

Now here's a really interesting question: *just what are the prospects for Christianity in the future?*—for the better or for the worse! That phrase—“*what are the prospects*”—is a quite common phrase used for smaller, “micro” situations—yeah, something like “what are the prospects for our company selling our new electric cars in the Upper Midwest market during the next five years.” Yes, the strategic marketing executive for Midwestern states in the U.S. for the car company will likely have a highly informed opinion about that—after all, that's her job.

But much larger, “macro” scenarios are typically much harder to discern correctly...like this one: what's the technology landscape for a U.S. citizen going to look like in, say, 25 years? Discerning *that* is difficult!

But some might not agree that's really true. So, let's revisit the year 2000—about 25 years back from the time of the posting of this podcast episode...

- The year 2000 was back when Jeff Bezos' very young company Amazon had a very limited scope of activity—that of selling just a relatively few books online.
- And, it was in October of 2001 that Steve Jobs announced Apple's original iPod digital music player. Wow, the world has really changed! And, of course, the iPhone was still in the future back then...yeah, it was still rattling around in the recesses of the brain of its amazing innovator.
- Then there's the social media giant Facebook founded in 2004...now doesn't that seem ancient?

The list could go on and on, of course. How about just a few items: flat-screen TVs, electric cars, 3D printers, GPS navigation, WiFi, tablets, wearable tech, and streaming services? Yeah, all that...and much more...*just in the last 25 years!*

So, in the year 2000, just exactly who could grasp the true picture of tech advancement in the 25 years to follow? To that end, when we might ask the question “*what are the prospects*” in such a macro, big picture scenario, almost always nobody really fully knows. Except God, of course!

And since we're speaking of God, let's return to the first question we asked in this episode: *just what are the prospects for Christianity in the future?* Hey, for us to be effective ambassadors and great stewards for God and His Kingdom purposes, we absolutely must work to have a true sense of the prospects for Christianity in order to take effective steps to fulfill God's true desire—God's revealed will—as to the future of Christianity. So, let's take a stab at doing just that.

In answering a marketing strategy question like “*what are the 'macro' prospects of future success,*” savvy marketers must foundationally ask who are the 'micro' targeted prospects for market success that make up that macro picture. Back to our electric vehicles example: yes, if a company wants to sell a lot of electric cars in the total American “macro” market, well, then, that company must identify the “who”—in this case, people wealthy enough to pay a premium for a new electric car over traditional cars. Yeah, the “who” really matters! And that's why the title of this episode is “Who are the Prospects for Christianity in the Future.” Accordingly, let's tackle the necessary “who” in sustainable, growing Christianity.

Hey, in the marketing world where the noun “prospect” actually means an individual potential customer, the ultimate “micro,” some believe a person has to meet three conditions to be a legitimate prospect:

- The prospect fits the target market of the organization;
- The prospect has the means...yes, the money...to acquire what's being offered; and
- The prospect is authorized to make the decision to respond to what's being offered.

So, what we're going to do is to utilize these three interlocking criteria for identifying and qualifying prospects for the Kingdom of God. Then, we're to address the clear reality that countless Christians largely ignore those who are prospects for entering into the Kingdom of God—yeah, that's right, many Christians often disregard the very key, foundational task that He has appointed all His followers to! So...here we go.

The first criterion for prospects is that *the prospect fits the target market of the organization.* And just what is God's target market? Well, Paul taught Timothy that “[God our savior] desires all people to be

saved.” (1 Timothy 2:4 ESV) And Paul taught Timothy that Jesus was a “ransom for all.” (2:6) And Peter wrote that God’s will is “that none would perish.” (2 Peter 3:9) Huh...can’t get much clearer than that!

That’s right: even easily one of most widely known sentences in the English language, John 3:16, speaks of Jesus’ fulfilling His Father’s purposes says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” Well, that’s very definitive, too...right smack in the heart of John’s Gospel! But test your personal internalization of that Scripture! It doesn’t say “for God so loved a few”—and it doesn’t say “for God so loved the elect.” No, the Holy Spirit Himself inspired those key, strategic words: “for God so loved the world.” Yeah, the whole world. Indeed, “God is love” (1 John 4:8), that His very character...and God’s target market includes every person worldwide!

The second criterion is that *the prospect has the means...the money...the resources...to acquire what’s being offered.* And wouldn’t you know it? Our God is a loving God, so He *gave* His only Son...yes, He sacrificially gave His Son and offered eternal life to every person who simply believes. Yes, the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24) is free to every person who would believe in Christ! Even though the cost of the Cross was very, very high, the price of God’s grace is free to every prospect, every individual. That means that every person on earth, regardless of wealth, actually has the means to accept God’s amazing offer of eternal life—whether living in Bangladesh, Baltimore, or Belgium.

The third criterion is that *the prospect is authorized to make the decision to respond to what’s being offered.* Well, every person with what’s called agency, that is, anyone with the basic intellectual capacity, every person who has grown to an age of accountability is authorized to make the decision for believing in Christ. (Romans 10:9) And guess what? Some choose to believe, and some don’t. When Jesus’s earliest disciples indicated that some wouldn’t listen to their news, Jesus simply told them to “shake the dust from their feet”...in other words, don’t waste time and effort on those who choose to reject good news.

Now all that is simply stunning. God’s target market is always *everyone!* And His offer is within absolutely everyone’s means—has been for 2,000 years. And each person has agency to make their own decisions. Therefore, arming His disciples with this understanding, Jesus commanded them to “go forth and make disciples” everywhere—the target market!

So. We’ve now reported exactly *who are the prospects for Christianity in the future*—that’s *simply, yet majestically, everyone!* But for these many centuries, many who would claim discipleship of Christ in their lives blatantly ignore His command to go forth to His full target market and make disciples. This very day, billions of people in God’s target market worldwide are unreached with the gospel of the Kingdom. But sadly, many professing Christians appear rather blissfully unmoved by this fact, deliberately inactive!

Still, hundreds of millions of new believers have been added around the world the past century! And I’m not talking about children following in their parents’ footsteps of faith, which is an amazing thing in and of itself. I’m talking about brand-new believers who didn’t have a Christian heritage! And yet only a very small percentage of Christians involved themselves in partnering with God in that “going forth and making disciples.” So. Here’s my *global* answer to our questions in this episode...

Reaching all those many millions of John 3:16 “whoever’s” as God commands us will be an integral part of *what the prospect of Christianity is in the future.* And if a relatively small number of serious Christians helped fulfill the adding of hundreds of millions in the 20th century, then surely a key number of serious Christians here in the 21st century can partner with God too, yes, to work to effectively reach the rest of the world! After all, “God our savior desires all people to be saved.” *So, the prospects for Christianity in the future are great!* But that apparently will depend upon just a relatively few laborers (Matthew 9:37). Yes, God is reaching down to each of us in this very moment, calling us to obedience to His will and desire that all people be saved. *So, are you one of Jesus’s few laborers who is all-in as to fulfilling the prospects of this utterly unique, eternity-impacting opportunity?*

Responding to Jesus’s command. Truly stunning...yet humbling...and exhilarating. *The fullest life in Christ.*

A&A: Application & Action

1. Think on this. Just why is it that so many Christians are relentlessly focusing on or harping about the Mosaic Law? The Bible promises they nor anyone else can keep the Law and also teaches that Christians are “not under the law but under grace” (see Romans). And at the same time why do so many of those very same Christians substantially ignore Jesus’s command to “go forth and make disciples,” the very prospect for Christianity in the future? Could the focus on Mosaic Law as primary be working to crowd out the commandment to make disciples of Christ? Discuss.
2. What do your actions and your life reveal as to the previous question...are you more focused on keeping the law of Moses than doing the command of Jesus as to making disciples? Discuss.
3. With regard to the first discussion question, what is the essence of your direct teaching or communication or transmitting of your faith to your kids (and possibly grandkids)...or to new (baby) Christians...or to the unsaved in your workplace? Is it the Mosaic Law or is it the grace of God? Discuss.