

# BE HOPEFUL



## AN ACTION PLAN FOR A RADICAL NEW YEAR

BASED ON THE BOOK, *RADICAL*, BY DAVID PLATT

### FOR LEADERS

- **Lead your church to “pray around the world” in 2011.**

I want to encourage you to begin an intentional prayer emphasis in your church for unreached people groups for the entire year. If you aren't able to get the prayer emphasis started on January 1, that's okay. Later in the month is fine. But of course, the sooner, the better. Urgent physical and spiritual needs around the world are tremendous!

Consider how to encourage individuals, families, small groups, or your entire church to pray daily. Perhaps you could have copies of the newly released seventh edition of Operation World available to distribute at cost to church members. Set the example by praying every day for unreached people groups yourself. Be prepared to remind the church members of their commitment periodically throughout the year.

To help the prayer emphasis get started, consider teaching on the importance of prayer. As an example you can reference a series I preached called “Pray Desperately.”

- **Start a church-wide Bible reading plan.**

The benefits of having everyone in your church reading the same Bible passage every day are incalculable.

You can choose to follow a one-year Bible reading plan or you can develop an intentional reading plan by publishing the text where you will be teaching each Sunday. Each week members of your church can read and pray through the scripture prior to the teaching. Plan to challenge your congregation to begin as soon as possible, at least by the end of January.

Throughout the year encourage your faith family by providing resources to help them to stick with it. You can distribute a one-year printed plan and/or point them to additional resources online. You could put the daily Bible readings in your church bulletin or on your church website.

Consider coordinating sermons, small-group studies, worship, and other elements of your Biblical community with the daily reading.

- **Give a “firstfruits” offering to the Lord.**

In the Old Testament Law, God required his people to give an offering of the firstfruits of their harvest. He reserved the firstborn sons of the Israelites to himself. The apostle Paul advised Christians to set aside money for the poor on the first day of the week.

God deserves the first because he is first in our hearts. What about the first of the year? Before January concludes, start a tradition in your church by taking a “firstfruits” offering every month, one that makes the statement “In 2011, we want to give sacrificially and specifically for urgent spiritual and physical needs around the world.” Dedicate the offering to a specific purpose or ministry your church is passionate about. Perhaps, for example, you could give the money to a partner ministry or missions organization.

- **Set your most ambitious mission goals ever for 2011.**

How many of your church members went on short-term mission trips in 2010? How many got involved in long-term ministry overseas in 2010? Quantify it. Begin by praying with other leaders in your church about how to increase those numbers in 2011. Seek ways to encourage your church to give their lives to spreading the gospel all over the world.

I would challenge you to encourage every member of your church to go into another context for 2% of their year... one week. That 2% will dramatically affect the other 98% of their year. I know of local ministries that were birthed out of a group of ordinary people who gave a week of their lives in another context. As a result their eyes were opened to the opportunities and needs around them back at home and now they are serving faithfully in their communities. So by going they are not only being used to spread the gospel overseas, they are actively serving here at home for his great glory!

As the leader and shepherd of your church I challenge you to be the first to sign up to go!

- **Cast a church vision around making disciples.**

If you haven't already done so, pray about casting a new vision for your whole congregation in January. Begin praying and seeking God now about teaching your congregation Jesus' strategy for spreading the kingdom of God throughout the globe by making disciples. Remember, this isn't something for just the professional ministers to do—it's for every follower of Christ!

How can your church be intentional to encourage every member to invest in the lives of a few other people at a deeper level? How can you introduce unbelievers to the gospel in this way? How can you help new believers grow in their relationship with Christ? And how can you make the process reproducible?

I'm not exaggerating when I say that disciple making ranks ahead of every program decision, facility need, or staff position you might have on your mind. It's how the Great Commission will be fulfilled. And then Jesus will come. The day is drawing near and the harvest is here! Don't miss out on the blessing of being a part of this great mission.

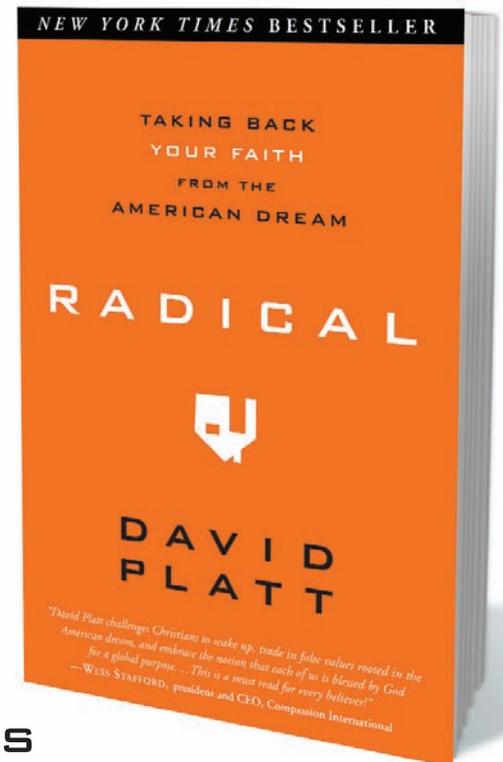
# WHAT PART OF THE GOSPEL IS OPTIONAL?

## WHAT IS JESUS WORTH TO YOU?

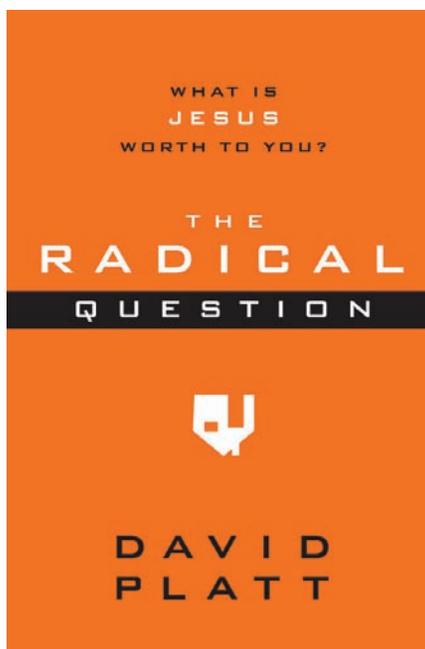
*“David Platt challenges Christians to wake up, trade in false values rooted in the American Dream, and embrace the notion that each of us is blessed by God for a global purpose... This is a must-read for every believer!”*

—WESS STAFFORD, President and CEO, Compassion International

*Radical* is a daring call for Christians to believe and obey the gospel according to Jesus—even if it flies in the face of success according to the American church. David Platt reveals what can happen when we exchange our convenient beliefs for authentic discipleship.



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