
ZONDERVAN

The Next Christians Participant's Guide

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 05 |
| How to Use This Study | 08 |
| Session One The End of Christian America | 11 |
| Session Two Restoration Thinking | 25 |
| Session Three Provoked to Engage | 39 |
| Session Four Creators Who Are Called | 53 |
| Session Five Grounded and In Community | 69 |
| Session Six Counterculture for the Common Good | 83 |

1

THE END OF CHRISTIAN AMERICA

READING ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THIS SESSION:

Chapter 1: “A Fading Reality” and **Chapter 2:** “The New Normal”
of *The Next Christians* by Gabe Lyons

SEA CHANGE

WATCH (15 minutes)

**View interviews with the following people from *The Next Christians* DVD.
Record your thoughts on the following pages.**

PHYLLIS TICKLE is founding editor of the Religion Department of *Publishers Weekly*, the international journal of the book industry, and is an authority on religion in America. In addition to lectures and numerous essays, articles, and interviews, Tickle is the author of over two dozen books on religion and spirituality, most recently *The Great Emergence* and *How Christianity Is Changing*. She is also the general editor of *The Ancient Practices* series.

LOUIE GIGLIO is the founder of Passion Conferences, a movement dedicated to seeing spiritual awakening come to the college campuses of the nation and the world. He also heads sixstepsrecords and founded Passion City Church, a community of faith in Atlanta, Georgia.

THOUGHTS

REFLECT on video and following questions *(25 minutes)*

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

“I THINK YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA, WHICH IS GROWING, AND CHRISTIAN AMERICA, WHICH CLEARLY IS NOT.”

“TO MOURN A FORMER FORM OF EXISTENCE IS NATURAL, BUT SOMETHING NEW IS BEING BORN AMONGST US.”

“BECAUSE WE’RE NO LONGER SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE OR POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE, WHEN WE CLAIM OUR CHRISTIANITY AT THE STREET LEVEL, WE HAVE CREDIBILITY IN A WAY THAT WE DIDN’T HAVE FOR A WHILE.”

“PLURALISM HAS CONSCIOUSLY AND SUBCONSCIOUSLY ERODED ANY SENSE OF A PATH.”

“THERE HASN’T BEEN IN RECENT HISTORY A MORE ENGAGED, CAUSAL GENERATION OF PEOPLE WHO WANT TO SEE A GOSPEL THAT IS INTEGRATED INTO CULTURE, THAT DOESN’T STAND ALONE OR EXIST SEPARATE FROM CULTURE.”

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

APPLY (20 minutes)

7. In a pluralistic culture where tolerance and religious liberty are championed, how can your own local faith community be influential in your city?

Lined writing area with horizontal dotted lines for text entry.

CONCLUDE

Spend every morning this week praying this simple prayer: “God, please open my eyes to the ways that my culture is changing. Help me to empathize with those outside the faith who do not understand our beliefs or convictions. Today, give me the grace to be patient and the wisdom to know how to stay grounded in my convictions while also presenting a gospel-centered worldview that is winsome and credible to my neighbors, friends, coworkers, and peers. Amen.”

BEFORE THE NEXT SESSION, READ:

Chapter 3: “A Parody of Ourselves” and

Chapter 4: “Relearning Restoration” of *The Next Christians* by Gabe Lyons

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION:

- Have an intentional conversation with a non-Christian friend and ask him or her what perceptions he or she has of Christians.
- Watch one of the *Zeitgeist* films online to get an idea of postmodern skepticism.
- Read *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* by Rodney Stark.
- Attend a religious service at a synagogue, mosque, Hindu temple, or with another religious group to learn about other religious ideas that are influencing your culture.