



Reaching the '?' percent

Reaching the 84%. This has become a real catch cry over the last year with various denominations and networks holding events and even conferences focused on raising awareness that only 16% of Australians connect via a religious service once a month or more often.

We are delighted that recent information from NCLS Research indicates the situation has improved but also recognise that there is still a long way to go. It has been a shocking realisation that only [2% of weekend attendees in most churches](#) in “Western” countries like Australia could be regarded as fitting the biblical description of a disciple.

This sad realisation has caused many leaders to review how to disciple people so that they obey the commands of Jesus, make other disciples and love others as He would, rather than just turning up for church and perhaps helping out.

The shift happens when we decide that our churches are there to serve Jesus first, we ask what it is that He wants and decide that it's to make disciples, and that whilst the weekend services might still be an important part of the church, ultimately, we need to disciple people to make other disciples.

If instead we choose to prioritise people over Jesus as who we are there to serve, we will ultimately attract and in many cases train people to believe that their primary responsibility is simply to become part of the church and to turn up. And the more we fail to make disciples, the greater the spiritual poverty in our nation will become.

Thankfully leaders across a wide range of denominations are grappling with the issues of how we can reach people and make disciples.

This leads to the good news from NCLS Research. Their soon to be released “Church Pulse Check” will tell us that the 16% has grown to 21% of people in our nation who attend a religious service regularly or semi regularly, and the 84% not connected has shrunk to 79%.

This is great news! We can and should praise God for what is happening.

And we need to continue to ask questions like “Are we ready? Are our churches ready? Are we really making disciples?” as we seek to see the spiritual poverty in our nation reduced and the number of disciples made increased.

Turning up on a Sunday and “a good time was had by all” doesn’t cut it; that is a far cry from making disciples and spiritual maturity.

