

Wanting Connection to Church Family? New App Bringing Faithful Together

Church attendance has been on a downward trend, leading to increased isolation among individuals even as doors remain open in the post-pandemic era.

Recognizing the need to reach out to those seeking faith and community, one organization is leveraging modern-day marketing techniques to revolutionize church outreach and spread the love of Jesus in the digital age.

Gallup data reveals that even before the COVID pandemic, membership in American houses of worship was heading below 50% for the first time in 80 years.

Over the years preceding the pandemic, overall church attendance dropped by 3%. The Pew Research Center attributes these declines, in part, to the challenges exacerbated by COVID, with one in five Americans reporting attending church in person less frequently than before the pandemic. However, Gloo, a ministry online platform, has been working diligently to connect people with local churches amidst this decline.

Devon Kline, the director of Gloo's Explorer Connections Program, highlights a new trend emerging as people who became disconnected from their local churches during the pandemic express a readiness to reconnect with their faith communities.

Using individuals' online search activity as a basis, Gloo taps into modern marketing strategies to connect people with relevant local churches. Relationship help emerges as a top trend in Gloo's research, and the organization capitalizes on this data to refine its marketing approach. Acting as an

online connection engine, Gloo helps individuals seeking faith connect with local churches and Christian organizations.

Churches and organizations partnering with Gloo invest in connecting with individuals through sponsored ads and search engine optimization. Responders, as Gloo refers to these partners, pay an annual fee ranging from \$1,500 to nearly \$4,000 to engage with explorers—the individuals seeking faith—and fill empty church seats with new souls.

Currently, over 6,300 registered churches are among the 23,000 organizations utilizing Gloo's tools.

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In just two years, Gloo has connected more than 150,000 people with churches across the United States, matching someone with a church every two and a half minutes. This means that every two and a half minutes, a church is introduced to someone in their community who may not have previously considered walking through their doors.

Gloo's notable partners include He Gets Us, a prominent organization that made its debut with two commercials during the Super Bowl as part of a \$100 million ad campaign aimed at making Jesus more relatable. Other major partners include Churches Care and K-Love Radio. While Gloo's primary goal is to bring people to Christianity, questions arise regarding the tension between marketing and conversion.

Despite these concerns, participating churches, such as Christ Fellowship Church in Florida, are experiencing the benefits of digital outreach. With Gloo's assistance, they have connected with over 500 people in the last 18 months, making it easier for them to share the gospel and reaching those who might not actively seek out a church through traditional means.

On average, participating churches can expect approximately 12

new connections each month. As these digital campaigns prove successful, outreach efforts are expanding beyond the web to public venues, including professional sporting events and music festivals.

Pastors and churches often become disconnected from their own communities, but thanks to Gloo, they are finding renewed opportunities to build stronger relationships with those who walk through their doors.

As Christians, we are reminded in Hebrews 10:25 of the importance of gathering together for worship and fellowship: “Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” It is in coming together that we can experience the support, encouragement and growth that comes from fellow believers.

Through innovative approaches like those undertaken by Gloo, the call to gather and share the love of Jesus continues to be fulfilled in the digital age.

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