Introduction:

- Unchurched = attend church five or less times per year
- The unchurched next door have much in common with us… Many of them have your moral values. Most are not antichurch or anti religion.
- Cookie cutter methodologies are insensitive to unique differences… customized approaches are best
- “Faith stages” = different levels of “faith receptivity”
- The book’s purpose = “find out what is on the minds of the unchurched”
- The “previously unchurched” sparked the idea to do this book… they encouraged the idea of segmenting lost people by “faith stages” AND to look at a wide mosaic of people, so as not to just accept old stereotypes
- Most (42%) “unchurched people” live in “large city/suburbs”

The Rainer Scale:

A. U5 = Highly resistant to the gospel, antagonistic attitude (5%)
B. U4 = Resistant to the gospel, but not an antagonistic attitude (21%)
C. U3 = No apparent receptivity, neutral, perhaps open to discussion (36)
D. U2 = Receptive to the gospel and to the church (27%)
E. U1 = Highly receptive to the gospel, “the Phillipian Jailer” (11%)

Conversion…

D1 = A “baby” in Christ
D2 = Signs of early maturity in Christ

Ten Surprises From the Unchurched:

1. Most unchurched prefer to attend church on Sunday morning if they go
2. Females tend to be either the most antagonistic or the most receptive
3. Most unchurched feel guilty about not attending – especially w/ kids
   * Church intimidates the unchurched, fear not fitting in
4. 82% are at least “somewhat likely” to attend if they are invited
   * #1 message of book: “If we invite them, they will come!”
     - Only 21% of active church goers invite anyone in a year
     - Only 2% of church members invite an unchurched to come
     > There are 160 million unchurched people in the US
5. Very few of the unchurched have had someone share with them how to become a Christian. And Christians have not been particularly influential in their lives.
   * The unchurched are waiting on someone to explain salvation
6. Most of the unchurched have a positive view about pastors, ministers, and the church.
   * Many perceive church as the most relevant institution in society
   * Key challenge: many have tried church but had bad experience:
     - Unfriendliness
     - Unkempt facilities
     - Poor signage
     - General confusion
   *** Most still view church positively, even after bad experience
7. Some types of “cold calls” are effective, many are not
* Uninvited home visit = most rejected form of evangelism!
* Chance meetings are different than uninvited home visits
8. Unchurched people would like to develop a real and sincere relationship with a Christian
* Most of the unchurched would respond positively to a “genuine” Christian who would spend time with them in a gentle, nonjudgmental relationship.
* The unchurched can tell the difference between “drive-by” evangelism and a person who really cares!
* If we really believe that a person is lost outside of salvation through Christ, we will make the lost and the unchurched one of our highest priorities
* Millions are waiting for us to show them we care
9. The attitudes of the unchurched are not correlated to where they live, their ethnic or racial background, or their gender
* Only “income level” was a consistent barometer… the higher the income level, the lower the faith (generally speaking)
10. Many unchurched are far more concerned about the spiritual well-being of their children than themselves
* Churches highly intentional about reaching youth and children tend to be among the most evangelistic churches in America
  - In our encounters with these unchurched we need to mention their children…

  - “I plead with you to ask yourself if lost people really matter to you. Do your priorities really reflect a concern for lost people.”
  - “The call of the gospel is to renounce self and follow Christ. And if we really follow Christ, he will take us to some messy places.”

Chapter One:

  - “Let us be reminded that evangelism begins with God. It is not some human endeavor that depends on magical words, the latest methodologies, or cutting-edge research.”
  - “Reaching the unchurched is spiritual warfare.”
  - “We cannot proceed in our own power.”

8 Tough Questions:
1. How is your prayer life?
   * Prayer is our source of power to fight against Satan
2. Whom did you tell about Jesus today?
   * When we fail to share our faith we sin against God. Jesus told us in his last words before he ascended into heaven, “You will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8). No option or out was given.”
3. How is your family life?
4. Do you need to reconcile with someone?
5. Are you handling your finances and possessions biblically?
6. Are you committed to your church?
   * A vast number of church members have a consumer mentality.
   * The Bible says only doctrinal deviation justifies a critical spirit…
7. Do you love others unconditionally?
   * “It is too easy to write off people who are not like us. It is too convenient to avoid those who irritate us. It is simply a lot easier to spend time with people like us…”
   * “But if we truly love people unconditionally, we will seek those who are different. We will, in God’s power, learn to love the unlovable. We will begin to see more people through the eyes of Christ.”
8. Do you have an attitude of gratitude?
   * “Our rejoicing does not depend on the changing circumstances of life, but on the unchanging Christ who gives us life.”
   * “Do you show a joyous attitude at home, at work, and in your neighborhood? Such joy can be contagious and give you opportunities to tell others the source of your joy.”

Profile of the Unchurched: 10 Key Issues
1. The unchurched are not “anti-church”
   * 4 of 10 unchurched have a friendly or better attitude toward church
   * Only 16% have a negative attitude toward church
2. Over 17 million people will accept Christ if presented with the gospel. Another 43 million are close.
3. Most unchurched persons believe in the existence of both heaven & hell
   * Talking about heaven may be a great ice breaker with unchurched
4. September 11 taught us that opportunities to share come with tragedy
5. Unchurched people are nervous but willing to talk about matters of faith
6. Most unchurched people have a fairly high view of the Bible
   * About 1/3 believe the Bible is God’s Word, and totally true
   * Another 46% believe that the Bible is generally true
   * Most unchurched are not turned off by Christians who cite biblical passages or discuss biblical truths
   * But none of the U5s saw the Bible to be the Word of God
7. Most of the unchurched would rather talk to a layperson than a minister about religious matters
8. Easter is still a key time to invite the unchurched
9. Many unchurched wonder why Christian neighbors and coworkers do not invite them to church.
10. Most unchurched have a “spiritual view” of life.
    * Most believe in the existence of God (albeit an unorthodox view)
    * Most pray on a regular basis, even daily
    * Most believe the Bible is more than just another “spiritual” book
Chapter Two:

- The second purpose of the book: show the diversity of lost people
- The third purpose... share characteristics of unchurched people with whom you might have confidence speaking in everyday encounters
- Parable of the Seed and Soils = best description of “faith stages”

- Faith Stages 101
  A. U5 “Antagonistics”
     1. Represent 5% of the unchurched
     2. Many Christians stop witnessing after a single encounter with a U5
     3. Not unusual to find that U5s have some church/religious history
     4. Many U5’s have trigger points that made a negative impact…
  B. U4 “Resistants”
     1. Equally resistant to U5s, BUT not antagonistic and hostile
     2. You can have a pleasant, faith-centered conversation with U4s
     3. Two sub-groups of U4s
        a. Resistant to anything religious
        b. Religion-friendly, but Christian resistant
     4. U4s will go to an Easter service (whereas a U5 won’t)
  C. U3 “Learners & Apathetics”
     1. U3s = the largest segment of the unchurched population
     2. Three sub-groups of U3s
        a. Apathetics (faith = non-issue) represent about ½ of U3s
        b. Learners = tend to lean toward either U2s OR U4s
        c. Undefined (my term) = described by what they “are not”
  D. U2 “Seekers”
     1. They are truly seeking “something” in their lives
     2. Many are fully aware that they are seeking God himself
     3. U2s are the second largest group of unchurched… over 25%
     4. U2s are the YOUNGEST of the unchurched groups
        * Over 62% are under the age of 36
     5. Their churchgoers have solid views on biblical authority
     6. Key: they know something (spiritual) is missing in their lives
     7. They wonder why Christians they know are silent about their faith
  E. U1 “Waiting on You”
     1. 17 million in America
     2. Represent 11% of the unchurched
     3. Tend to be younger-to middle aged… 83% < 51 years old
     4. “Business” = #1 reason (by far!) for not attending church
     5. Most U1s pray regularly
     6. Most believe in both heaven and hell
     7. Almost half have a “grace/faith” understanding of salvation
        * But most admit some degree of confusion
     8. Over 97% of U1s would be “somewhat” or “very likely” to attend church if invited
Chapter Three: The World of U5s

- They seem to be struggling with deep personal problems
- Many would not go to church even if invited
- Most do not believe in the existence of God
- They are the most difficult of all unchurched people to reach
- High income levels are common amongst U5s, there seems to be a relationship
- U5s are the most highly educated among the unchurched, 40% advanced degrees
- U5s are likely to be over 50 years old
- Most had some experience in church as a child
- U5s have a condescending and suspicious view of the Bible; the see people who do rely on the Bible as being “weak” and “uniformed”
- U5s have a negative view of the church
- Defining issue for U5s = the intensity of their hurt & bitterness (past church time)
- U5’s antisupernatural mind-set tend to reject truth of heaven and hell

5 Keys to Reaching U5s
1. Don’t take them personally… and don’t prioritize your resources at U5s
2. Use apologetics to appeal to their intellectual rationale
   * 3 great books to use with U5s:
     a. Evidence that Demands a Verdict – by Josh McDowell
     b. Mere Christianity – C.S. Lewis
     c. The Case for Christ and The Case for Faith – Lee Strobel
3. Be aware: most U5s are ignorant about Christianity (“never churched”)
4. Understand… you are often dealing with hurt and anger among the U5s
5. Long-term relationships are essential to moving U5s toward faith

Chapter Four: The World of U4s

- Many U4s are not atheistic or agnostic... they pray “a few times a week”
- Most think of God as “just a supreme being”
- Common for them to have had a negative experience w/ church/Christians
- Most U4s believe in a “works salvation”
- U4s need more than one invitation to attend church
- Key difference from U5s = majority U4s believe in “a” heaven and hell
- Tend to “affirm the beliefs of virtually everyone”
- Conversations about an afterlife #1 approach with U4s (heaven more accepted than hell…)
- All discussions about God with a U4 require clear definitions set up front
- First century world was filled with U4s…
- U4s struggle with their own inconsistencies regarding the person of Jesus
- Discussions about Jesus = one of few open doors to reach U4s
- Exclusivity claims = most heated challenge by U4s (ref. John 14:6)
- Most have some level of respect for the Bible… = good bridge to use
  - 60% believe the Bible is totally or mostly truthful
  - Only 14% view Bible as a myth
- Many U4s would come to a home Bible study, but not go to church
• U4s see value in prayer (even though it sounds contradictory); they think of prayer as a sort of “spiritual safety net”
• U4s tend to be very spiritual; however, they are extremely confused
• The “tolerance movement” rooted in the U4 world
• 62% of U4s would come to church if invited, but you must be with them

Chapter Five: The World of U3s

• This group is the largest of the unchurched... 36%
• They tend to defy categorization... they are opinionated but uncommitted
• “Neutral U3s” don’t give many indicators as to their spiritual state
• “U3s Leaning: U4” = middle but leaning toward resistant
• “U3s Leaning: U2” = middle but leaning toward seeker (about 50% of U3s)
• Nearly 90% of U3s are at least “somewhat likely” to attend if invited to ch.
• U3s believe the church is relevant
• Most U3s confused about the gospel... = “Jesus + works”
• 63% have an active prayer life, but many pray to an unknown God
• U3s believe in an afterlife, but not a biblical one
• U3s have the highest opinion of ministers and clergy (unknown why)
• Over 90% of U3s have had some Sunday School/small group experiences
• Most believe Jesus is the Son of God
• Most believe Scripture is authoritative
• Most U3s are eager to learn about God and are will to be corrected
• The primary instrument God uses to bring “U3 Leaners” closer to Him is the witness of a Christian
• U3s are waiting to be invited to church...

Chapter Six: The World of U2s

• “U2s are friendly and receptive to the gospel... they give seemingly orthodox responses to questions about the Christian faith, but they have yet to make a personal step of faith.”
• U2s will welcome a conversion with you
• U2s will likely join a Bible study if you invite them
• 62% of U2s are female – unknown why the % is so high
• Vast majority believe in a biblical heaven and hell
• U2s have less family income than any other unchurched group (U1 = #2)
• U2s have few obstacles to hearing and receiving the gospel
• U2s still cling to “salvation by works” theology
• Typical U2 response: “Saved = obey 10 Commandments + be a good person”
• 80% acknowledge Jesus is the Son of God (but... knowing the fact is different from living by faith)
• U2s fall short of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
• Parents played a key role in U2s early church experiences... ask about them!
• More U2s have been witnessed to already (82%) than any other group
• Friends and family members are the typical witnesses to U2s
• U2s have as many negative memories from church as U5s
• 97% of U2s would come to church if invited, but intimidated to go alone
• Reaching the U2s
  1. U2s are eager to study the Bible
  2. U2s desire to talk about eternal issues
  3. U2s are frustrated with their understanding of a works salvation
  4. The parental connection is a great way to open conversations…
  5. Acknowledge and express regret about their past bad experiences
  6. U2s want to be invited to church!

Chapter Seven: The World of U1s

• U1s tend to be younger… most under 36 and 83% under 50
• No geographical correlation to where U1s live (small towns & big cities)
• Educational levels reflected national averages
• U1s are in search of life’s (God’s) real answers
• More than any other group, they have had a church background
• U1s have opinions on heaven, hell, and spiritual issues like most churchgoers
• Many U1s know biblical truths very well
• Most U1s did NOT leave church due to a negative experience… no known cause
• Most U1s recall positive church experiences (some neg. too but not big deals)
• Number one reason U1s not in church = “too busy”
• “Many U1s simply need that last bit of encouragement, that gentle shove to get them into church to hear the gospel. They know they are making excuses not to attend.”
• “U1s have a more fervent prayer life than most Christians. 9 of 10 U1s indicated that they pray regularly, 7 of 10 say they pray daily.”
• Many U1s believe God intervenes in the lives of people
• One of the best ways to reach U1s is to ask them if you can pray for them…
• U1s do not grasp the gospel as a free gift, they depend on a works salvation
• Too often Christians talk to U1s and leave thinking they are saved because the hear the “right words” but fail to realize U1s have the wrong salvific equation
• “U1s need to hear from Christians who will present the gospel with clarity. They are so close, yet they are still an eternity away from heaven.”
• Issues to consider in reaching U1s: insights from the “formally unchurched”
  * Only one person is reached each year for every 85 churchgoers
     A. Never forget Prayer
     B. Persistence is important
     C. Invite and take U1s to church with you
     D. U1s respond to opportunities to study the Bible

Chapter Eight: The Formally Unchurched Offer Some Insights

• Resistance is not a permanent “no”
• Don’t take negative responses personally
• Doctrine really matters. Churches that attempt to reach unchurched people by compromising or diluting the teachings of Scripture are counterproductive.
• Strong biblical teaching is critical
  *** “It was really sad to go to churches that thought they were being relevant when they were really just being worldly. I got out of those churches as quickly as I could.”
• Doctrine was the #1 issue of importance to unchurched people seeking a church
  *** 91% said doctrine was the #1 issue
• Seekers desire to discover truth and conviction among Christians
• U1s and U2s will go to Bible studies in homes and/or churches
• U3s and U4s will likely go to a Bible study in a home, but not in a church
• U5s won’t go to any Bible study…
• Relationships make all the difference…
• Family relationships are the most influential
• “Ten years ago the paradigm of youth ministry was ‘reach the parents to reach the children.’ Today the paradigm is ‘reach the children to reach the parents.’”
• Crisis moments soften unbeliever’s hearts and open the door to spiritual matters
• Personal evangelism is key… sharing Christ leads to converted hearts
• Evangelistic visits have eternal impact
• Anything less than excellence in the church is not good enough for God… unbelievers form opinions, in-part based on how the church looks and is run
• Use “formally unchurched” people (teamed with mature Christians) in your evangelist efforts… they are zealous and have a great network of friends who need to be reached.

Chapter Nine: 10 Reasons We Have Not Reached the Unchurched

1. Spiritual Lethargy
   a. How can we expect to grow spiritually when we do not obey his direct command to make disciples (Matt. 28:19) and to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8)?
   b. Lack of spiritual growth inevitably leads to a diminished desire to share Christ with others
   c. One of the main reasons many Christians do not share their faith is simply disobedience
      *** “In the battles of spiritual warfare, Satan is the victor when we remain silent in our witness.”

2. Growing Inclusivism
   a. Pluralism is one of the fasting growing belief systems… it holds that ALL religions lead to God and heaven for all who are faithful to THEIR religious beliefs… America largely embraces this belief!
   b. Inclusivism (a variation of Pluralism) is also growing… it holds to the fact that “Jesus is the only way” – BUT, he can be found in other “good” religions.
      *** Often called “salvation thru an anonymous Christ”
*** Explicit faith in Christ is not necessary… Jesus may save you without your knowledge of his work in your life
*** The Bible teaches EXCLUSIVISM!!!

3. Growing Disbelief In Hell
   a. If you don’t believe in a real hell, there is little urgency to share your faith
   b. Annihilationism is growing… there is no bad eternal existence

4. Busyness
   a. Pastors often report being so busy doing what is “good” that they neglect the urgent (not their urgent need but that of lost soul’s)
   b. Satan is happy when lost souls don’t make it onto our “to-do” lists

5. Fear of Rejection
6. A Desire To Be Tolerant
   a. Remember… the gospel, in some senses, is intolerant.
   b. The Bible says there is only one way to salvation, all else leads to hell
   c. There is no room for compromise, but a command for compassion!
   d. Many Christians give in to a culture vs. defend absolute truth
   e. Many unchurched say that “intolerance” is unacceptable… To Bad!!!
   f. Jesus never wavered in his message – we cannot cave to culture!

7. Losing the Habit of Witnessing
   a. Witnessing, like prayer and Bible study, is a discipline
   b. Witnessing is a habit to learn, to retain and, if lost, to regain.

8. Lack of Accountability
   a. Accountability is likely to engender more witnessing attempts…
   b. Attempting more evangelistic encounters creates a habit of witnessing
   c. A habit of witnessing increases our zeal for evangelism

9. Failure to Invite Lost People (vs. church-shopping Christians) to Church
10. We Go To Churches That Do Not Reach The Unchurched
   a. A well intentioned Christian can be very active in the church, and never be challenged to reach the lost!
   b. What should you do in this case?
      - Pray for and encourage your pastor
      - Become an advocate for unleashing the laity to do ministry
      - Encourage members… the bulk of ministry is their responsibility
      - Be personally evangelistic & intentional about sharing your faith

Chapter Ten: Reaching the Unchurched at Their Faith Stages

• Methods and programs will never replace the simple sharing of the gospel!

A. Strategies for Reaching U5s
   1. Pray for the anger that is behind their heart
   2. Key in on their lack of true contentment, even with all their affluence
   3. Build long-term relationships and stay with it
   4. Learn and share apologetics
   5. Be prepared for a rejection of all absolutes

B. Strategies for Reaching U4s
1. Discuss eternal issues
2. Clarify who the “total” Jesus is
3. Prepare for U4s rejection of “Jesus as the only way”
4. Invite them to church

C. Strategies for Reaching U3s
1. U3s need clarity in understanding the gospel – be simple and direct
2. Invite them to church… U3s see the church as relevant
3. An appeal to the benefits of your church may be effective
4. The reality of hell is a concern for the U3s

D. Strategies for Reaching U2s
1. Most U2s will convert within a year with a consistent, loving witness
2. Explain the truth about a works salvation to them
3. Invite them to church
4. Get their family members to show Christ to them
5. Invite them to a Bible study

*** “Historically Sunday School was a highly intentional evangelistic tool in the church. Now it is rare for church members to invite the lost and unchurched to Sunday School. The problem is not that Sunday School is not working; the problem is that most churches are not working Sunday School.”

6. One of the simplest yet most effective strategies for reaching U2s is to respond to their desire to study the body.

E. Strategies for Reaching U1s
1. Just tell them about Jesus… most will say: “where have you been…”
2. Invite them to church

*** Read the book of Haggai for a good parallel lesson… “God’s people had been commanded to build the temple. Instead, they chose to focus on their own comforts and desires. As a consequence God removed his blessing from the people.

We have been given the Great Commission to make disciples, to share the gospel, and to build God’s house. But significant numbers of American Christians are not being obedient.”

*** ‘The unchurched next door need Christ. And they are waiting to hear from you’