**Barriers to Reaching the Cowboy Culture**

I. ***Judgmental Attitudes***

 Many in the cowboy culture are lost and unchurched and have been intentionally and unintentionally shunned by existing traditional churches. Many feel judged by Christians or feel unworthy of coming to church.

2. ***Physical Barriers***

 Fancy brick buildings, stained glass, steeples, red carpet, plush pews, fancy clothes all say to the lost in the cowboy culture, you must clean up and get right first before you come to church. While our traditional church brothers and sister may have never intended for those things to be barriers, in fact they just want to give their best to the Lord, these things can scream out to the lost and unchurched, "you're not worthy to be here".

3. ***Worship Barriers***

 A) ***Preaching***- There are several ways preaching can be a barrier to people in the cowboy culture.

 1) ***Length of message***- The according to research the top end of the average attention span of an adult is 20 minutes, when you factor in the fact that many will not be comfortable being present at all, long drawn out messages can be a barrier.

 2) ***Tone of message***- Many in traditional preachers focus on condemnation and judgment, while these are important to understand and need to be preached, lost folks need to hear about the grace, love and victory in Jesus.

 3) ***Content of message***- Abstract messages exploring the intricacies of God's word can be a barrier. Many in cowboy church will be lost or new believers, practical life application messages from God's word delivered with culturally relevant analogies and antidotes will benefit believers and non-believers alike.

 B) ***Music-*** Traditional church music can be a barrier. Most folks in the cowboy culture would not normally listen to the style of music that you find in traditional churches. Culturally relevant music can not only be a hook that brings folks in, but it can be a very effective way to deliver God's message through music to these people.

 C) ***Public Display of Emotion***- Worshiping God is a very emotional act, however, when trying to make lost and unchurched people comfortable, excessive displays of emotion can be a barrier. Over the top vocal congregations, hand raising, hand holding, over use of praise music to illicit emotion, dramatic prayer services while congregation is captive and pleading alter calls can all be things that keep unchurched folks away.

 D) ***Money-*** An over emphasis on money can be a barrier.

 1) ***Passing the plate*** can guilt people to give or make people feel bad if they can't give, both of which doesn't benefit the person.

 2) ***Panhandling*** from the pulpit- Pastors are obligated to preach biblical giving and to not do so is indefensible, however when preachers preach on giving every time the bank account is low or try to guilt congregations into giving instead of leading them through God's word to give, it can become a barrier.

 3) ***Transparency***- When information about how a church spends the money it receives is hidden or not available to those who are giving, it can be a barrier.

 E) ***Organization***- The more complicated the church structure and methods of operation are, the greater the barrier it is to folks involved. This is why simplicity is listed as a core value of cowboy church.