FOREWORD BY J.D. GREEAR

PEOPLE
ARE THE
MISSION

How Churches Can Welcome **GUESTS** Without Compromising the **GOSPEL**

DANNY FRANKS

People Are The Mission:
How Churches Can Welcome Guests Without Compromising the Gospel
Book at a Glance

Admit it: you were supposed to read this for staff meeting. Or a discussion group. Or because it was assigned by an absent-minded professor who assigns random books that have nothing to do with molecular biology.

But you didn't *read, and now you're panicking. How can you sound intelligent? Simple: get caught up with the summary below. (If you want to* look *intelligent, try bringing a monocle and a top hat.)*

The skinny

Most churches would agree that reaching new guests is a good thing, but the focus is usually on the *how*: tactics and techniques to bring people in. *People Are the Mission* takes a deep dive on the *why*: the reason that the gospel compels us to love others. In Part One (Looking Out), the *why* reveals our influence in our community, how guests view us, and how we should treat them. In Part Two (Looking In), the *why* upends the pervasive idolatry that may be rooted in our pews, power brokers, and pouting older brothers.

Chapter 1
The Gospel Is Offensive. Nothing Else Should Be.

We live in the age of microaggressions. Social media posts and water cooler conversations reveal that many of us are ready to attack those who disagree with our positions. We're too easily offended by too many things, but church hospitality doesn't have to be one of them. The gospel of Jesus is the supreme scandalous offense (and rightfully so), but the road to the gospel should be paved with rose petals and puppy fur.

Chapter 2
The Sermon Starts in the Parking Lot

Every church has *stage messages* and *sidewalk messages*. Sadly, most of the time those are in conflict with each other. Stage messages may proclaim a God of extravagant generosity, while underwhelming sidewalk messages - spoken or implied - leave guests to figure out their first visit on their own. The "sermon before the sermon" should tangibly demonstrate what a guest is about to hear inside.

Chapter 3
When Hospitality Meets Hostility

In our churches and communities, there are three types of hostile people. Some are hostile towards the **gospel.** To them, it's antiquated, senseless, and for weak people. Others are hostile towards a **bad experience.** A previous run-in with a church turned them off to organized religion. And a few are just **generally hostile**: it seems there's nothing about life that they enjoy. Humility in our hospitality can start to heal their hostility.

Chapter 4
Beyond Parking Shuttles and Smoke Machines

While every local church is a little different, every local church should know who they are and what they're about. Multiple menus and never-ending ministry approaches can confuse first-time guests as well as long-time members. Discovering your main thing will help your guests know who you are and what you stand for.

Chapter 5
When the Older Brother Rears His Head

They populate your pews. Fill your committees. And one stares back at you from the mirror. In Luke 15, Jesus tells the familiar story of a wayward prodigal and a forgiving father. But the prodigal's older brother - the rule-follower, the scorekeeper, the one who stayed and played the part - reminds us of our need to check our own hearts as we open the doors to our guests. We'll attempt to redeem the older brother and, in doing so, may find redemption for ourselves.

Chapter 6
It's Not About You

If we're not careful, the things that attract us to a church may eventually repel us from the church. If we're brought in by bells and whistles, those lures will have to get louder and flashier to hold our attention. As we mature as believers, we have to push through the "fight or flight" mentality and embrace grace in order to reach those who are coming behind us.