

THE BARNABAS PAPERS

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Part of my job as the Associational Missionary is to help strengthen the ministries of our pastors and churches across our area. One way that I get to do this is by attending conferences with our pastors or by bringing resources back with me from special events in order to distribute to the pastors. It is my pleasure to walk alongside each and every congregation to equip and encourage them for advancing the Kingdom of Christ.

Recently, I attended a preaching conference and once again came away with some great resources. Along with the outlines of messages and notes from sermons that will undoubtedly strengthen my own ministry through the preaching of the Word of God, it was another resource that I write to you about. You see, on a platform, there laid hundreds of books and materials, donated from retired pastors who were giving away their libraries so that others could be equipped in their own ministries. The pastors, who attend the event, had multiple chances to comb through the materials and take what they wanted. I picked up a few here and there, but it was a set of boxes that really called to me. In these boxes lay a treasure trove of messages recorded on cassette tapes by men who have preached the Word of God mightily for many years. For those retired pastors, these tapes meant something to them. The conference attendees walked by them time and time again, but now they are mine to share with you.

I did not grow up hearing messages preached from dynamic preachers. I was born in 1982; therefore most of Billy Graham's crusades were before me or out of my reach. It really wasn't until I attended Promise Keeper rallies at Arrowhead Stadium and Faurot Field that I heard men like Dr. Tony Evans preach the Word of God with conviction and passion. From then, I knew that is what my heart desired. The truthfulness and compassion of the Gospel told to me in a direct way.

I hear some of our pastors, from time to time, talk about sermons that have impacted their lives. Titles like "Payday Someday" by RG Lee, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards, or even messages by George Whitefield and Charles H. Spurgeon that they have read. The way that our pastors talk about how the Word of God was spoken, particularly in those messages, calls me to want to hear them myself. This is why I am excited about the new library of tapes that I have. Maybe you have heard some of these names: W.A. Criswell, Dr. Adrian Rogers, Dr. Bailey Smith, E.V. Hill, Tony Compolo, Dr. James Merritt, Junior Hill, Jerry Vines, Dr. W.W. Wiersbe, Vance Havner, and even a copy of "Payday Sunday" by R.G. Lee.

Here is my point in all of this: Pastor, are you being consistently challenged by the Gospel through the preaching of the Word of God? I am not talking about what you are listening to for your next sermon, but rather daily or weekly, being challenged by the Word of God? Are you sitting under the preaching of someone else along with obeying the Word you preached last week?

Church member, are you sitting under the preaching of your own pastor? Or are you looking for someone else to itch your ear or tickle your heart? The greatest resource for your own spiritual growth is your home church. Be an encouragement to your pastor. Sit under his preaching, which means hold him up to the office of a proclaimer of the Word of God and obey the Word. If he preaches a great word, share it with others, just like I now have a library of great sermons, which others have shared with me.

Warning: There are undoubtedly great orators out there but make sure that you are not following them because they are "great". Like I said before, we have great pastors who preach every week in our churches. Sit under their messages. If you need to be reminded every now and then of the passion of the gospel, go ahead and find that one message or your favorite speaker, hear it, and then get back in to the trenches.

Oh by the way, does anyone have a cassette player?

Preston

Camp Ministry

Attention youth pastors, children's pastors, and parents and adults: we are in need of leaders for the Youth Spring Retreat (Friday, 31 March – Saturday, 1 April). This is a two day youth retreat focusing on prayer led by Pastor L.P. Cook of Union Hill Baptist Church. If you can help, please call Pastor Cook at (573) 353-6745.

Also, we are in need of leaders for our Youth Camp (Sunday 25 June – Friday 30 June) as well as one of our two newly reformatted children's camps (Sunday 9 July – Friday 14 July and Sunday 16 July – 21 July). If you can help with youth camp please contact Monica Martinez (573) 721-7621 or Eric Flemming (573) 253-6883. If you can help with children's camp please contact Cari Beasley (573) 220-0955.

For Summer Camp Cabin Leader Volunteers

written by Aaron Crumbey June 24, 2015

<https://youthministry.com/helping-summer-camp-cabin-leaders/>

Summer camp is one of my favorite events of the year. I've watched God do some amazing things at camp in the lives of students, and even in the lives of leaders. I've watched cabin leaders become small group leaders, weekend leaders and even one on one mentors to students. I've seen students go from being invited to camp, to joining a life group, to serving and even going on a mission trip. It's crazy to think that so much can happen in a week, but it does without fail.

Well, we always want to help our leaders have the best experience at camp possible. So here are a few things I've shared with our leaders over the years, to enhance their overall experience as a leader at camp.

Be all in – Know that God wants to use you to change/encourage/motivate/inspire/challenge a student that week. You need to be all in on building relationships that last post camp. That doesn't happen without you being all in.

Have conversations – Don't see your students free time as a time for you to retreat and get away. Use that time to grab some of your students, or even one of your students and have a conversation. Get to know the students you don't know well and get to know your core students even better.

Set rules and be consistent – From day one you need to set some rules with your group. I would set the rules based on how I want the week to go. It may seem like sucking the fun out, but you're actually making the week more productive. Example:

Eating time – We all sit together and pray family style.

Chapel time – we all sit together and you must bring your bible. Give them instructions before Chapel, what will happen after chapel.

Example: Where do they meet you if you all get separated.

Free time – Steal 20mins of their free time and do a one on one with everyone in the group.

Cabin time – Respect each others things. etc... Make a list!!!

Travel time – Have people sit with certain people so they can get to know each other on the way to camp.

Be a camper – Participate in what's going on at camp. Don't sit back and watch your students worship, worship with them. Play the games enthusiastically. Be the camper you want your students to be. Participate, participate, participate.

Attitude reflects leadership – Know that your students, for the most part, will reflect your attitude. If you are griping and complaining about everything you don't like about camp they will do it also. And you will annoy those who do like camp but can't have a good time with you complaining. And you will give those who want to be negative a platform. So be positive and know that everything is not going to go right or the way you feel it should go. Just stay positive!!

Expect to be used by God – You are at camp because God has called you to serve at summer camp. He has chosen you purposefully so expect Him to use you.

Expect to Grow – Being in isolation with a group of teens for a week has the potential to make you or break you. haha Let it grow you. Allow God to transform, stretch and break your heart for what breaks his that week. This is not just an opportunity for you to be used to change a life. Your life can be changed.

Be patient – I can almost promise you something is going to go wrong. Stay focused on the big picture.

Your room won't be ready.

That one kid will have already made enemies within your group before you even reach camp.

The schedule you were given at the leader meeting will change a million times before you get to camp.

You will have left something behind that you should've packed.

Etc...

Remember their names – Here's a tip if you are bad at remembering names. Be upfront about it. Share how important it is for you to know everyone's name, then share how much you suck at remembering names. They will show you more grace, and even help you. TIP: Take the list of your students who are in your cabin, and write something unique about their look next to their name. Then study it. You will work harder, but the payoff is worth it.

Start praying now – Start communicating to God what you want to see happen. Start thanking him for what He will do in you and through you.

Pastor Spotlight - Being Called

I was called into the ministry my senior year of High School. Not fully understanding what the call actually was, I wrestled with it for quite a time. There were more questions than answers. "Where should I turn for guidance?" and "What questions should I ask?", would run through my mind constantly. The only thing that I knew was God spoke with a clear calling and I answered saying, "Here am I, send me."

I am sure that my story is not unique. In fact, I would almost bet that there are one or more men in your church that are struggling with understanding what it is that God is revealing in their life. We, as the Church, have drifted away from regularly extending the invitation for men to answer that call into ministry. I believe that we need to also foster the place in the local church for these men to express and experience that call in a loving environment.

My hope is that the following article will help pastors as they minister to their flocks. That it will be an encouragement to the laymen who are wrestling with the desire to preach and pastor. As well as, solidify the call to ministry in every minister.

Preston

Five Elements of the Call to Ministry

by Ray Gilder <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Five-elements-of-the-call-to-ministry>

Here are some vital elements of the call of God to vocational ministry.

1. Receiving the call

Most Bible students agree that the ministry is reserved for those who sense a call of God upon their lives for this work. The Bible gives the details of the specific call of many Old Testament prophets. (Moses Exodus. 3,4; Jeremiah Jeremiah. 1:5-10; Isaiah Isaiah 6; Amos Amos 7:14-15, and Jonah Jonah 1:1,2.)

In reference to the role of the Old Testament high priest, the writers of Hebrews made this statement, "and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is call of God, as was Aaron." Hebrews 5:4.

A New Testament example of this call is seen in the early church when God called Barnabas and Saul: "as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them out." Acts 13:2,3.

2. Verifying the call

Unless a man believes he is called of God, he will find it difficult to survive the stresses of the ministry. One who thinks that God may be calling him needs to concentrate on three specific areas.

- First, he needs to give himself to prayer. The call must come from God.
- Second, he should seek godly advice from proven ministers.
- Third, it would be wise to explore educational and training expectations and possibilities.

3. Announcing the call

A major step for every young minister is to announce before the church that he is sensing a call of God to enter the ministry. Some call it "announcing your call to preach" others use the term "surrendering to the ministry." This allows the church to know what God is doing in your life and encourages them to pray that you will follow His leadership.

4. Affirming the call

As people become aware of your call to preach, you will be given opportunity to supply preach when pastors are away, bring devotions at various events and speak at nursing homes and jails. It is very important that you take advantage of each opportunity because some things can be learned only by practice. Nobody expects a new preacher to preach like Billy Graham. You will be tempted to give up and quit but if you work hard and stay faithful God will make you the preacher He wants you to be.

5. Solidifying the call

After the church has had sufficient time to witness the evidence of your call, you will want to ask the church to license you to preach. This is done by an official vote of the church and is a statement of their approval of your preparation for the ministry. This is not the same as an ordination. That usually comes after you have been called to your first church.

Ray Gilder is the bivocational ministries specialist at the Tennessee Baptist Convention and is also a bivocational pastor.

Pastoral Ministry

Pastors and the Problem of Evil

This article was recently a blog post of For the Church
<http://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/pastors-and-the-problem-of-evil>

Six weeks after I began pastoring my church I found myself hugging one of the ladies in our congregation, tears streaming down her face and threatening to cover mine. Food and friends were everywhere, as people had gathered to comfort her the best that they could. Her husband had suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. As I struggled to find any words that could possibly minister God's grace to her, she asked me the question I was afraid she would ask.

"Pastor, why? Why would God take him?"

Pastors spend a lot of time at the intersection of grace and evil, serving as witnesses to God's grace when someone suffers from the evil that sin brings into our lives. As we minister to people experiencing grief, loss, pain, and despair, we will hear the "why" question over and over. "Why would God let this happen?" "Why is this happening now?" "Why doesn't God do something about this?"

The "why" question is really a question about the problem of evil. If God is good, and God is all-powerful, then why do things like this happen? Believers have long wrestled with this question. The psalms lead us again and again to ask God, "How long?" Habakkuk begins his book with this question, asking him why he was tolerating such wrong and making him witness such injustice (Hab 1:3). We know that even Jesus struggled with this question on the cross, crying out to the Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me (Matt 27:46)?"

Pastors who love their congregations want to help them see and experience God in the midst of their suffering, so we're often tempted to answer the "why" question with some kind of explanation. Depending on our theological leaning, we might make an appeal to God's sovereignty and providence, reminding people that God has a plan, his plan encompasses even the worst kinds of evil, and his plan is always good even when we don't understand it. Or we might launch into a defense of human freedom, reminding people that God's love and respect for us as created beings is so great that he wants us to freely choose him, which means that not choosing him, and the evil that results, is a regrettable reality that God is working to overcome.

We don't want people doubting, we don't want people hurting, so we do our best to give some kind of biblical answer.

We must resist the temptation to explain the unexplainable. We can't forget that Scripture never offers us a rational explanation of evil. We need biblical understandings of God's sovereignty, human freedom, and original sin. However, they are not adequate answers to the "why" question. One of the reasons we have the book of Job is to help us resist offering our theological explanations as solutions to the problem of evil. We see the wisdom of Job's friends put in its place when God appears on the scene. God offers no explanation, he reminds Job of who he is and what he has done, and calls Job to trust him.

So what should we say when someone asks us the "why" question? When that lady asked me why God would take her husband, my prepared explanation of God's providence and the awful consequences of sin seemed to be wholly inadequate in the moment. Instead, I mumbled a few words about how we don't really know the answer to that question, but we can trust there is an explanation because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I quickly moved to praying for hope and comfort based on those truths. That night I felt embarrassed and inadequate, asking God for forgiveness for botching such a basic pastoral responsibility. I felt like I had failed, not providing a decent answer to such an important question.

It took me a while to see how God was working in that situation, keeping me from saying the wrong thing. Our best answer to the "why" question is not to try and explain evil, but to remind people what God has done about evil. Jesus Christ died to defeat sin and evil, the resurrection brings victory over sin and evil, and the reality of cross and the empty tomb grounds our expectation of his return, when all things will be set right. At the cross we see the goodness of God, the power of God, the full reality of evil, and the reality of evil's defeat. We need the same thing Job needed, to remember who God is and what he has done so we will trust him. Our people need the hope of the cross and the assurance of the resurrection. As pastors we must remain witnesses, helping people to place their faith in the gospel again and again. We can't explain why evil things happen, but we can point people to God and what he has done about evil through his Son. This is the answer that God's people need to hear.

Gary L. Shultz Jr.

Discipleship / Sunday School Ministry

Disciple Making: Go!

I attended part of the Great Commission Conference put on by our Missouri Baptist Convention recently. The focus of the conference, as it's name suggests, was making disciples. This event used to be called the Evangelism Conference and it still contends with that subject but now in the larger context of discipleship. The presenters and staff rightly pointed out that evangelism is the beginning of discipleship, not something separate from it. What has this to do with education ministry? I'm glad you asked!

The charge to make disciples is given to every Christian. Each of us should be involved in intentionally helping someone else to grow in their faith. According to a LifeWay research study, however, only 42% of Protestant church goers "intentionally spend time with other believers to help them grow in their faith." Considering that we all make ourselves sound a little better than we are, this percentage is probably a little higher than reality. Less than half of the folks who attend our churches are doing anything that could be counted as discipling another believer. While I'm very thankful for those that are, we need to do better.

Happily, there's one thing you are already doing that helps encourage your people to build relationships. People who participate in Sunday School, Bible study groups, or any other group ministry are more likely to build meaningful relationships at church. In fact, group participation was the best predictor of relationship building in the study! Meaningful relationships don't guarantee discipleship but discipleship cannot happen without them so the groups you have are the best place to start.

If you are not in a group, find one at your earliest opportunity! Most of you are in groups already and are in one of two roles. If you are a leader (pastor or teacher) you may be wondering how to encourage your folks in personal discipleship. First, I'd suggest encouraging everyone to be in a group. Second, encourage your established class members to pray about who God is leading them to disciple. This should be an expectation for all teachers. Training new teachers (see last month) goes right along with discipleship so this is not an additional thing, it's part of the same thing. If you are a class member, lead by example! Ask God who and get busy leading them.

Maturing as a Christian is not rocket-science. Still, it would be a great help if pastors and leaders came up with a list of characteristics for mature believers that everyone can aim at. This would be the "meat" of the discipleship process. This may seem like a big job but Jesus promised to go with us. What might happen if we take Him up on His offer?

If you're interested, you can find the research study here:

<http://lifewayresearch.com/2013/04/25/research-church-relationships-are-missing-something/>

LP Cook

Worship Ministry

10 Recommendations for Your Next Rehearsal

An article by Stan Endicott, Jan/Feb, 2013

<http://worshipmatters.com/2016/05/13/singing-songs-from-questionable-sources/>

This article was originally published in Worship Leader magazine (Jan/Feb 2013). For more great articles like this one, subscribe today.

I recently spoke to about 20 worship leaders at a lunch gathering. Trying to determine what I could say that would be the most helpful, I landed on this: A huge miss in worship ministry is the quality of rehearsals. I told them, "Rehearsals are so important that you should 'rent a tux.'" They all laughed but got the point. In fact, afterwards, one of the guys told me that he was actually going to rent a tux for his next rehearsal just to make a statement to his team. I guess you could at least wear a bowtie.

The Sizzle

When rehearsals happen at your church, are the musicians and tech people motivated? Has the rehearsal been prepared in such a way that everyone involved feels valued and it's been worth their time? Have you really considered what it would take to make rehearsals a wonderful experience for every person involved? I can assure you that a commitment to having great rehearsals will revolutionize your ministry. Here are some pointers.

- 1. Choose songs carefully, with intentionality.** Don't assume your personal song choices are always the right ones. Recruit a "song team" of three people who will help you find great songs. Those people are just waiting to be asked to get involved.
- 2. Develop a creative music production process to determine how the songs should sound.** Don't assume a song should sound the same each time you use it in worship. There are reasons to change the sound of a song depending on the context. This in itself is why the music in many contemporary churches sounds the same. If this step is omitted from the process, welcome to sameness and eventually boredom.
- 3. Keep the congregation in mind** when creating the musical styles, especially when considering key choices. If you expect the congregation to sing, make it easy for them.
- 4. Give your musicians and tech team enough time** and the necessary resources to be prepared for the rehearsal. Don't underestimate how much volunteers are willing to invest given enough time and the resources.
- 5. Give attention to the musical transitions before and after songs.** Note: Not every prayer or serious speaking requires background music. Background music doesn't always add to the emotional impact.
- 6. Rehearse the rehearsal.** Write out the plan. Rehearse each aspect in your mind. Rehearsals offer the opportunity to experience the impact of what is already planned and prepared.
- 7. Give thought to what you will say** during the rehearsal about each song and the other elements of the service. Pacing of a rehearsal is so important.
- 8. Prepare spiritually.** Plan the spiritual footprint for the rehearsal. The rehearsal prepares the team for the worship service but is just as much an opportunity to bring Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father to the team. Rehearse worship.
- 9. Don't start on time!** Starting on time really won't give you traction. What will give you traction is an attitude and a culture of people arriving early, prepared, excited to be there and to have confidence that this rehearsal is going to be one of the most enjoyable experiences of the week.
- 10. Anticipate your drive home** from the rehearsal with a sense of, "This was so enjoyable. God, thank you for the amazing opportunity to prepare our worship with these great people."

So, I'll say it again ... "Rent a tux for your next rehearsal!"

Rent a limo if you have to! Whatever it takes to commit yourself and your team toward better rehearsals. Will you join in?

Stan Endicott is the founder of Slingshot Group (slingshotgroup.org), a nation-wide staffing and coaching firm that helps churches become remarkable. He is a deeply respected and beloved worship pastor, music producer and mentor to hundreds of young leaders.

Church History

I am encouraged by the response of those who read this newsletter each month. I appreciate the feedback and ask that you continue to give me suggestions on how to make it better. Recently, a member of one of our churches mailed me a copy of a newspaper article that documents the celebration of the Audrain Baptist Associations 100th Anniversary in 1984. I have decided to include the complete newspaper article here for your reading pleasure. I am deeply thankful for the multitude of years of ministry that are recorded by all of our churches. We have a great history of Baptist work in both Callaway and Audrain counties. Thank you Steven Kreyling, for sending me this wonderful piece of history.

(The caption under the black and white picture of FBC Mexico reads the following)

UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH, Mexico, was dedicated July 3, 1870, by the Rev. W. Pope Yeaman. It was the birthplace of the Audrain Baptist Association on Oct. 5, 1884. Later, its name was changed to First Baptist Church.

Audrain Baptist Association Set To Celebrate 100th Anniversary

This is a big year for area Baptists as the Audrain Baptist Association celebrates its centennial year and the Missouri Baptist Convention, first known as the General Baptist Association of Missouri, commemorates its sesquicentennial year.

Mrs. Russell Kaiser Sr., historian for First Baptist Church of Mexico, has researched the history of the organizations and has submitted notes on the two bodies.

The Little Bonne Femme Baptist Association of Boone County had been organized in 1839 from the Salem Association. Churches in the group were called United Baptist Churches, showing they agreed on the questions of missions.

The 1875 minutes of that Association reported that members from Audrain, Boone, Callaway, and Montgomery counties were

represented. Those from Audrain include Mexico, Hopewell, Bethlehem, Martinsburg, New Hope, and Union.

Hopewell had been organized in 1836; a division over missions caused the forming, in 1840, of the Davis Fork Regular Baptist Church. The United Baptist Church of Mexico came into being in 1857.

Travel to association meetings, which often lasted for three days, was both difficult and involved great distances for the times. Families traveled (there were no baby-sitters back then) over deeply rutted roads to renew friendships, exchange news and ideas, as well as to report on Baptist work.

Churches at this time held services one day per month, usually on Saturday, with ministers traveling among four churches during each month.

The Rev. J.C. Armstrong became pastor of the United Baptist Church of Mexico in 1881 and served until November 1886. He assumed leadership in forming the Audrain Baptist Association in 1884 in order to consolidate members from three into one association.

At a meeting on Aug. 5., 1884, the representatives of 16 Audrain and adjacent counties' churches unanimously voted to organize.

After securing letters of dismissals from several associations, they met Oct. 15, 1884, at 11 a.m., at United Baptist Church of

Mexico, with former Gov. C.H. Hardin presiding. He was elected moderator and Joel Guthrie, Mexico, was elected clerk.

The executive board included Gov. Hardin, chairman; Mr. Armstrong, secretary; J.A. Guthrie, treasurer; W.O. Shannon, W.T. Fuqua, William Lake, Temple Wayne, R.C. Carter, E. Hughes and Clifton Black.

Churches represented included Mexico, Rush Hill, Union, Bethlehem, New Hope, Vandalia, West Cuivre, Pleasant Plain, Corinth, Laddonia, Zion, Farber, Martinsburg, Littleby, Mount Zion, Hopewell, and Beaver Dam.

When the Union Baptist Church came into existence in 1857, its members had no church home but met in the home of a Regular Baptist and shared Sunday School with other churches in town. They struggled through the Civil War years with the assistance of the Missouri Baptist General Association. The Rev. W.R. Wiggington was their first pastor.

What is today called First Baptist Church began on Feb. 9, 1867, when the church reorganized with 25 charter members and was called United Baptist Church. A July 2, 1870, dedication was held for the new brick church, located on the corner of East Promenade and Coal streets, Mexico, considered to be one of the finest in state. It boasted a full basement and cost \$11,265 but was debt-free. The Rev. S.A. Beauchamp was the

first pastor of the reorganized church.

This birthplace of the Audrain Baptist Association was razed in 1894 and a new building was completed on the same location. In 1957 First Baptist Church moved to its present location at 600 E. Promenade. The Rev. Frank L. Park is the pastor.

There are 16 churches remaining in the association; Bethlehem, Centennial, Farber, Friendship, Hopewell, Laddonia, Littleby, Lockwood Park, Mexico First, Mount Zion, New Hope, Perry, Union, Vandalia First, Vandalia Southside and West Cuivre.

Current officers are the Rev. Gordon Curtner, Laddonia, moderator; The Rev. Wesley Keeling, New Hope, assistant moderator; Mrs. Marvin Jones, Friendship, Mexico, clerk; Stanley Kelley, Mexico First, treasurer; the Rev. J. Arnold Bickel, Friendship, Mexico, director of missions.

In honor of the anniversary celebrations, anyone who wishes may dress in early day styles during the annual meeting, which will be held Oct. 1, and 2 at First Baptist Church of Vandalia.

The Ministry of First Impressions

In the year of 2012, Southside Baptist in Fulton, completed a full renovation of their office and educational space on their main level to provide a new environment for ministry. Like most churches in GCBA, there simply was not much room in the sanctuary building for welcoming guests and members each Sunday. The church designed and renovated this space into a beautiful welcome center and office area. As a result, a new ministry was formed to use this new resource for Kingdom purposes.

In the next few months, I will laying out a ministry that Southside produces called The Ministry of First Impressions. You might have a ministry similar to this at your church. Or, maybe you have always wanted to start one, but you did not know where to begin. I hope to give you the basics, so that you and your church can build off of the success of another sister church.

Below you will find the initial outline of the Ministry of First Impressions. Eventually, the church simplified the name to the Welcome Team Ministry. In the business world, first impressions are huge. They can “sell” a product or dissuade one. In the church, the Welcome Ministry is the same. It does not start when a person enters your building on a Sunday, but rather, when they drive by on a weekday or even enter your parking lot on an initial visit.

A Welcome Ministry is made clear by an example that happened to me today. On my way back from a meeting in Mexico, Mo, I stopped by the Casey's General Store in Auxvasse. As I was paying for my snacks, I asked the three ladies working behind the counter this question, “What do you know about Grand Prairie Baptist Church?” It was a simple question, but the answer was astonishing. Two of them (one was middle aged and the other was early 30's), didn't know where the church was located and had never heard anything about it. The other lady, admitted that she does not attend church at all, but her sister does in town at the Christian Church. She believed that the churches get together each year for an event, but did not know anything about Grand Prairie. She also said that she had not heard anything negative about it, if that helped me find my answer. If you have ever traveled through Auxvasse, you would know that the Casey's Store is only 1 block from the church, and the church is on the major intersection in the town. The ministry of first Impressions is key. A building and a sign does not cut it anymore. Even the sign on your building with your name and denomination does not influence the lost in our communities like it once did.

So, when new people come to your church, how do you minister to them? The ultimate goal, I believe is to see individuals transformed from a lost person driving by your building, to a committed disciple who disciples others. Here is how Southside in Fulton started that process.

A. WELCOME TEAM MINISTRY

1. PURPOSE – to provide a welcoming and safe environment at Southside Baptist for members and guest alike. This ministry will take place before, during and after Sunday Morning and Evening service times, mid-week discipleship and training, and during special activities and mission trips. The Welcome Team will serve the Lord and His people at Southside. The Pastoral Leaders deem this to be a vitally important ministry as the church continues to grow.

2. DUTIES OF THE MINISTRY

- A. Greet Guest and Members as they enter the church building
- B. Provide a clean and accessible Parking area, while also assisting individuals to and from their vehicles if assistance is needed or during inclement weather.
- C. Usher guest and members to seats for services, to education rooms for Sunday School, or to special events.
- D. Answer questions about our church, the services, facilities, and ministries for all individuals that ask.
- E. Carrying out whatever other ministry opportunities that may arise while fulfilling the duties of the three teams that make up the Welcome Team. The Welcome Team should let the Holy Spirit be their guide and the pastoral leadership their resource.

3. MAKE- UP OF TEAM

The Welcome Team is made up of a three pronged approach to providing the environment at our church where growth in faith, service and Christian maturity is fostered. The three teams that make up the Welcome Team are: (1) Greeter / Usher Ministry, (2) Welcome Desk, and (3) Parking Lot Team.

In the following months, I will unpack each of these ministry teams. If you would like more information, you can contact myself or Southside Baptist Church for a first hand look at their process.

Senior Adult Ministry

Does Your Church Need More Than One “Senior Adult” Group?

By Dr. Frank E. Fain, The Baptist Home

Bill Craig predicted in his 2009 book that as Boomer adults age they will NOT accept the “senior adult” title. He also predicted they will NOT accept their church’s senior adult ministry.

In 2012 I wrote the column: “Change is Coming” in which I shared that Boomer adults in 2011 started turning age 65. Also, over the next eighteen years, 76 million Boomer adults will turn age 65. This Boomer adult group will be the largest older adult population in history, but they will not accept the title or the ministry “senior adult”. Now that we are in the year 2017, we are nearly six years into those Boomer adults moving into older adulthood. What has been predicted about Boomer adults is becoming a reality.

Some senior adult ministry leaders are not happy that the Boomers are not joining their ministry. They believe this has never happened in church ministry in the past. But some of us know there have been problems in the past, and leaders made changes to address those problems.

You see, I began working with senior adult ministry in 1980. Most of the older adults then were members of the Civic Generation which was also called the GI Generation and the Greatest Generation. There were 63 million in that age group. In 1990, senior adult ministry was stable and made up of the Civic Generation whose members were ages 66 to 90.

Starting in 1991, members of the Adaptive Generation (birth 1925 – 1945) began to be part of senior adult ministry. The Adaptive group was a smaller group of only 50 million. As Civic Generation members entered nursing homes or passed away, the stabilized senior adult ministries started declining in size after 1995.

In the year 2000, almost every senior adult group was in decline. It was very common in 1996-2003 for senior adult ministry leaders to be discussing change. Many local church senior adult groups changed names at that time. The second most popular senior adult group name became “Prime-timers”; the third most popular name was “Maturing Adult Ministry”.

Adapter generation members were ages 66 to 85 in 2010. Most of them are retired. All of them are eligible to be part of the church “Senior”, “Prime-timers” or “Maturing Adult” ministries. While the older Adapters enjoy being part of the ministry, many younger Adapters do not. They are just like Boomers. They also do not want to be called “Senior”.

This year, the Boomer adults are ages 53 – 71 with the majority of them still working. A recent national survey found 70% of Boomers are planning on working at another career or a part-time job during their retirement years. In conversations about employment, many Boomers are hoping they get to work until age 70. This heavy commitment to being employed is resulting in the Boomers having no interest in participating in “retirement Senior Adult, Prime-timers or Maturing Adult type of activities.”

Bill Craig was correct in his 2009 book. Many churches are now finding the best approach is to develop two distinct adult ministries. One ministry for adults age 70 plus and another ministry for adults ages 55 to 70. These churches are also finding that the leadership group of each ministry must be the same age of the group. The Baptist Home’s Adult Ministry Services is very willing to meet with you for an individual consultation or meet with your congregational leaders to discuss ways to develop A New Focus in adult age 55 + ministries.

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.

Technology in Ministry

Viral Video Suggestions

Article by Brad Kerr, 3-1-17

If you have spent any time on the internet the past 10 years you have probably seen viral videos. The cats who are scared of cucumbers. A person falling down a flight of stairs. The boy doing a cannonball into the baptistry. A viral video is simply a video that grows in popularity through the use of social media. Churches can use these short videos as an announcement of an event to come, a new sermon series, to clarify a theological or doctrinal issue, or even to add some humor to their corner of the internet.

Here are some ideas and suggestions to help churches shoot their videos, whether viral or not, better:

- 1) **The lens should be your audience.** Look at the lens of the camera, and not the screen. Whether you are using a traditional video camera, or your phone, look directly into the lens and not at the screen. Looking directly into the lens will give the view of the video the impression you are looking directly at them. And if your goal is to address them directly, then they are your audience. If you look away to draw their attention to something else that is fine, but then look back to the lens, not the screen, to address them again.
- 2) **Sound quality is important.** It should go without saying that if your audience is unable to hear you then your message will go unheard. Fortunately, we live in a time when mobile phones have better mics on them than consumer cameras did 15 years ago. However, if the sound quality doesn't seem very good then try speaking louder and clearer. If it is still not what you want look into adding an external mic to your video device of choice. Simply google your device with the added phrase external mic. That will be a good place to start.
- 3) **Think through what you will say.** You don't need to have a teleprompter running, but even if you are making a silly video announcement then take time before you actually shoot the video to work through a logical thought progression. This will help your audience understand your message.
- 4) **Work on your posture.** Many of us don't realize that we sound better standing or sitting up tall. If we are bent over your computer or phone then you will not be at your optimal sound. In addition to sound, it always looks better to be sitting up tall on a chair or stool, then to look like you are just relaxing at home watching TV.
- 5) **Where to put the camera.** Ideally, the camera would be at eye level so you are not looking down or up to it. There are many reasons for this, but honestly it just looks better. If you don't have someone to hold the camera away from you a foot or two, then you can put it on a tripod, hold the feet of the tripod against your hip, and raise it up at an angle to get to eye level. Just talk to Preston, or Martin Stukenborg about this. If you have to hold the phone or camera in your hand then do your best to keep it steady and at eye level.

These are just a few ideas for some quick videos to post on social media. If you would like to shoot more "professional" looking videos for Sunday morning then check out the links below. One of the biggest components to a more professional looking video is quality equipment.

<https://prochurchtools.com/church-video-series/>

This is a video series that walks you through all the steps as a beginner.

<http://www.churchproduction.com/story/main/dslr-setup-for-video/2>

This is an article about things to look at when setting up your video. It is also a link to the church production website which has several topics that any church would find useful.

http://sermons.io/help/how-to-video-and-livestream-your-church-service#recording_video_overview

This is an article that would bridge the gap from just the video side to also talking about live streaming and recording a church service.

Evangelism

Are you Intentionally Prepared?

I recently attended a couple evangelism conferences in Arkansas and Missouri and was edified and challenged by both. At one of the conferences, a speaker shared story after story of how he was leading young men and women to the Lord in his daily interactions. I sat there at first feeling somewhat indicted by my lack of winning men and women to the Lord with regularity. It turns out I was not the only one.

After talking with a couple fellow pastors, I realized a couple truths. The first was that this particular speaker lived in a fairly large city and frequented particular establishments with regularity. Also, he had been doing this for a number of years such that he had become a “regular” at a myriad of different restaurants. That was somewhat reassuring as it told me that the city in which he was fishing was larger than the population of our association. But it also brought me to think about the second truth.

That second truth was quite simply he was fishing. This is exactly what Jesus called His disciples to do. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus called Peter and Andrew saying “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Now, in all honesty, I do not fish with any regularity, but I do know fishing takes preparation. You need certain tools in order to fish. You need a pole. You need bait. You need tackle. You need lures. You need a source of water that is stocked with fish. In other words, you need to be intentionally prepared in order to properly fish.

In the same way, when it comes to evangelism, you need to be intentionally prepared. First, you need to know the gospel. If you are a true born again Christian, then you know the gospel. You know that you are a sinner and have sinned before a holy God and that He will rightly judge you unless you put your faith in Christ alone and repent of your sins. There is your fishing pole.

Second, you need to have a framework. You will want to know any number of methods of moving conversations toward the gospel. For some this may be developing relationships, for others this may be asking a question or two to bridge the conversation to spiritual matters. Here is your tackle box.

But, a tackle box is really useless without tackle. Do you have gospel tracts to leave behind? Do you have pocket New Testaments to offer? Are you willing and able to pray with others at a moment’s notice say with a waiter or waitress? What materials do you possess to be able to hook the fish so to speak? These tools are your lures and hooks and bait.

Finally, where can you go where you know there are lost people? Do you frequent these places? Do you return again and again with the intention of catching some fish? Most fishermen I know have a favorite fishing hole. Christian, what is your favorite place to go and fish? Where is your water source full of fish.

Again, I am not a fisherman, but I know most men and women who enjoy fishing enjoy the experience whether they catch a fish or not. Sure, sometimes it can be frustrating, but more often than not the time is well spent and is relaxing. Christian, understand that to be fishers of men is not to string up how many you have caught in order to show others. Rather, the goal of fishing for men should be to proclaim the gospel and offer the sinner the opportunity to repent of his sins.

Will you join me in fishing? If you need any tackle, please do not hesitate to contact me or Pastor Frank Whitney (Union Hill Baptist) for any number of resources and/or training materials.

Your servant in Christ,

Terry Delaney

Youth Ministry

My kids aren't listening part #3

Maybe it's a full moon or it's just started to snow or one of your students got the flu 10 minutes before you got up to talk, but for whatever reason; nobody seems to be listening.

I know that I have a great lesson. I have studied, I have worked on my illustrations, I have some great verses from the Bible and I know that what I am trying to communicate to my students is something that they need... And yet, most of the group is talking to the person next to them.

Welcome to youth ministry, you have normal kids. The big question is what do I do now.

After all my experience, after all these years, I wish there was one fool-proof thing to do to fix it. Although there isn't a one size fits all cure there are a few things that may help.

First: Love the kids more than what you have got to say. I know the frustration, I know how mad you can get when you feel disrespected, but remember, each one of the students that are in front of you have had a variety of experiences before they got to your study.

Some of them have just argued with their parents. Some of them just got a bad grade on a test. Some of them just had a relationship break-up. Some of them look like their normal selves, but they hate who they are. And some of them just need to quit talking and pay attention.

Remember: *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* Matthew 9:36 (NLT)

Before you scold them, make sure that you have compassion for them.

Second: Stop talking and see how long it takes until everyone in the room notices and stops talking! For fun, you can even time it! The last person or two to stop really get the idea that they had lost touch with the group and it should help. Sometimes it takes awhile.

Third: I sometimes keep going until I have a verse from the Bible to read and I ask for their attention and honestly tell them that they might not care what I have to say, but I am about to read right out of the Bible and this is what God Himself has said, so please pay attention.

Fourth: After you are done, talk to a couple of your older kids or the kids that seem to influence the group the most and let them know that when they quit paying attention the other kids think that what I have to say isn't important. Ask for their help in the future to set the example and remind the others to knock it off.

Fifth: I stop what I am saying, get their attention and remind them that in a little while, they can talk all they want to, but right now, I still have a few more things to say.

But never forget... Love the kids more than what you have got to say. Calling out the worst offenders publicly, Raising your voice in frustration or punishing the group somehow will hurt you in the long run. I always say that I can have a great, well behaved, small group of youth; all I have to do is run off the others! But, if I want my students to bring their unsaved or uninterested friends, I have to be ready for a group of students who might not always act like I want them to.

Martin has been on staff at FBC Fulton for 15 years and has been doing youth ministry for over 17 years. If you have questions about youth ministry or you would like to stop by and see what a typical Wednesday night looks like for him, (**And how well his students pay attention!**) email him. mstukenborg@hotmail.com

GCBA History

Have you ever driven by a church on a county road somewhere and said to yourself, “This church looks very familiar?” Or maybe you even visited another local church one Sunday, and said, “This church is laid out just like ours!” Well, your not alone! I visit a lot of our churches each year and there are a certain number of building types that are well represented across our area.

Churches are known by both their inside design as well as the outside. For instance, if you walked inside the sanctuaries of Providence, Dry Fork, and Grand Prairie, you would notice that they are almost identical in size and appearance. They have a fan shape layout with a sloped floor and overflow rooms in the back that are separated by large wooden panels.

In my research of church buildings, I came along an article by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources called Rural Churches of Callaway County, Missouri, July 2010 (<https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey/CYAS002-R.pdf>) that helps us find the architectural link between the outside design of churches.

Despite alterations and additions, the rural church buildings of Callaway County can still be classified into common church building types, namely: center steeple, gable-end, side-steeple, steepled ell, side gable and T-plan. (Footnote: Center steeple, gable-end, steepled ell, and side-steeple types were identified using the characteristics described by Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings in *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. Side gable and T-plan are types identified by SHPO staff based on footprint and orientation of the primary façade and entrance.)

According to this study, our rural GCBA churches in Callaway County are represented by the following designs: Gable-End Church - Hopewell Baptist, New Bloomfield, Center Steeple - Millersburg Baptist, Side Steeple - Providence Baptist, and T-Plan – with Carrington, Dry Fork, and Grand Prairie. Unfortunately, the study is limited as it only covers the southern end of our Association, only those churches that are outside of Fulton, and only churches that were erected prior to 1945. It would be interesting to see this study carried out across our Association.

For the last two weeks, I have been shooting a short video at the location of one of our churches. I am doing this for a few reasons. First, we need to know what each church looks like so we can see our similarities. I think I have stated it before, but 30 out of 35 of our churches run under 100 people on Sunday Morning in worship (21 of those run under 50). Our churches and congregations form a unique and important thread that weaves together the communities of our area. Each group is extremely important to the Lord and to me, no matter what size they are!

Secondly, I shoot the videos, because most will never travel to visit that sister church. I include in the message a way for everyone to pray for that church as a reminder that we are all in this together. The goal of Grand Crossings is “Serving Churches to advance the Kingdom of Christ.” Though our congregations maybe separated by miles, counties and highways, we all are doing the same kind of work. We all need the prayers of others to help us in this “Good Work”.

Third, I shoot the videos and post them on Facebook, so that the whole world can know about GCBA. I try to share how old the church is and what is unique about it. So, please share them on your personal or church’s Facebook page. Send them out into the world! It is my desire to have all of Callaway and Audrain counties attending our churches. I know that might be a little much to ask, but I truly think that we have that great of an Association. Each church is unique by God’s design, yet we are the same. We are GCBA! Join me as I celebrate each congregation this year.

Deacon Ministry

DELIGHTING IN DEACONS

by William Boekestein • March 02, 2017

http://www.alliancenet.org/christward/delighting-in-deacons#.WMGCbxiZM_V

How do church deacons help establish God's kingdom? Many of us might struggle to answer that question. For a number of reasons, the diaconate is often viewed as a non-spiritual administrative committee. Because deacons oversee church money and property we might mistake them simply for parochial accountants and custodians. But, according to Scripture, if we minimize the biblical office of deacon we miss a huge part of God's plan for vibrant Christianity.

Healthy churches and healthy believers treasure deacons as invaluable servants of God, Christ's official ministers of mercy. They help exposit the kindness of God, strengthen the communion of the saints, and preserve the fiscal integrity of the church. It is important for us to retain or, if need be, recover a biblical view of the office of deacon.

The Conditions for Serving as a Deacon

If we want the church to value the diaconate we need to preserve the high biblical standard for becoming a deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

Deacons Must Be Spiritually Minded

The first deacons were men "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3-4). "Likewise deacons must be reverent... holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless" (1 Tim. 3:8-10). Of course, deacons must be financially and administratively competent. But they must also demonstrate a God-like sympathy for the hurting and a heart given to service. The idea that unqualified men should be put up for deacon as a way of urging spiritual maturity is totally contrary to God's will for the office. Deacons must be spiritual pacesetters.

Deacons Must Be Self-controlled (v. 8)

Deacons must not be double-tongued. A double-tongued man says whatever he can to please his current conversation partner. A deacon must be able to speak the truth to all people lovingly and tactfully.

Deacons must not be given to much wine. A deacon may drink wine; Paul urged Timothy to take up the habit (1 Tim. 5:23). But a deacon must show that he can enjoy God's good gift of alcohol without abusing it.

Deacons must not be greedy for money. Without financial self-control no man can steward the church's resources or set a positive example to the congregation. A deacon who is content with what he has will serve well and bolster the confidence of others.

Deacons Must Be Successful at Home

"Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (vv. 11-12). Deacons need not be a husband or father. But those who are must have a history of capable leadership. A deacon without wife or children must be sufficiently established so as to have some domain over which he exercises godly rule.

The Charge of a Deacon

Deacons are Intercessors

Since deacons exercise Christ's priestly office they must reflect his ministry of mercy. As priest Jesus offered up "prayers and supplications" for those who weighed upon his heart (Heb. 5:7). Deacons must prayerfully intercede for their poor.

Deacons are Supervisors of Mercy

The Church Order that governs the congregation I serve puts it well. Deacons must supervise "the works of Christian mercy among the congregation; acquainting themselves with congregational needs; exhorting members of the congregation to show mercy." The deacons must strive to ensure that the church loves, practices, and receives mercy (Micah 6:8).

Continued on page 15

Deacon Ministry (continued)

Deacons are Stewards

Deacons must gather, manage, and distribute the offerings of God's people. Deacons should study Jesus' money parables (Luke 16:1-13; 19:11-27, etc.) to know how to leverage God's resources for spiritual gain.

Deacons are Ministers

The deacons must distribute the offerings "in Christ's name... encouraging and comforting with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's mercy." Through the deacons "the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted..." (*Belgic Confession*, Art. 30), not merely financially but also spiritually. Jesus says there is a way to give a cup of water in his name (Mark 9:41). Deacons must use their unique position to communicate God's unmerited kindness to the recipients of financial assistance.

The Commendation for Well-serving Deacons

Paul offsets the sacrifices demanded of deacons with the reward for serving well (Cf. 1 Cor. 3:14). He does so using diaconal language, the language of investment and return. "...Those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13). When a deacon serves well he brings honor upon himself, his church, and his God. He also strengthens his own faith by others-oriented service reflective of his Master's example. Most men who have served as deacon will say that their service was hard but fruitful.

God is encouraging Christian males to desire the office of deacon (Cf. 1 Tim. 3:1). Here is what we should be hoping for, praying for, working for: That our young men, our five and ten and fifteen year old boys, would be heard saying, "When I grow up I want to be a deacon. I want to be proved blameless so that I might be entrusted with the privilege of serving Jesus' church. I want to attain a good standing and great boldness in the faith." God is looking for men who are eager to serve as officers in his church; who desire to be his hands and feet, to be his mouth, and to wield his spiritual scepter. Other church members will not always recognize your service. God always will.

The Commitment of the Congregation to the Deacons

If the deacons help share the resources of those who have much with those who have little (2 Cor. 9:9-13-15) then the rich have responsibilities to the deacons. God commands "those who are rich in this present age" to "do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). That the rich provide more than their share of financial support for the church should not lead them to grumble but to rejoice!

The recipients of diaconal help also have responsibilities. Recipients must receive help cheerfully, repenting of their (sometimes inherited) unwillingness to receive help. When God helps, his children should receive it gladly. Beneficiaries must also refuse to be enticed by financial aid. Jesus warned the crowds not to follow him simply because he had provided for their physical needs (John 6:26-27) but to use these gifts to receive the greater gift of eternal life through Christ. Finally, recipients must rely on the deacons only as necessary, understanding that it is a sin to take from the church what one can provide for himself (Eph. 4:28, 1 Thess. 3:10).

The duties we have to the deacons are greatly outweighed by the benefits of their ministry. Through the deacons Christ continues his priestly work. The deacons are perpetual illustrations of God's love for our bodies and our souls. They remind us that God cares for our cares. He overflows with compassion for us.

Seventeenth century pastor Wilhelmus `a Brakel encourages not just deacons but all Christians to acknowledge the preciousness of our gifts. "And may you burn with zeal to use them for that purpose for which they have been given, namely, to serve your Lord and to be beneficial to His church."

Church History

Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation - Martin Luther

As we continue to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, of which we owe our heritage to, we will look at three of the major figures in the Reformation. This month, we will look at Martin Luther.

In 1517, a 34 year-old Roman Catholic Monk named Martin Luther (1483-1546) preached against the selling of indulgences which the Roman Catholic Church (RC) was using to raise money to fund the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy. Luther's road to becoming a monk was actually rooted in a life-scare he experienced in 1505 when he was caught in a frightening storm and he vowed to St. Anne (a RC saint) that he would become a monk if she saved him. He survived and gave up his career as a lawyer in order to join the Augustinian order in Erfurt, Germany. As history now shows, God had other plans.

While learning to become a priest, Luther celebrated his first RC mass on 2 May 1507 and fled in terror at the thought of performing such a holy sacrament. His problem was his conscience and the fact that he knew he was a sinner. He would actually go to confession multiple times a day because he would recall a sin he had committed moments, days, weeks, months, and even years prior that he had failed to confess. This became such a nuisance that it was rumored that the head of the monastery told Luther to go and sin so that he would actually have something to confess!

While wrestling with his personal sinfulness, Luther came across Romans 1:17 in his study. Romans 1:17 states, "For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" It was Luther's grasping of the eternal truths found in this passage that launched what history has come to call the Protestant Reformation. Luther, however, never wanted to leave the Church. Rather, his hope was to reform her from within. Instead, he brought about a revival of biblical truths and challenges to the RC rooted in Scripture. Hence, the 95 Theses nailed to the Wittenberg door and spread throughout Europe thanks to the Guttenberg Press, launched Luther into the center of controversy.

He was declared a heretic in 1518 and was excommunicated in 1521 at the Diet of Worms (pronounced *Verms*). On his way home from Worms, he was "kidnapped" by friends for fear that he would be murdered and locked away in Wartburg Castle...a mighty fortress to say the least. It was here that he translated the New Testament from Greek into German in 10 weeks!

While much has been written on Luther and his name became synonymous with an entire denomination, we must not overlook this simple man God used to bring about a revival of faith in a world that was in need of genuine faith. For more information on Martin Luther, I would highly recommend a biography by Roland Bainton entitled *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* originally written in 1950 and still unmatched in quality and objectivity. I would also commend to you his commentary on Galatians. This can be read as you would read any non-fiction work. Obviously, you will not agree with everything he writes, but you will see that his heartbeat was for God's glory and honor and for the salvation of all men and women in Christ alone through faith alone according to Scripture alone.

Terry Delaney