

# THE BARNABAS PAPERS

## Setting High Goals for Ministry

I admit that I did not reach all of my goals that I had set for our association, and myself, in this first year as the DOM. Maybe I set them too high? Maybe there were too many? Maybe I didn't work hard enough or long enough or fast enough to achieve them? I could go on and on asking myself these questions, but the simple fact is that I did not reach them like I had hoped.

Time has flown by and I really can't believe that it will be an entire year come the 18<sup>th</sup> of January. With the current track record of getting this newsletter out to the churches through digital and print documents, it might just be the first of the year until you read this article. But in all reality, the end of the calendar year is usually a time to reflect on the past 12 months and plan for the next dozen. In the space provided, I would like to reflect on some things that I have found to be critical for the nature of ministering to you, the churches, pastors and ministries of Grand Crossings Baptist Association. This is not an article to complain or seek help but a way of communicating to you that I am working hard for our Association and will be using what I have learned this year to propel me into 2017.

### Office work is a constant

When I started, I more or less needed to create from scratch, all documents and databases for the Association. Even when you think you are through with all of the information, a pastor leaves, a church changes something or you uncover you still have yet to find the contact information for the key communicator from every church. Please understand, I am not whining here, I am just stating that I am in the office a lot more than what I intended to be. It is all very good stuff, just time consuming. I do believe that with the vast majority of these things completed and needing simple maintenance from here on out, the office work will slow down.

A way that you can help me out in the future with this office work, is by sending me any changes in your church's contact information; such as new emails, leadership information, Executive Board members information, etc., when you get them, instead of me fishing for them later. Another way you could help is by sending me either electronically or in print, your church directory. On it you could highlight your leaders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, children's workers, youth workers, and so on. This helps me know how to network certain groups together.

### Meeting with Pastors is a challenge

I love our pastors. I love that most of them are Bi-Vocational. I wish they were all full time. I seriously feel like I have failed in meeting with the pastors as much as I would like to have done already. Along with meeting with the pastors outside of church services, I really wanted to be in every church at least once this year. I am close, and next year, this is a primary goal. By the way, I have my calendar ready for next year, so if you want to get me on the schedule to come preach at your church I would love to get you written down.

### Preaching verses Visiting

I love to preach and I cherish the opportunities that I have to come alongside you the church and the pastoral staff to communicate truth to the congregation. I did not realize at first, just how much preaching I would be doing. Please hear me, I will preach any and every time that I am invited to do so if there are not other calendar conflicts, but I really miss visiting our churches. I simply love our churches.

### Remember this is a Marathon not a sprint

Again going back to my initial comments, I wanted to do so much, so fast this year. Time has taught me to be more patient with certain aspects of ministry. Some things just take longer. Relationships take time.

### The Honeymoon is over

Actually, it was over about two weeks into being the DOM. Critics are going to come and go. It is the nature of ministry. I understand, that there are those who are not happy about a direction or decision that I have made. Maybe you agree that I have not worked hard enough, long enough, or fast enough for your taste. All that I can say is I am sorry, and I am working harder each day for the Kingdom. You can reach me anytime by my cell phone, email, or Facebook. I am a missionary. I serve you. I am not your boss. I am available anytime that you need me. If I have failed you over these last months, please let me know how I can better know you and serve you right now.

Yes, I set high goals for our Association, and myself this past year. I have also set high goals and standards for the year 2017. I will take what I have learned and put them to practice. I don't know if I will write something similar to this article next year, but what I do know is that I love the Lord, I love my family, I love my church, and I love GCBA. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Associational Missionary. I am looking forward to God's work in 2017.

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## Missions Partnerships

### *Who's The MO Team to Me*

by Rob Roise

About 18 miles east of Bottineau, North Dakota, there is a people group from an entirely different cultural background!

They have a fascinating, ancient, hard, and heartbreaking history. And I read a statistic somewhere that says that of all the *reached* people groups in the World, The Native Americans are, by far, the **most** resistant to The Gospel of Jesus Christ!

With so much at stake for the Glory of God amongst a hard people in such desperate circumstances, one would expect The Church nearby to respond in outpourings of Love and costly discipleship... all in Biblical Proportions! When in reality there are locals in our churches here who advise newcomers (like us) to get our shopping done before the end of the month because Government Checks are issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> and then **they** (the Natives) come shopping at our Walmart... in other words: "Stay away from *those people*."

The Church Culture in Bottineau is several generations old. People proudly tell stories of ancestors who came from Norway, Sweden, and Germany 140 years ago and made sure they built the town Church before they managed to build their own homes. And for decades, that dedication to God's Word, to Christ Himself and His Church has marked the very identity of any given multi-generational family group throughout this entire area.

However, The Church here *today* generally seems to be relegated to a novel bygone niche; a compartment of society that's long since seen its best days. It makes me think that "*Church*," appearing to once be a *strength* or *influence* within our community either was, or has at least become *mere tradition*. It's just "*what we do some Sundays*."

It's really no wonder, then, that such odd, obstinate, and troubled people like the Natives *should just be ignored*... after all, it's not like we're unkind, right? It's just best if we all leave each other be...

With that, and many other examples and attitudes, the spiritual distance we put between ourselves and the Natives (and between one another, no less) becomes a tragically insurmountable obstacle to The Gospel when it comes to *our* proclamation of *it to them*.

Story continues on page 3

*Picture is of Eric Fleming (Youth Pastor at Centennial Baptist in Mexico) on the left and Rob Roise, Youth Pastor at Grace Church in Bottineau, North Dakota. We have partnered with Rob and Grace for 8 years on missions.*



## Missions Partnership

### *But there's Hope!*

For the last several years, The Grand Crossing Baptist Association has been sending Missionary Teams up our way to do various outreach ministries all over The Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. (I call y'all "**The Mo Team.**")

And the significance of this outpouring to the people on The Reservation here is really beyond any estimation!

You've doubtlessly heard from GCBA leaders what they've seen and experienced here as they've reached young and old alike. And my hope and my prayer for the GCBA is that you'll keep sending teams each summer! That this ministry will continue to grow and expand, and even more stories of God's Grace in Triumph will pour back into your Churches every summer through those who come!

But what I'm writing to tell all of you about is the audacious, exciting, and desperately necessary \*PERMANENT\* impact that the MO Team is getting set to make up here!

As I've titled this article: Who's the MO Team to me? My answer is, "Hope!" Hope for these Native People! Otherwise, all there is spiritually for the Natives here is brokenness and neglect. I will promptly raise my hand to say that as local Christians, "it's our fault!" Of course it is! For the last Century, it's been our fault!

While it's outside of our control whether Natives receive the Gospel, realistically expecting that, statistically speaking, there's a chance that most maybe won't... there's STILL no good reason that outreaching and influential discipleship ministry has been neglected on the Reservation by local churches! Therefore, there's no good reason why it couldn't even now begin as a permanent outreach ministry from a local standpoint at any given time!

But, so far, it's only been The MO Team... If it's going to happen at all, and if anyone's going to lead local Churches into The local Mission here, it's going to be The MO Team...

These Native people need Jesus. And He comes to them in amazing and personal ways through you! And right now, I lament, there is no one else!

The day may dawn when God comes upon us here in Bottineau; to all Churches throughout our area, and Calls us; effectually commanding us to lay our lives down for our neighbors, The Natives!

I'm certain that when He does, it will be your Glory and your Joy to see the few weeks per year you give to those up here take root and grow until Ministry that was once only seeds that you'd sown spread every day, and all on its own.....Till it no longer needs you... It's true. God can call anyone. He can do His work here through anyone. He always does. And He still may. But right now, He's doing His Work up here through YOU!

The GCBA!

May God grant fame for His Great Name, so that in Him your Joy continues to abound until all you say and do reflects in itself to others, and overflows into them all of God's Joy in you!

Amen.

# Leadership

## 5 Signs You're a Leader Who Talks Too Much

By Charles Stone

<http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/291493-5-signs-youre-leader-talks-much-charles-stone.html>

"Healthy conversations should be two-way streets, but science tells us that we tend to spend 60 percent of our conversations talking about ourselves."

Nobody likes to talk to others who monopolize conversations and drone on about themselves. Healthy conversations should be two-way streets, but science tells us that we tend to spend 60 percent of our conversations talking about ourselves. And unfortunately, leaders can talk too much, not necessarily by monopolizing conversations, but by giving too many answers. So, how do you know if you are a leader who talks too much and what can we do to stop? Consider these indicators.

**Five signs you're a leader who talks too much:**

**1. You do more than half the talking in staff meetings.**

If you do, your staff may feel the meeting is all about you rather than about the team.

**2. Staff and volunteers come to you for answers more often than to offer solutions.**

This can indicate an unhealthy dependence on you to solve their problems.

**3. You tend to rush conversations with others.**

If you're a quick thinker and get frustrated with time wasters, you'll struggle with this one.

**4. Silence in a conversation really, really bothers you.**

Action biased leaders often view silence as another time waster.

**5. While another person is talking, you're framing your response.**

It's easy to slip into this one. When we do, we miss half of what the other person is saying.

I suggest these three solutions to help you stop talking too much.

**1. Practice the art of the W.A.I.T.**

WAIT is an acronym for this question, "Why Am I Talking?" In meetings and conversations with others when you sense you may be dominating, mentally ask yourself this question. I've found it helps me listen much more carefully and talk much less.

**2. Use the AWE question.**

In Michael Bungay Stanier's book *The Coaching Habit* (which is a phenomenal book every leader should read), he calls the AWE question the best coaching question in the world. It stands for, "And what else?" When you think a conversation has come to the end, he suggests asking this question three to five times to get everything from the other person.

**3. Ask "What do you think?"**

This handy question helps when you sense someone wants you to solve his problem. You may immediately know the answer, but by answering it you may foster an unhealthy dependency on you. Often when I use this question with a staff person, her or she comes up with their own solution. The result? They buy in better to their solution and they learn to think better for themselves.

The Scriptures often remind us to listen more and talk less. These are my two favorites on this topic.

*James 1:19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry. (NLT)*

*Prov. 18:13 Answering before listening is both stupid and rude. (The Message)*

What has helped you become a better listener?

*Dr. Charles Stone is Lead Pastor at West Park Church in London, Ontario, Canada, and the founder of StoneWell Ministries, a pastor coaching and church consulting ministry. He is the author of four books including, "People Pleasing Pastors: Avoiding the Pitfalls of Approval Motivated Leadership" (IVP 2014), and his most recent book, "Brain-Savvy Leaders: The Science of Significant Ministry" (Abingdon, May 2015).*

## Discipleship / Sunday School Ministry

### Nets and Targets

A little while back, I used this space to talk about the need to clearly define the purpose of any small group in your church. I want to talk about targets again but this time focused on the audience. Purpose defines what you are trying to do but we also need to think about who we're trying to reach. It is a good reminder that the fishermen Jesus called used nets not lures. That is, they took any fish their nets brought up. As churches and as individual Christians, we should definitely be ready to take in whatever "fish" the Holy Spirit brings into our nets. That does not mean, however, that we are forbidden from aiming where a particular type of fish is more likely to be. Before my point gets lost and some of you set out for your waders and fishing poles, let me explain.

Each small group (like a Sunday School class) needs a purpose and a target audience. Like you, I'm never going to turn someone away from my Sunday School class when they walk through the door. I like fishing with a net. We do have a target audience for each class, however. This helps the teacher prepare and helps new folks find where they fit the best. I should stop and say that the best way to add new folks to any class is for a class member to invite their friends. These folks automatically fit in the group because they are already connected. Still, when new folks join your church or when guests who have been attending worship decide to try Sunday School, it is very helpful to have some general guides for how to find the right class.

Maybe the "young people's class" at your church means anyone under 50. Great! That's helpful. Do you have a group of parents with younger children? Parents of teenagers? Age divisions work also but we have found that, for parents, the age of their kids matters more than the age of the parents when finding a group. Any target is better than no target. Targets are not boundaries. I can't imagine telling an adult, "You need to go to a different class." People should go where they fit and the individual is the best judge of that. When I first came to Union Hill we had a dear grandmother in a class full of young married couples. This was odd to me but I later learned that she had taught that class for many years. When she retired from teaching, the relationships she had built with these "young 'uns" made her feel more at home in that class than with her peers. I have no problem with that but it didn't change the target of our class.

I'm blessed to be at a church with around 15 adult Sunday School classes. This past Sunday we started a new one because we were not doing a great job of getting 18-30-year-olds in our Sunday School classes. We had a few here and there but we had more coming to our worship services than were going to Sunday School. I'm happy to report that, because of the excitement of starting something new and because our new teacher contacted many of the folks who we hoped would begin attending, we had 8 people in that class this Sunday! Two of those 8 came from another class where they were happy but they wanted to try something new. I'm sure you can see the potential problem there but we had talked to the teachers who we thought could be affected ahead of time. Guess what, two of the folks who came to the new class are probably not going to "stick" there. They have a young child so I bet they're going to find they fit better in the class that just lost two members. They came because it was something new. They will keep coming because they find a small community where they belong.

Finally, some of you are thinking, "We don't have enough people coming to make multiple classes." For some that may be true but if you have 20 adults, I'd say you have enough for two classes. Maybe our thinking is backwards. Maybe we don't have enough people coming *because* we don't have multiple classes! Pick a target, train a teacher, start a new group, fling the net and see what the Lord does!

*Article was written by LP Cook III, Associate Pastor at Union Hill Baptist Church. LP also serves as our Church Strengthening Team leader for the Association. He can be reached for questions concerning Discipleship, Sunday School and Church Strengthening by contacting Union Hill Baptist Church.*

## Worship Ministry

### What If I Don't Want to Sing?

An article by Matt Damico, NOVEMBER 20, 2016

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-if-i-don-t-want-to-sing>

At our church, everyone shows up ready to sing with full hearts each Sunday morning. Nobody arrives after a tense car ride to church, or a difficult morning with children, or a late night of studying, or a long week of work. Everyone is well-rested and eager to make melody to God.

Except, not really.

Each Sunday, a good portion of our churches gather for worship with genuine anticipation for singing, praying, and hearing the word. But not everyone. Life is too real, and the ancient fall of Genesis 3 is still too valid, to think nobody walks into church with scars, shame, or even cold apathy.

*Is it better to be honest  
and silent than an  
audible hypocrite?*

But let's be honest. Even the most stably enthusiastic in our gatherings have had Sundays when we wished our hearts burned more brightly. We experience an inner struggle in these moments. On the one hand, we know that we should sing because we're at church. On the other, it's good to be authentic and real, so it feels like a lie to sing when we don't feel like it. Is it better to be honest and silent than an audible hypocrite?

Of course, we don't want to portray something false about ourselves. Nevertheless, we have at least two good reasons for us to open our mouths and lift our voices even when we don't feel like it.

### You Have the Voice Your Neighbor Needs

*In that moment, when the broken believer struggles to address God, we remember that God has told us to address one another with our songs.*

People in every congregation have no voice at times. They're not singing, but not because they don't want to. They're weak and worn, and in that hour they can hardly speak, much less sing. Maybe it's a young woman who can't sing "It Is Well" because that Sunday marks one year since her mother's death, or a young couple who can't sing "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" a few days after another miscarriage.

In God's infinite love, he has not left these people alone. Instead, he has ordained for corporate worship to work not only vertically, but horizontally. In that moment, when the broken believer struggles to

address God, we remember that God has told us to address one another with our songs (Ephesians 5:19).

When we don't feel like singing, we have an opportunity to consider the interests of others and count them more significant than our own (Philippians 2:3-4). We have the privilege, in a way, to open our mouths for the mute (Proverbs 31:8). You may not want to sing, but the person next to you, in front of you, or behind you may need you to sing. The sight and sound of your singing may impress on them the truths of the gospel, or spur them to believe, with the psalmist, "Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you" (Psalm 63:3).

The sight and sound of God's people singing is a powerful, stirring exhortation for struggling hearts to believe the truths they hear sung around them. The next Sunday you're inclined to keep quiet, remember your neighbors and sing their song.

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## Worship Ministry

### Singing Bends Our Souls to God

Another reason to sing when we don't feel like it is this: singing can be the best way to start feeling like it.

It is impossible for us to desire the right things all the time. Our wills and affections often lag behind our knowledge. I know I should exercise more, but the desire is sometimes absent. I know I should pray more, but my heart is often cold. Does that mean that when I do exercise or pray after some self-convincing, I'm not really exercising or praying? Of course not. It's better to desire everything we ought, but we need not wait to feel rightly before we act rightly.

In Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis articulates this with typical poignancy in regard to loving our neighbor when the desire isn't there:

“Though natural likings should normally be encouraged, it would be quite wrong to think that the way to become charitable is to sit trying to manufacture affectionate feelings. . . . The rule for all of us is perfectly simple. Do not waste time bothering whether you “love” your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets: When you are behaving as if you loved someone you will presently come to love him.”

So it is with our singing. Let's not wait for our hearts to burn before we open our mouths. Opening our mouths can be an important part of kindling the fire.

This isn't an up-by-the-bootstraps approach to corporate worship. Lifting your voice, when you'd rather not, can be an act of faith, believing that God's word is true: “it is good to sing praises to our God” (Psalm 147:1). You may need to pray, “O Lord, open my lips” (Psalm 51:15), but before long, don't be surprised to find your heart beginning to refill with thanks and praise.

Perhaps it will be this weekend. Another Sunday is coming when you will feel a cool disinterest toward the singing of the saints. When that happens, remember God's promises, remember your neighbor, and remember what a privilege it is, and what a catalyst it can be, to sing to the one who has saved us.

Article was submitted by Brad Kerr, Associate Pastor of Worship and Education at FBC Fulton.

***Let's not wait for our hearts to burn before we open our mouths.***

# Deacon Ministry

## What Pastors Wish Deacons Knew by Derek Gentle [http://www.baptiststart.com/pastors\\_deacons.htm](http://www.baptiststart.com/pastors_deacons.htm)

I appreciate you more than you know

There is not a greater blessing in a pastor's life than a godly deacon who loves the Lord and loves the Word of God. I feel that I couldn't have a more wonderful relationship with them. I wish every pastor were so blessed. Just looking out in the service and seeing you there is an encouragement. Knowing you are praying for me motivates me. Knowing you share the vision of a growing, evangelistic church and impacting our community challenges me to my best efforts! God bless you godly deacon. You are appreciated!

Not only do I appreciate you, I need you. Let me list some reasons why. These items represent a general view, based on the experiences of numerous pastors at multiple churches.

### **Pastors need their deacons to understand the level of stress they live with**

There are several causes of this stress. Pastors deal with life and death issues regularly. They are always on call. They live with constant deadlines. There is the unrelenting creative process; every Wednesday and every Sunday they have to be ready to preach and teach. If they take some vacation time, but have to come back to preach on Sunday, they are not fully on vacation, and are not completely with their families. They have to spend a lot of "think time" preparing their work. Then, they have a large number of people who go home and evaluate how they did. In fact, every decision they make, from personnel matters to the order of service is under constant scrutiny. They go into monthly deacons meetings not knowing if someone will be upset about something. Usually, there isn't a problem, but they never know. If someone goes into the hospital and they don't know about it, there are those who complain to fellow church members that the pastor didn't visit. Your pastor needs you to remember that this stress is a part of his daily life. Sometimes they need you to come to their rescue when it gets to be too much.

### **Pastors don't have all of the spiritual gifts**

Pastors are expected to be preachers, administrators, hospital chaplains, and friends of the home bound. They are personal evangelists, counselors, leaders, and visionaries. How many times does a church lose its pastor and then vow to find a man who will do what the last pastor couldn't? "Brother Joe was a fine preacher, but he wasn't good to visit; our next preacher will be more of a pastor!" Then, after Brother Sid leaves: "I loved ole Brother Sid; he sure was good to visit, but he couldn't preach a lick, bless his heart. Our next man needs to be able to preach!" Why can't church members figure out that one man is limited to one personality, one driving passion, and one spiritual gift-set? The truth is, even if a man *were* gifted in *every* way, he wouldn't have enough *time* to do everything well. Like you, doing what I am gifted at energizes me; doing the things that I'm not drains me. Accept your pastor for who he is and then staff and use volunteers to balance his weaknesses.

### **Pastors have multiple constituencies with whom they must deal**

Many church members have only to please their immediate supervisors. Pastors don't have one supervisor to whom they report. (True, they report to the Lord, but let's face it, how long they get to stay at the church and if they get raises, and if their leadership is supported... well, these matters aren't always determined by the Lord). There are the deacons, the personnel committee, the stewardship committee, the senior adults, the young adults, and on and on.

### **Pastors don't have the power many think they have**

Some church members own and run their own business free from "political considerations," but the pastor isn't able to run the church his own way. Often, pastors are given responsibility without being given the needed authority. For example, he is given the responsibility of supervising the rest of the ministerial staff. However, the pastor's input often isn't even sought at budget time when raises are being discussed. He may have to go through a committee, the deacons, and a church vote to dismiss a staff member. Sometimes, staff members have a group of supporters in the church who would make such a move risky. The pastor is dependent on the good will of each staff member and his own ability to lead others based only on his moral influence. The occasional bad-apple staff member will realize this and use it to his advantage.

### **There are often unrealistic expectations placed on the family of the pastor**

The deacons and church should know that they did not call an additional staff member for the price of one. The call to pastor is unique and the pastor's family has the role of supporting him, but not the role of being the unofficial staff. Also, children are children whether they are pastor's children or not.

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# Deacon Ministry

## Getting time away is difficult for pastors

First, Pastors are generally conscientious about taking their vacation time. They will put the church calendar first and take what's left. Though they should, many will not take all the time they have coming. Further, church members can get away for a few weekends during the year. Some pastors have a difficult time taking two days in a row off. If a pastor's wife holds a job and has to work on Friday, it is particularly difficult. For example, in one church, we had a stretch in which we had to postpone or come back early from 80% of our vacations. Someone had died each time. It became something of a joke, "Uh oh, the pastor is going away." One can imagine how such experiences could hinder pastors' children's attitude about having a dad in the ministry. These situations are almost always unavoidable, but a little alertness on the part of deacons can help their ministers make up for lost vacation time. Is there someone there to see that he is getting (and taking) enough time off? Many deacons would be shocked if a pastor of, say ten years, asked for a sabbatical to study and refresh himself. We have to take in more than we put out or we burn out. Many churches fail to realize that they are using the man up and draining his internal resources. If you look out for him, he will be more effective... longer. As Vance Havner said, referring to the practice of Jesus, "If we don't 'come apart', we will come apart." It is to the church's advantage to encourage their minister to get away for a break now and then.

## Respect his training

A pastor may have a college degree, a masters degree, perhaps an earned doctorate... he may have have been to innumerable training events... He may have shelves of books of commentaries and hundreds of books on theology, evangelism, and church growth. He may have given his life to learning about pastoring since his teens. Yet, occasionally, the burden of proof is placed on the pastor to "prove" the details of his recommendations in deacons meetings. No pastor minds answering questions - and most ministers aren't bothered when people of good will disagree. But sometimes, such a discussion is a case of people pooling their ignorance. They may be arguing with the only person in the room who knows what he's talking about. Feel free to ask the questions (or to vote no, if necessary), but respect the pastor's training.

## The meeting ain't deac-ing

Attending meetings and giving orders to the paid employees of the church is not "serving" and it is not fulfilling the office of deacon. It's more like Lou Holtz's description of football: Twenty-two people desperately needing a rest being watched by 60,000 people desperately needing some exercise. One minister wrote me to say, "I wish all deacons were familiar with, not only the qualifications of a pastor which they expect to be adhered to, but also the qualifications of a deacon which should carry the same weight and commitment."

## In most churches, there's no one with the job of looking out for the pastor

The deacons and personnel committee are sometimes called upon to deal with personnel crises as they arise. On the other hand, most churches have no one who understands minister's taxes or who, during the budget process, takes the time to look over the history of his compensation. Many don't think to check when he last received a raise or to look at the inflation rate for the previous year. There is always that group determined to see that he doesn't get too much, but often there isn't a group to see that he gets paid *enough*.

## The dog isn't sleeping just because it's not biting you

Sometimes, a pastor will have a member dealing him continuous misery. When he asks for help in dealing with the situation, he might hear something like, "Pastor, let's let sleeping dogs lie." However, a sleeping dog is one who isn't bothering anyone. That dog isn't likely to bite unless provoked. If a member is harassing your pastor, he isn't a sleeping dog, he it's a biting dog. Go to his aid!

## The church is not General Motors

The church does not exist, as does a business, to make a profit or to hoard money. The church is on a mission. The main work of the whole church for the whole age is evangelism. The church is content oriented and the Bible is its source of authority. It's about Jesus! Deacons have the opportunity and influence to help the entire church family stay on message.

## Pastors would rather hear bad news from their friends than from their enemies

Sometimes, we pastors are going to mess up. And sometimes someone has to tell us the hard facts. When this is true, we would rather hear it from our friends than from our enemies. Our friends want us to succeed. They will tell us in love, without trying to embarrass us or wound us. They have our best interests at heart. We need you to be that kind of friend.

# Technology in Ministry

## Seven Core Productivity Apps for Pastors and Church Leaders

An article from Jonathan Howe, November 10, 2016

<http://thomrainer.com/2016/11/seven-core-productivity-apps-pastors-church-leaders/>

I bought a new iPhone for my wife this weekend. While in the process, I noticed how few apps she had on her phone. Mine on the other hand is packed full of apps I use quite often and others I may have used just once.

Even though she has several dozen fewer apps on her phone than I do, my wife and I still use a core set of apps for many of the same functions. My guess is that many of you do as well because we all use our smart phones for similar purposes unless you work in a highly specialized industry.

So for those who are in ministry and ministry related jobs, what are the core productivity apps? A Bible app seems like an obvious start, but what next? Here are seven suggestions:

1. **Evernote.** This is really the perfect app for ministry—or any line of work. You can store sermon notes, track mileage for hospital visits, create to do lists, and so much more. Even after their recent price changes, the functionality and cross-platform syncing make Evernote a must-have.
2. **Wunderlist.** You can use this app to track to-do lists for a team, personal to-do lists, and much more. There are other list apps and even some that are specifically for project management. If you need something more robust than Wunderlist, check out Basecamp or Trello.
3. **Tweetbot.** This is my preferred app for Twitter. It may not be a free app, but it is worth every penny. No ads, no promoted tweets, no tweets out of chronological order, and customizable tabs, Multi-account functionality is also excellent in this app if you manage your church's account along with your personal account.
4. **Facebook Pages.** I manage a few dozen Facebook Pages, so a dedicated app is quite helpful. I realize you can manage the pages in the regular Facebook app, but having the Pages app makes it easier to stay on task without worrying about my personal content on Facebook.
5. **Buffer.** There are several good social media scheduling apps out there. Hootsuite and Sprout Social are two of the best. But I prefer Buffer for my phone for two main reasons: I'm not distracted by other content while using it and it gives analytics in the app. Very few apps provide analytics in the app. Many reserve that function for desktop sites. So I give the nod to Buffer simply for the accessibility of my social media stats.
6. **Speaky.** This may be an unfamiliar app to many of you, but I find it immensely helpful. Have you ever wished you could listen to an article instead of having to read it? Basically with the Speaky app, you can turn articles from blogs or news sites into a mini podcast of sorts. It's not always perfect (abbreviations and acronyms are often hilariously butchered), but Speaky allows you to consume written content audibly.
7. **Key Ring.** This is likely another unfamiliar app, but I guarantee you'll love it. At one time, I had a key ring with a dozen or so "loyalty tags" or "membership tags" on it. Now I just have keys because I converted all of those tags into digital versions in the Key Ring app. I never have to fumble with my keys to find the right tag. It's right in the app on my phone. It saves me time, and if I'm in my wife's car with her keys, I still have all my tags and info.

These are just seven apps I use to help with productivity. What would you add to the list?

Article was submitted by Brad Kerr, Associate Pastor of Worship and Education at FBC Fulton.

# Evangelism

## Evangelism and Peace, Hope, and Joy at Christmas

By the time this newsletter hits your inbox, you will have undoubtedly been to or invited to at least one Christmas party. If you are not a pastor, it may have very well been a Holiday party. Regardless, it is the one time of the year when everyone pauses to celebrate the birth of the savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Even those who are opposed to Christmas, Christianity, or anything religious, understands what this time of year is all about and that brings me to my thought for this month.

We sing Christmas songs, even on secular radio stations and in businesses that talk of peace on earth and goodwill to men. We will hear songs like *Joy to the World* (which is actually about Christ's Second Coming!) and songs of hope abound. What an opportunity to take advantage of the season and offer even complete strangers true peace, true hope, and true joy.

So many possibilities are before us as we shop and eat. For many who we will interact with, the truth of 2 Corinthians 6:2 will ring out, "...Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

How can I have a gospel conversation with someone in a checkout lane or while ordering my food? That is a great question and I am glad you asked. First, you must prepare yourself by praying to the Lord of the harvest. Ask Him for opportunities to proclaim the gospel to at least one person every time you are out shopping or eating or at a Christmas/holiday party.

Second, you must have a basic understanding of the gospel. Sinners need the gospel and we are all sinners. As a believer, you need the gospel as much as the unbeliever. The savior is Jesus Christ and the manner of salvation that God has ordained is through faith in the Son. You need to be able to transition a conversation within 30 seconds to the One who saves.

Third, you must be intentional. This might be forcing yourself into a conversation that you would not otherwise have. It might be being aware of the music that is playing in the store or the restaurant and using a lyric to transition to the gospel.

For example, let's say *Silent Night* is playing on the radio. Where the lyric talks of "sleep in heavenly peace," you can talk about the need for peace and how it never seems to be possible on the world stage but it is attainable at the personal level. From there, you are able to share how you have experienced true peace in Christ Jesus.

Another example might be the Christmas sign hanging in the window. Simply ask the person you want to proclaim the gospel with what they think of the use of the word Christmas. When they answer, you will already be in a Christ-centered conversation. It is just a matter of proclaiming the need of faith in the Christ of Christmas.

Perhaps you will be able to present the free gift of salvation in Christ to someone this year. I pray you are.

If you were able to proclaim the gospel in an everyday setting this Christmas season, I would love to hear from you. Please email me at [tdelaney017@gmail.com](mailto:tdelaney017@gmail.com) to share your story. Remember, successful evangelism is the actual proclamation of the gospel and not necessarily someone placing their faith in Christ though that is the desired outcome of every evangelistic encounter.

Merry Christmas and may God bless you and your family this year with His presence,

*Terry*

Terry Delaney serves as the Evangelism Team Leader for GCBA and is the pastor at Union Baptist Church outside of Mexico, MO.

## Youth Ministry

### Jesus was a Youth Worker

<http://awanaym.org/blog/jesus-was-a-youth-worker>

Article written by Joshua Griffin October 25, 2016

Most people run out of teenagers' lives. And with good reason ... they are nuts! Developmentally they are all over the place, everything is red-lining, off kilter or running wild. But as a youth worker – we run into their lives.

When I meet people on airplanes while traveling, as soon as I tell them I work with teenagers they just shake their head in awe. If I could read their minds, I'm sure I would hear, "Ha! This guy is nuts ... you couldn't pay me enough to work with teenagers." And while the "you can't pay me enough" part is true, I love running into the mess of their lives. Over 20 years in youth ministry there's nothing I haven't seen. I'm ready and prepared to care for students in the rollercoaster thrill ride of young adulthood.

I think Jesus knew this feeling better than we think. Historians tell us that many of the disciples were very young men, several of which were probably still in their teenage years. So my first big observation is... Jesus was a youth pastor! YES! Sweet vindication!

I think Peter may be the perfect, Biblical example of what it looks like to mentor a teenager!

- **Peter was impulsive.** Like the kid in my youth group who carved his name in the coffee table with a screwdriver during Life Group, Peter cut the ear off of Malchus. Jesus shook his head, then miraculously 'super glued' the ear back on.
- **Peter said things without thinking.** Yet Jesus loved him and pushed back gently (and at times not so gently).
- **Peter was opportunistic.** But Jesus told him to be patient and humble and eventually Jesus 'built the church on him' as the Rock.
- **Peter left others out, liked cliques and caused trouble.** He would have been kicked out of most youth groups. And yet Jesus sees potential in him, and unlocks it with patient discipleship. We can learn a lot from our Savior, the youth pastor. What an incredible, long-suffering Jesus who ran into his students' lives to help them know the Way.

That's our job, too.

Blessings as you serve students this week!

Josh Griffin has served in youth ministry for 20+ years and is the co-founder of Download Youth Ministry

## GCBA Ministry - Camp Cedar Crest

### Camp Cedar Crest Committee Update

There have been an inordinate number of changes with your Camp Cedar Crest Committee since October. As many of you are aware, Josh and Tammi Bennett accepted a call to Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, Kentucky. Also, Candice and Bart Bockenstedt have resigned their various positions on the committee. Due to Josh leaving for Kentucky, I was nominated and elected unanimously as the president of the committee.

I would like to personally thank Josh and Tammi and Candice and Bart for their work on camp for so many years. I believe Candice has been involved in Cedar Crest for 15 years! All four of these men and women loved the ministry of Camp Cedar Crest and truly wanted what was best for the camp at all times.

To say we are in a season of transition would be an understatement! As I shared with the committee members comprised from both associations, we are asking for prayer first and foremost. Please pray for wisdom as we move forward with the various camps and retreats we are planning in 2017. There will be some tough decisions to make and no one on the committee is taking these decisions lightly.

Second, please pray for unity. This is not only on the committee (which I believe we are all unified) but for the associations and the many churches that comprise the two associations. One of the points I made in our November meeting, and a point I will continue to make as long as I am involved in the committee, is that we are to be accountable to the associations.

There have been many recent rumors of DOM's wanting to sell the camp or associational leaderships not wanting to support the camp. As a member of the Leadership Council of GCBA, I can assure you that 1) Preston Thompson does not want to sell the camp and if he did, he would have a mutiny from every other member of the council on his hands. 2) The Leadership Council and our DOM are all extremely supportive of the Camp whether it be through the camps our associations host or helping fund some of the many needed repairs and upgrades the Camp Cedar Crest Board is working through.

Finally, please be in prayer to the Lord of the harvest that He will supply the workers for what amounts to our association's greatest evangelistic endeavor each year. Please consider helping in one way or another with your Camp Cedar Crest. For now, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at [tdelaney017@gmail.com](mailto:tdelaney017@gmail.com). Please stay tuned as more information is forthcoming and will be shared when it is available.

Thank you and God bless,

*Terry Delaney*

President, Camp Cedar Crest Committee

## Children / Family Ministry

# 20 Christmas and Thanksgiving Family Night Ideas

[childrensministry.com/articles/20-family-friendly-holiday-ideas/](http://childrensministry.com/articles/20-family-friendly-holiday-ideas/) By Children's Ministry Magazine 11/6/2015

Give these 20 Christmas and Thanksgiving Family Night Ideas to slow down the craziness of this time of year—and focus on God. Or use them yourself!

'Tis the season to be jolly — and busy! Families have to cook a turkey for the Thanksgiving potluck, shop, cook, clean for company, get their kids to choir rehearsal, attend the Advent program, wrap gifts, go caroling with their Bible study group, and drop the kids off for their Christmas party. And on and on...

Wouldn't it be nice this holiday season to clear the church calendar and help families focus on what's really important about this season of the year? (Okay, I agree, one or two things are important to keep!)

Encourage families to set aside a Family Night each week. Perhaps they'll stay in for the evening, join with another family for fun activities, or serve another family. Share these ideas with families to help them plan for more than pizza and a movie.

### JUST OUR FAMILY

- 1 Look at a photo album of family memories. Or watch clips from homemade family videos. Begin conversations with "Remember when..."  
Video a good memory and send it to the person who was part of it.
- 2 Buy a new game as a family gift for Christmas. Open it early and play it together.
- 3 Work on a jigsaw puzzle. Play Christmas carols in the background.
- 4 Each family night, read aloud a few chapters from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens until it's finished.
- 5 Have each family member choose a Christmas carol, read one verse, and tell why it has special meaning.
- 6 Make special cards for grandparents. Together, write a message on each card.
- 7 Have each family member think of something helpful to do for another family member. Write the idea on a piece of paper, sign it, and put it in a box. During the next seven days, do the helpful thing and present the box to the right recipient. Repeat this each week.
- 8 Go for a walk together. Look for the brightest star, the largest pine cone, the most interesting house decorations, and so on.
- 9 Help each other memorize a Christmas verse, a passage, or a psalm.
- 10 Go through the alphabet naming gifts from God. The first person begins, "God gave our family an apple tree." The next person says, "God gave our family an apple tree and a basketball goal." Keep adding items. See how far your family can go through the alphabet and remember the gifts named.

### FAMILY FRIENDS

- 1 Invite a family that's different from your own to dinner. It may be a single person, a single-parent family, or a family who has a child with special needs.
- 2 Decorate Christmas cookies with another family. Use a roll of prepared sugar-cookie dough or make your own.
- 3 Take a Christmas lights tour of your favorite places. Combine with other families to use the church bus. Or you could rent a bus if you have enough people. End your tour at someone's house for hot cider and Christmas cookies.
- 4 Get with another family and each share one holiday tradition.
- 5 Have a simple supper together that symbolizes togetherness in the family of God. It may be vegetable soup or a salad that both families contribute to. Note the individual parts and how they make up the whole. Include a loaf of bread to "break bread" together. Read Acts 2:42-47.

### FAMILY TO FAMILY

- 1 Make hot chocolate mix, freezer jam, or a simple fruit bread. Give to neighbors or people who live near your church. Write a Christmas message on each item.
- 2 Join with other families to sing Christmas carols to elderly people.
- 3 Trade child care with another family for an evening or Saturday so you can shop, bake, clean, decorate, or sleep.
- 4 Help children shop for gifts for their parents (particularly in a single-parent household). Help children wrap and tag their gifts.
- 5 Adopt a needy family and provide gifts and food for their Christmas celebration.

*The author, Bobbie Bower, is a children's ministry consultant in Kansas.*

*Want more great help with helping parents with faith tips and insights? Check out the customizable Parenting Christian Kids newsletter.* You know that communicating with parents is critical and that parents aspire to raise strong Christian kids in a troubled world. The *Parenting Christian Kids* newsletter will help you—and parents—do just that! With incredible content for parents and a fun, modern design, this newsletter will positively impact the families in your ministry.

# Church Revitalization

## Hope in Church Revitalization

This past November was the Renovate National Church Revitalization Conference in Orlando, Florida. During this time, we learned different ways to improve and help the churches which are plateaued and declining. Many people left the conference rejuvenated and ready to continue forward, as for myself, I came out of the conference with a deep sense of hope.

Hope is an important part of our lives and ministries. When it comes to the church, everyone should hope that their church will be the lighthouse for Christ in their communities. Unfortunately, we are living in the time where most churches just hope they can keep their doors open one more Sunday.

*If your church is running less than 100 a week, welcome to the club.*

I'm here to tell you there is hope for your church. At some point in history a group of believers came together and started your church. These men and woman felt the call to start the church and the truth of the matter is, God wanted that church right there in that location.

This is the hope that you should have. The knowledge that God appointed your church for His purpose for that community.

By having and believing in this knowledge, you now have a mission for the future. If your church is running less than 100 a week, welcome to the club. This is common for many churches in America. It can be hard to be the pastor of one of these churches, but this is not a reason to give up. In fact, it is the reason to keep going. You do not need to wait until the church is dead before bringing in a church planter or someone to start something new. You can bring your church back to life now!!!

Every church is different and the reason your church needs to be revitalized is unknown to me. Churches hit rough spots in their lives, but the church needs to know there is hope. If your church is pushing 100 or has 7 people each Sunday, there is still hope that it will be the lighthouse it needs to be for Christ.

There are a large number of unsaved people around your community. The job of the church is to reach these people. Remember, God placed your church in its community for a reason.

*When it comes to the church, everyone should hope that their church will be the lighthouse for Christ in their communities.*

Know your church. Know your community. Know your church's issues. Know your church's strengths. Never give up hope on God and His will. Be faithful and fulfill your ministry and your church will be renewed by God.

This is your hope.

This article was written by Pastor Wil Hoffmann from Rising Sun Baptist Church. He has a Masters degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Church Revitalization. If you have questions on how your church can begin the Revitalization process, please contact him through his church.

# Senior Adult Ministry

## CAN WE TALK? By Dr. Frank Fain

*Dr. Frank E. Fain is the Director of Adult Ministry Services for The Baptist Home. He serves as a resource person to churches, congregational leaders, senior adults and their families on issues related to aging and adult ministries.*

The Baptist Home's Adult Ministry Services offers to "adult children" a workshop entitled "The Things I Need to Know About My Parents." This workshop is free of charge and provides participants with ways to care for their aging parents.

Each workshop participant receives an "Important Information Workbook". This workbook is a system to organize parent's essential information such as financial, insurance, legal, medical, and property data. This information is helpful to adult children as they fulfill the biblical mandate to "honor your father and mother," especially when our aging parent(s) becomes ill or incapacitated.

In this brief column we cannot discuss all we do at the workshop, but there is enough space to share information about the "Talk" between adult children and their parents. The "Talk" is an opportunity for the entire family to become proactive in dealing with their parent's potential problems. We begin this conversation by asking our parents "Can We Talk?" Here are some conversational highlights we discuss about the "Talk" in the workshop:

- Start the conversation early – Do not wait until a health crisis occurs. While our parents are in good health we need to start discussing things such as their aging plan, potential medical issues, housing plans, and potential financial needs. Once our parent(s) develop a serious illness or is unable to make decisions it is more difficult to have these kinds of important talks.
- Pick the Right Time – When your parent(s) and you are calm and well rested, have a time when you can clearly communicate your concerns and learn needed information from your parents.
- Involve All Family Members – The majority of adult children are not in this situation alone. They have siblings and other close relatives that should be involved in this conversation. With parent(s) permission, you should enlist other family members to be involved in this talk.
- Deal with Facts – Be open and very clear about your parent's potential age related issues and your concerns about taking care of them.
- Focus on your parent's needs, concerns and wishes – Encourage your parent(s) to express their thoughts and feelings. For example you may be fearful about the old home place and the decline of the neighborhood. In your opinion, the old place is not a safe place for dad to live, but dad may be afraid of moving to a new place where he does not know the new people, banks, gas stations, coffee shops and grocery stores. Give your parents ample room and time to express their thoughts and concerns. After all it IS THEIR LIFE AND HOME WE ARE DISCUSSING.
- Introduce the "Important Information Workbook." – Make sure your parents understand that information gathered in this booklet will only be shared with people the parents approve of. Also stress that parents sharing this information help their adult children to be better caregivers to them.
- Respect your parents
  - o Listen carefully and try to understand their views
  - o Agree to Disagree – Your heart may tell you that you are right and that you know what needs to be done, but your parent's wishes should prevail unless there is a major health or safety issue at risk.
  - o Parents are to be in control of their decisions – Whenever possible let your parent(s) draw the conclusion and make the choices related to the issue at hand. They will be much happier parents if they feel they make the decision rather than having someone else "Tell them what to do."
- End on a positive note – End conversations before everyone becomes tired and irritable. Do not feel you need to decide everything in one session. Leave the conversation open. One discussion breaks the ice, but these topics need to be discussed repeatedly. Ask your parents to think about the various subjects you have been discussing. Conclude the conversation by saying you would like to continue this talk in a week or so.

If you would like more information about "The Things I Need to Know About My Parents" workshop or about "The Talk," contact Frank Fain at [ffain@thebaptisthome.org](mailto:ffain@thebaptisthome.org) or call (866) 454-2709.