalized, but the content we take in has all been equalized. Jimmy Fallon, and use the same pieces of equipment to get stuff out.

Carey Nieuwhof:

Yeah, and the answer to that is you do not need a lot of money to make a big impact. She has millions of downloads a month, and, oh, I'll tell you, it was a great conversation, so that's coming up subscribers, you get that automatically for free. If you are listening for the first time, and you haven't subscribed here's a little truth for me. I only listen to podcasts I subscribe to, because otherwise I forget. Do subscribe, it's absolutely free. We love bringing this to you, and thank you for our partners. I want to share What I'm Thinking About these days, and do want to thank our partners. Thank you to ICM for training and equipping pastors in Africa. You can help for \$35 a month and train, and equip 48 pastors in the next 12 months by going to [OneMillionPastors.com](http://OneMillionPastors.com). Just spell out [OneMillionPastors.com](http://OneMillionPastors.com), just don't type in the numbers, [OneMillionPastors.com](http://OneMillionPastors.com).

Carey Nieuwhof:

And, Pro Media Fire would love to book a free digital strategy session with you by going to [ProMediaFire.com/ChurchGrowth](http://ProMediaFire.com/ChurchGrowth). Also, thank you to the 10,000 leaders who did my free crisis course. It's still available, but we're also pivoting, and I've got something I'm really excited about coming up soon. It's called The 30 Day Pivot. I think the future is uncertain, and as we move into the days ahead, I think we're moving into brand new territory, so soon, perhaps by the time you listen to this, you'll be able to go to [The30DayPivot.com](http://The30DayPivot.com) and see a brand new training, a brand new resource that I'm releasing for leaders. I've had to pivot a couple of times in the last 60 days, and I think that may be part of the new normal for all of us, so head on over to [The30DayPivot.com](http://The30DayPivot.com) to learn more, and I want to share What I'm Thinking About, and this actually ties into the whole idea of are we going to keep pivoting?

Carey Nieuwhof:

My guess is you have changed so much in the last 60, 80 days. Like, you look at yourself in February, it's like that was a whole other life, and you've gone online, you've led a virtual team, some of you are reopening your buildings, but your buildings aren't the same, and you're tired, and you're exhausted, and you've made some progress, but I don't want this to sound like an insult. It's not, think about it. Did you really innovate in the last eight weeks? I don't know. You know what happened? We reacted, you and I reacted to something that we couldn't control, and you get full marks for that, but the pivots that you and I have made in the last two months aren't really innovation yet. I've made a bunch of pivots, like

changing this podcast, taking all the spring interviews, moving them to the late spring and summer, and then, re-recording a whole bunch of episodes, doing that free course on crisis at [HowToLeadThroughCrisis.com](http://HowToLeadThroughCrisis.com), from idea to launch in 10 days. That's great, that's a response, but am I really innovating? I don't think so.

Carey Nieuwhof:

The real innovation curve is just about to get started, because all this "Innovation." over the last few months has been caused by an external factor. True innovation happens when you start to really dig inside, and go, "Okay, what does this make possible?" Keep going. I really believe the real breakthroughs are ahead of you, and what I would encourage you is to take all the learning, and change you've experienced in the last few months, and lean into it way harder, way harder. I know that sounds exhausting, but I got to tell you, I think there are great breakthroughs ahead, and if you're willing to further rethink your methods, I think you will really begin to explode your mission. You've only really gotten started, so think about that. What if the real innovation was ahead of you and as we move into a period of uncertainty, I think it's going to require greater, and greater innovation.

Carey Nieuwhof:

If you want to learn more, head on over to [The30DayPivot.com](http://The30DayPivot.com) that's, [The30DayPivot.com](http://The30DayPivot.com) and you can learn a little bit more. We got some fun stuff over there for you. Thank you so much for listening. What a joy it was to sit down with Tim Keller. We got some great episodes coming up. Guys, thank you for your partnership. You're just, wow, making this such a rewarding journey. We hope these resources really, really help you, and if you haven't subscribed yet, head on over to YouTube. We're putting more and more of these up there, and they will be there forever for your study and beyond, and as always, I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

Announcer:

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