

THE BARNABAS PAPERS

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Last night was a first for our family. Well, maybe not a very first, but a first in a long time. What was so special about last night, you might ask? My house was filled with neighbors! These are the very ones that we have been praying for specifically and praying for opportunities to share the gospel with. People we know, because of prior conversations that do not have a personal relationship with God. And yet, these neighbors found their way to our home on the same night, at the same time. Let me try to explain what happened.

I was outside mowing our yard since it was not raining and the sun was shining. My wife and kids had come home and were doing stuff around the house. As I was attending to the front yard, one of the guys across the street was attending to his yard. I began to pray for an opportunity to talk with him, because our time as neighbors is quickly coming to an end. Their house is up for sale, possibly even sold already and ours will be very shortly. I have been trying to reach out to these guys each opportunity that I see them. Unfortunately, he went into his back yard and I never saw him again, but I kept on praying for opportunities to share the gospel.

The next thing I know, one of my oldest son's friends shows up on his bicycle, and off they go for a ride. This is not all that uncommon but when they came back at suppertime, the friend stayed and ate with us. This was huge! At the same time we were finishing up dinner, my wife received a text from a mother up the street saying that her daughter and she were coming down so that the girls could have some playtime. The next thing I know, I have a house and yard full of opportunities for people to hear the gospel. Everyone except my middle child and myself had someone to minister to. Even my dog had a friend come over to play, who came with the mother and daughter. While everyone had his or her time, I was praying.

Last night was very special and important. My family's life has been crazy this past year. It was a season, I believe, that we needed to experience in order for us to really look at what our priorities are. We, my wife and I, have coached a sport during every season this school year, which means that our kids rarely were at home, but rather sitting in bleachers 2-4 nights a week, having to keep themselves occupied. My kids were involved in sports all last summer and fall. You can begin to see the picture, right? We were busy. Now, I know that there are many who live this same life as we have and I respect your decisions to do that, but it is not for us at this time.

Last night revealed to my wife and I, that our lives were not a testimony to the relationship we have with Christ to our closest mission field: our home and neighbors. The fact that we were home for a night, with no expectations to meet, was really nice. The conversations and interactions that God allowed us to have with our neighbors was awesome and greatly needed. We felt like last night was what we are supposed to do.

So here is my point in all of this. Church, pastor, congregation member, ministry, are you simply too busy to be an effective witness? Have we neglected our personal mission fields for the sake of being active? Have we traded in what some would call idol hands for a form of idol worship through business? Do we really use the activities that we drag our kids (to or our kids drag us to) as an opportunity to share verbally the gospel of Jesus Christ? Church, have you made your congregation member's lives so busy with "church work" that they are no longer able to do gospel work?

As a family, we have had to make some drastic, prayer saturated and God driven, decisions to slow down so that we are focused on our mission fields. Last night was a refreshing sign that our decisions are correct. I can't wait until my home is filled with my neighbors again. What about you? When are your neighbors coming over?

Preston

Missions

Are Short-Term Mission Trips Valuable?

By Randy Alcorn | April 10, 2017

<http://www.epm.org/blog/2017/Apr/10/term-missions-trips>

I'm a strong believer in missions, and in my travels I've seen firsthand God's wonderful work through missions and national churches. If there's anything I could do to encourage those who feel their hearts being touched by God to spend the rest of their lives on the mission field, I would do it gladly. But I also encourage those who do not feel God's leading into a lifetime of missions to take a few weeks and go out on a short-term mission. Nothing will touch and change your heart quite like seeing the work firsthand and getting involved in ministry. It will also motivate your prayer life and stimulate your giving to missions.

Some have asked me, wouldn't it be better just to take the money spent on short-term trips and send it to the mission field instead? In some cases, yes. Americans sometimes believe that our seeing ministry firsthand validates it. If a missions trip costs tens of thousands of dollars and involves minimal ministry impact, it's really nothing more than a fun cross-cultural experience—which wouldn't be enough to justify it.

But many short-term missions trips are strategic and greatly help the national churches, missionaries, and indigenous people. They create "world Christians," who come back changed and who will pray for and fund missions the rest of their lives, thereby spreading their world vision and serving on missions task forces in ways they never would have if they'd stayed home. Also, many long-term missionaries have started with short-term experiences that have helped prepare them and move their hearts toward missions.

In *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, I write how it might cost a church over \$5,000 for instance, to send a pastor to an area of Africa where there is persecution to fellowship with believers, hear their stories, teach them the Bible, and above all learn from these persecuted Christians. But when that pastor comes back to his church, his visit might bear the fruit of hundreds of thousands of dollars given, many hours of prayer, and an ongoing relationship with fellow believers overseas that otherwise wouldn't have happened.

Furthermore, if people don't go on short-term trips, the equivalent money will almost never be spent on missions but instead will go toward cars, vacations, or repaving the driveway. *Many missions and vision trips are not funded out of missions dollars but from money that would have been spent other ways.*

Our church sends out 50 to 60 short-term missionaries a year. Consequently, our congregation includes hundreds of world Christians who know our missionaries personally, pray for them regularly, and give to missions more generously. The eternal dividends far outweigh the short-term costs.

Here are some good articles that do not blindly, but intelligently point out the good in short-term missions, while at the same time acknowledging the need to recognize their limitations and maximize their effectiveness:

[Do Short Term Missions Work?](#)

[The Place of Short-Term Missions](#)

Randy Alcorn (@randyalcorn) is the author of over fifty books and the founder and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries.

This article was provided by Pastor Nick Drake of Richland Baptist Church in Kingdom City, MO. He has been a full time missionary overseas and is a constant voice for the sending of people to the mission field. Please contact him for more information about his experiences and heart for the nations of the world.

Pastor Spotlight - Bryce Kristofferson

Recently Pastor Bryce Kristofferson sang from the roof top of Centennial Baptist Church in Mexico, MO. He was challenged to do this if the church reached an Easter attendance goal of 200. There were 220 who attended on Easter.



Pastor Bryce Kristofferson, Pastor of Centennial Baptist Church in Mexico, MO, sings on the roof top. He was challenged to sing on the roof if the church had an attendance of at least 200 on Easter Sunday. They exceeded their goal with 220 present.

Pastoral Ministry

7 Commandments For Every Young Student Pastor

Posted by Danny Watterson on 4/20/17 7:47 AM

<https://www.vanderbloemen.com/blog/commandments-for-student-pastors>

For many young Student Pastors, this might be your first or second full-time role in ministry. There are so many things that you'll face in this role that will challenge your faith, test your patience, and inspire you to be all that you can be as a leader of the next generation.

Here are a few tips that will help in the earlier stages of your ministry path.

1. Understand the bigger picture.

Especially when you're younger or in a new ministry role, it can be difficult to "see the forest for the trees," as the saying goes. As a new, young pastor, you're neck-deep in details, remembering names, adopting a church's culture, etc. Be mindful as you begin to swim that the water is deep and wide around you and that the area you've been placed lifeguard over is only a portion of a bigger pool. It's too easy to lose sight of the fact that you and every other team member are commissioned to help push the kingdom, not just your area, forward. How can you adopt the overall vision of the church and adapt it to your specific ministry environment?

2. Carry yourself with professionalism.

Being a Youth Pastor means that you need to relate to teenagers and adults alike; however, I've seen more than one young Student Pastor forget that they are in fact no longer a student. Maintaining relevance should not be an excuse for immaturity. Have fun and create an engaging culture for students to engage in a relationship with Christ, but carry yourself as a leader and not another eighteen year old. Are you able to determine when it's appropriate to act like a student and when it's time to show maturity?

3. Study.

This is the perfect season for you to continue to grow and learn. Although it may not seem possible due to time constraints, you likely have more time now than you will later in your ministry path. Things only get more consuming as time goes on. Use your time wisely and invest in the leader you want to be in the future. What resources are you reading, and how are you currently growing yourself?

4. Know who you are & who you're not.

At Vanderbloemen, we are always asking candidates what kind of leader they are. Typically, we find there are three arenas that we as pastors operate in (some more than others).

- The teacher; those who really love to study God's Word and prepare to engage a crowd with a message. These leaders generally thrive on stage and really enjoy communicating.
- The pastor; those that love the one-on-one ministry encounters and by nature are counselors, mentors, and listeners. Shepherding is what fuels them.
- The leader; those that thrive on systems and team building. These types truly enjoy motivating people and spearheading initiatives.

Again, in full-time ministry, we generally wear all of these hats at different times. However, as a young leader, you should begin to determine which area fuels you most and how you operate best. Know what you're good at and where you're weak. Self awareness is a valuable commodity. What type of leader are you and what areas do you thrive in?

5. Arrogance will get you nowhere quickly.

Nobody likes arrogance, especially from those who've not even earned the right to brag. Don't sink yourself before you've even gotten started on your ministry path. The best leaders are those that serve. Jesus came to serve, not to be served. I've often heard it said this way: Humility can be learned in public or in private. The choice is ours to make. I've been there, and I know it's too easy for young people to feel like they know everything. What are you doing to keep your pride in check?

6. Organize your time wisely.

We all get the same 24 hours in a day, and I'm a big believer in knowing where that time goes. If you're not managing your time well, I can almost guarantee you that you're losing hours each day to pointless causes. Spend the next week scheduling each of your hours, and I can guarantee you'll be more productive, or at least have more time to kill. This is a great habit to set now as a young leader. What can you start putting on a regular schedule in order to streamline your time?

7. Replicate yourself.

This is a wise habit to begin now and will serve you well as you continue down your ministry path. Develop other leaders around you. Pinpoint a couple possible candidates that could possibly do your job, and begin to invest time into them. One of the worst things you can do is to one day leave your role and your current team empty handed. Your leadership will shine brightest if, when you leave, your absence isn't felt. Are you investing in your student and volunteer leaders and others around you?

Student Ministry isn't for the faint of heart - just look at the national average tenure of a Student Pastor, which is 18 months. Hopefully these tips could help lengthen your time in this important role.

What are other important lessons for young pastors and Youth Ministers to learn?

Discipleship / Sunday School Ministry

4 Reasons VBS Is Important to the Local Church

by Rhonda VanCleave on Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 02:21 PM

<http://www.lifeway.com/Article/vbs-right-for-your-church-kids-ministry>

As summer begins, we think about lots of special activities for children and youth. VBS is a big part of that for many churches. Holding VBS just because "we've always done it" is not a great recipe for success, but not having it just because it's "old school" is not much of a strategy either. What can VBS help you accomplish? How would it fit in your ministry plan? Could you cooperate with other churches in your area or share resources with someone else in the association?

LP

Every year, more than 25,000 churches host VBS and more than 3 million people experience it. Here are four reasons why so many people participate in VBS every year.

What images pop into your head when you hear the words Vacation Bible School?

If VBS has been a great experience for you as a child or adult (or both!), you are probably smiling. Some may think of VBS as "old school" or not an event for your style of ministry. You might think VBS is OK, but you feel pressure because you need an event that sets your church apart from others in your area.

If you are not sure VBS is for you, here are a few things to consider.

1. VBS is a dependable ongoing ministry.

For 90 years, LifeWay has provided trusted VBS resources to churches, **reaching more than 25,000 churches and 3 million people annually.** VBS can be a short-term event with long-term results.

With a typical five-day time frame, VBS offers a chance to pull out all the stops and create an unforgettable experience. Research shows connections made during VBS result in salvations, discovery of church prospects and potential workers for other ongoing children's programs. Also, it is not uncommon for a leader to volunteer to help for "just one week of VBS," and feel God's tug on his or her heart to work with kids permanently.

2. VBS creates lasting memories.

VBS is a special event that creates memories that help lock Bible truths in a child's heart and mind for a lifetime. Birthday parties and other special events have themes that use creativity to evoke feelings of excitement. Games, food, decorations and fun all link together in a total package. VBS does the same thing. When we connect with kids through this ministry, the biblical truths that permeate all aspects of VBS also connect with their hearts and minds.

3. VBS is an opportunity to share the gospel.

VBS is an intentional evangelistic opportunity.

The biblical content built into the curriculum lays foundational truths that help kids understand who Jesus is and why they need a personal Savior. The relationships you develop with kids and their families can provide many opportunities to not only show the love of Jesus, but to share the truth of the gospel.

4. VBS is an event that you can customize.

VBS is what you make it.

Whether you provide an on-campus experience that encourages your church kids to bring their friends or an off-campus, community-centered Backyard Kids Club, the purpose of sharing the good news about Jesus is the same. Some churches are finding that it's worth the effort to do both. After a great on-campus experience, you can take those resources to backyards and community rooms, or on mission trips.

VBS is the resource. The name you choose can be your own! You can call it VBS, Kids' Week, Fun Zone or any event name of your choice. Kids will come to love and talk about the events that excite them, engage them, and help them know that God and the people at your church really care about them.

VBS is an opportunity to ignite the imagination of your church, involve volunteers for a specific "doable" commitment and connect with the kids in your church and community.

The methods you use will create memories. The message you share will change lives.

Worship Ministry

Does Your Worship Pastor Like Every Song We Sing?

Music Matters: An article by Andy Hammond, March 8, 2017

<http://www.hernandobaptist.org/blog/2017/3/8/does-your-worship-pastor-like-every-song-we-sing>

One of the most important (and most humbling) tasks for our worship ministry leadership is choosing the songs that our church sings during our Sunday morning worship gatherings. Choosing songs for our services is kind of like choosing the food for your kids: your choices as a parent greatly impact the health of your children and set a pattern for their lives.

What we sing in corporate worship matters greatly. Singing plays a crucial role in the formation of our faith, the physical expression of that faith, and our witness to a watching world.

For that reason, we have tests for our songs to make sure they are the right fit for our people, like:

- *Is it Scripturally sound?*
- *Is it Christ-centered or me-centered?*
- *How does it point to the Gospel?*
- *Is it driven by the voice of the people?*
- *Is it musically excellent and artistically honest?*

Did you notice anything missing that you might expect? The following are *not* one of our tests:

- *Is the song in the 1940 Broadman hymnal?*
- *Is the song on the latest Passion album?*
- *Does the worship pastor like it?*

When it comes down to it, a worship service's music shouldn't be a jukebox of your worship pastor's favorite songs, a platform to promote any particular style or songwriter, or a Lawrence Welk-style showcase of childhood nostalgia. Our songs need to put on display the beauty and majesty of Jesus Christ, and enable our people to respond through singing.

So yes, there are songs (albeit only a few) that we sing on Sundays that, for one reason or another, are not my personal preference. Here's why I'm OK with that:

1.) The stakes are too high to worry about something as trivial my personal preference.

Do you want to know what the people of a church believe? Don't just look at what is being preached—look at what is being *sung*. Choosing a church's songs is having a say in what is taught (and should require pastoral oversight!).

Songs have a way of affixing themselves to our hearts and causing us to remember whatever is taught. The question is, *do we really know what our songs are teaching?*

So what's at stake in our congregational singing? The very shaping of our church's view of God, the clarity of the Gospel message, and the equipping of the church for spiritual warfare. With the oversight of His Word, we're making declarations about truth and putting that truth in the mouths and hearts of a multigenerational church.

The fact that I may not prefer the way the writer overuses the subdominant chord really doesn't even register.

2.) My job isn't to create clones of myself, but to help unleash the voice of the people.

It all comes back down to a question of purpose: *I'm not trying to make everyone like the same music as I do*. On any given Sunday morning, our worship teams and I are trying to facilitate faith-filled congregational singing from our specific church at that place, at that time.

We're trying to help the middle-aged dad who is self-conscious about his voice sing so his kids can see His love for Christ. We're trying to give the teenager a soundtrack of singable truth for his life that counters the narrative of self-centeredness that the world offers. We're trying to use the best music to stir affections for Christ in a large gathering of God's people from different seasons and walks of life, that they might proclaim with one voice how great our God is.

If all that means we sing something I don't necessarily prefer, so be it. In the words of Bob Kauflin, *"If the people aren't singing, you're doing it wrong."*

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Worship Ministry

3.) The Gospel shines brightly in a church of diverse musical preferences.

People gather together because they are brought together by something they share in common. The question is, "*What is that thing that brings them together?*"

When there is no other apparent answer other than **Jesus Christ**, God is glorified and the unifying power of the Gospel is made manifest. Jesus is the glue that should hold us together, not common music interest.

When people with obviously different tastes in musical style gather and sing together, the unbeliever present looks on and says, "*There is something special at work here.*" We know that it's the power of God through Christ's work of calling a people for Himself.

4.) We grow when we sing something we don't like.

Growth comes when we are stretched. Think about it: where would you be if you never did anything that made you uncomfortable or chafed against your personal preference? I, for one, would still not like green beans, Apple computers, or music from the Baroque period!

The truth is, there will be songs we sing in church that you probably won't like at first, and that's ok. (In fact, some of my favorite songs we sing now were not my favorite when we started singing them!) We need songs that we have to **sing into** as a church. It's good for us and helps us grow.

5.) We serve others when we sing something we don't like.

Singing songs we don't like reminds us that corporate worship is not about me. Worship in the church gathering is not merely a "God-and-me" thing, *it's a "God-and-us" thing*. We aren't just worshipping God, we are encouraging one another in the faith as we "speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" ([Ephesians 5:19](#)).

One Sunday, you may not like a particular song that we sing, but what do you think it would look like to the person who *does* like the song to see you with joy on your face, singing it anyway? It's putting the good of the church above your own personal comfort.

Sounds a lot like Jesus, doesn't it?

Keep singing, church.

Article was provided by Brad Kerr, Associate Pastor of Worship and Education at First Baptist Church in Fulton, Mo.

Children / Family Ministry

Make Safety a Top Priority

Children Matter: An article by David O. Middlebrook, JD, March 13, 2014

<http://kidzmatter.com/make-safety-a-top-priority/>

One of the first ministries developed in a new church is the children's ministry and one of the greatest assets to the new ministry is adult volunteers. Whether nursery workers or youth group chaperones, these volunteers provide the care, mentoring, and valuable manpower that is needed to help a ministry thrive. Oftentimes, an "all hands on deck" approach is taken in recruiting volunteers simply because it takes a lot of people to care for the children in your church. However, in the quest to fill much needed volunteer spots, many churches decide not to screen or train volunteers, fearing that doing so may deter persons from volunteering. This should not be the case. Churches need to take care in choosing who will have access to the most important people in the building: the children.

One of the ways churches can manage access to its children is by requiring criminal background checks on all persons—volunteers and employees—who will work with children and youth. No church should be without these checks; they are an effective tool for determining whether a potential employee or volunteer is safe to care for children. The justification for background checks is compelling. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s, one particular national youth organization chose not to perform background checks. Consequently, the organization admitted over 200 men who had previously been arrested or convicted of sex crimes as volunteers in the organization's youth programs. Although the organization slowly began requiring criminal background checks for new volunteers, it was not until 2008 that the organization ultimately ordered background checks for all volunteers. Hundreds of cases of child molestation occurred during the interim. As a result, young lives were destroyed by abuse and a once effective nonprofit is now struggling to overcome the legal challenges, as well as shame from its failure to protect youth in its care.

This should be a warning for all churches and ministries. Just because your church is a religious organization does not mean it is insulated from those who may abuse children. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of cases of abuse arising from children's and youth ministries. But churches are not helpless! A church should implement systems that will screen all employees and volunteers to prevent the opportunity for abuse as well as train employees and volunteers to spot and report suspected misconduct. Not only will proper screening and training set safeguards around the children and youth, it will also protect the church from engaging in the negligent hiring of employees and negligent supervision of volunteers. *Negligent hiring is when the employer knew or should have known key background facts of the employee that indicated a dangerous background. Negligent supervision of volunteers is when volunteers are improperly supervised, allowing injury to occur.* These common legal claims arise when abuse occurs within the church. Careful hiring and supervision will help prevent even the opportunity for abuse.

Many churches have buckled under court judgments for failing to show they did enough to protect children in their care. In response, I developed The Guardian System. This program gives ministries confidence that they're demonstrating the care needed to protect children. The foundation of The Guardian System is a four-step tool known as S.T.O.P.: Screen, Train, Operate, and P.L.A.N.

Often, churches "trust and believe" when they should "trust but verify." We need to remember that Jesus said to "be shrewd as serpents ..." By implementing S.T.O.P. you will wisely improve the protection of children in your care. Our legal system demands you show due care when giving access to children, and children deserve that care. By following these four steps you will enable your ministry to minimize opportunities for evil.

S – Screen

A properly designed screening process should be the gatekeeper for entering children's ministry. Most importantly, a screening process will help uncover those with evil intentions. It is difficult to understand how someone who wants to work with children could have evil intentions. But case after case has shown that for many abusers, moving to a job or volunteer opportunity with access to children is often intentional. A properly developed screening process will help weed out wolves in sheep's clothing.

A screening should consist of several steps and should not only consist of a face-to-face interview. Many times, abusers are very likeable people and it may be difficult to believe they could harm anyone. The first step in the screening process is creating job descriptions, even for volunteers. Every position involving direct contact with children should have a written description of duties and responsibilities. A good job description helps you control the contact employees and volunteers have with children. You set the boundaries for a job, not the employee or the volunteer.

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Children's / Family Ministry (Continued)

Along with a thorough job description, a written application should begin the screening process. A carefully crafted application allows the church to obtain important information from the applicant, which you can verify through outside sources. Finally, do not let employees or volunteers begin their work prior to your receipt of the completed application. Make it clear that until you have a completed application, applicants are not allowed to work or volunteer.

You should also classify employees and volunteers according to their contact with children. For example, persons who have direct contact with children or youth and may be called upon for events such as overnight excursions need to be supervised at a higher level than volunteers who may only work in the parking lot or directing traffic. Classifying volunteers will help you allocate supervision and training.

Finally, face-to-face interviews, obtaining references and performing criminal background checks are the very last, but arguably most important parts of your screening process. An interview will help you have a "gut check" about the applicant: listen to your gut check. If you perform a reference check or criminal background check that comes back positive for violent or sexual crimes, the applicant should be immediately disqualified from primary contact with children. While an applicant's life may have changed since they committed crimes, it does not mean you have to place the applicant in primary contact with children. Remember to screen existing employees and volunteers if you are just beginning to perform background checks. No one should be excused due to seniority.

T – Train

Training for all employees and volunteers should occur before they have an opportunity to interact with children. Anyone in your ministry who has not received training should do so immediately. Training should cover: 1) Recognition of a child abuser, 2) Identifying victims of abuse, 3) Appropriate interaction with children, including physical touch and discipline, 4) Verification of identity for child pick-up, 5) How to report abuse, and 6) General safety, such as CPR.

Education is a significant step in protecting children from abuse. Training equips your employees and volunteers with the tools they need to recognize, report, and prevent child abuse.

O – Operate

Screening and training are not effective unless you operate your ministry so you know what is happening on your premises. Instilling good practices will prevent negligent supervision and let your staff, volunteers and parents know that you have safety at the top of your priorities.

One important practice that will prevent a negligent supervision claim is the "Two-Deep Rule." The Two-Deep Rule means that a child is with at least two, unmarried and unrelated adults at all times. A child should never be alone with one adult or even two adults who are married or related to one another. By ensuring two unrelated adults are always with children, you will deter misconduct; and if there is a false allegation of abuse, you have a witness who can verify nothing improper occurred.

P – P.L.A.N.

Should there be reported abuse, your response is critical. Immediately, contact your church's attorney. After contacting the church's attorney you will need to respond to the incident. Each state has specific reporting laws that carry criminal consequences for noncompliance. To help you respond, I have created a second acronym, PLAN: Prevent, Listen, Assemble, and Notify. These steps will help you respond in an ethical, professional and effective manner.

First, PREVENT interaction. Regardless of how baseless you believe the claim is, you must prevent any further contact between the alleged wrongdoer and any children.

Second, LISTEN to the report. Once again, regardless of how unlikely the claim may be, you must never ignore a report of child abuse. You should never shuffle the alleged offender to another staff or volunteer position. Always investigate the matter thoroughly.

ASSEMBLE a response team. This response team should be made up of leadership in the church and your church's attorney. The role of the team is to perform internal fact-finding.

Finally, you must follow your NOTIFICATION procedures. Any communication to the church or even a meeting with parents should be carefully planned and include the church's attorney. If the abuse involved the victim's parents, communication with them is not appropriate. Instead, you should consult the church's attorney.

When a church is faced with allegations of abuse, the use of S.T.O.P. will allow you to confidently know everything within your power was done to protect the children in your care. This will go a long way with your congregation, the public and even a jury.

Cost is the most common argument against any program, such as The Guardian System and tools such as S.T.O.P. However, no price can be put on the safety of the children in your care, and no court will see budget restraints as a defense to negligent hiring or negligent supervision.

Article provided by Brad Kerr, Associate Pastor of Worship and Education at First Baptist Church in Fulton, MO.

Technology in Ministry

Tech Talk: I hope that these two articles will help you shape the tone and purpose your church will use going forward on social media. They also have some helpful hints for us as followers of Christ.

Brad

Social Media and the Fruit of the Spirit

An Article from Aaron Earls, October 7, 2015

<http://www.lifeway.com/pastors/2015/10/07/social-media-and-the-fruit-of-the-spirit/>

One of the most unfortunate but telling aspects of social media is the way many Christians use it with little concern for how it reflects on them or their Savior. Often times they are unconcerned with the truth, haphazardly sharing demonstrably false news stories. Other times, they wrongly believe as long as we speak the truth, nothing else matters—even (especially) when talking to or about other Christians. However, Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:15 that believers keep unity within the body of Christ by not just speaking truth, but by doing so in love.

One of the simplest ways to tell if our social media speech is truly biblical in both the content and delivery is by testing it against the fruit of the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23 HCSB).

Each of those characteristics evident in a person living according to the Spirit should raise questions about what we share on social media.

- **Love:** Is what I’m saying concerned more with others’ edification or my reputation?
- **Joy:** Will this bring lasting joy to those who read it?
- **Peace:** Am I doing all I can with this to promote peace in the body of Christ?
- **Patience:** Is it the right time to say this or should I wait until later when I may be thinking more clearly and less reactionary?
- **Kindness:** Are my words kind—not telling someone exactly what they always want to hear, but maybe not always saying exactly what I want to say either?
- **Goodness:** Will my words encourage the reader to live more like Jesus?
- **Faith:** Am I attempting to say something that will cause people to trust more in Christ or applaud me?
- **Gentleness:** Am I speaking more harshly than needed simply because I want to “make an example” of those who may disagree with me?
- **Self-control:** Should I actually say this? After considering the other fruit of the Spirit questions, is this something that is better left unsaid?

Discipleship involves submitting every area of our life to the Holy Spirit, including what we post on Facebook and Twitter.

Does your social media feed live up to the test of the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

An Article from Jonathan Howe, January 3, 2017 7 Keys to an Effective Church Social Media Strategy

<http://www.lifeway.com/pastors/2017/01/03/keys-effective-church-social-media-strategy/>

Social media is here to stay and some churches have done well as early adopters of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. But many churches are still either hesitant to use social media or are using it poorly and not seeing any positive results.

As the pervasiveness of social media grows, it would be unwise to continue to ignore your church’s social media strategy and presence. And like any other ministry in the church, social media needs planning (a strategy), people (someone in charge), and a purpose (measurable goals) to be effective. These seven keys will help your church engage both members and guests on social media.

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Evangelism

This is my review of Dr. Alvin Reid's *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out* slightly modified from what I published at ChristianBookNotes.com on 17 April 2017.

SHARING JESUS WITHOUT FREAKING OUT BY ALVIN REID

Reid, Alvin. *Sharing Jesus {without freaking out} Evangelism the Way You Were Born to do it*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017. 144 pp. \$16.99.

Introduction

Alvin Reid holds the Bailey Smith Chair of Evangelism as well as serving as the senior professor of evangelism and student ministry at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. More than teaching on evangelism, Dr. Reid (Doc) also serves as pastor to young professionals at Richland Community Church in Wake Forest, NC. He is interactive on social media and is always willing to help and instruct any who might ask him. Oh, and I would be remiss if I did not mention he one proud grandpa to whom this book is dedicated.

Summary

Divided into eight chapters, Doc sets out to explain how he has found great success in his evangelism ministry. The answer is quite simple just from looking at the chapter titles. Chapter one discusses the importance of spreading the word without overcomplicating the message. Chapter two explains the message of grace and mercy over and above the message of anger that so many preach today.

The third chapter begins to deconstruct the walls we have built to evangelism by looking at the need for conversations instead of the sales pitch presentation. Continuing the conversation explanation, Doc moves in chapter four to show how you are vital to the mission of God even though you cannot do this in your own power.

As he continues to build the conversational model of evangelism, he turns to conversation starters and transitions that will help you to engage anyone with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sixth chapter takes this even further by instructing the reader on how to let the other person help you. In other words, as you get to know them through a conversation, they will point you to their need of the gospel.

Once you begin to transition to the gospel, you will find that that you are able to talk more freely about the things of the Lord, but you will need to be careful as you must also talk with more than words. Chapter seven is devoted to showing the reader the importance of living out your faith in the context of sharing your faith.

The final chapter argues for making friends instead of making visits. Here, Doc wants you to have a plan of action before you go into any situation in order that you might effectively share the gospel more readily.

Review

This is just what the church needs! Yes, you can argue that we have the Bible and that we have many different methods of proclaiming the gospel, but the fact of the matter is, here in America, we are simply not doing what we have been commanded by our Lord and Savior. Doc Reid has been proclaiming the gospel for many years and, to be honest, has challenged me greatly in his 'success' rate.

This is not to say that evangelism is all about success rates and models and strategies, but it is to say that Doc's ministry is proof that the Word of God does not return void (Is. 55:11). I have been blessed to listen to Dr. Reid present a number of times in the state of Missouri where I live and have learned much from his ministry. One area I find that has helped him to be more effective is the location of where he lives and ministers. His town of Wake Forest is larger than my county in Missouri.

That being said, as this book shows, it is not about the size of the community as much as it is about the size of the God who has commissioned you to this mission. Doc shows that the key to effective evangelism is having a strategy in place before you engage with the message. The key to evangelism is realizing you are engaging people not statistics.

In *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out*, Doc explains that our mission is evangelism for the sake of seeing souls saved and not for the sake of numbers and statistics and honor at state conventions. Doc shows how sharing the message of salvation in Christ alone is natural to the one who has been born again because the new creation in Christ has a message to proclaim. Doc simply equips the new creature to do what God has enabled him or her to do.

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Youth Ministry

Thoughts on Youth Ministry 5-1-17 Go Ahead and Do Something

OK, so you have a youth age Sunday School class or maybe a Wednesday night youth Bible study group. Maybe you have been going to a few ball games or school events and you have been praying for your students to get to know Jesus better... Congratulations, you have a youth ministry!

You might have two youth or twenty, but no matter the number, you need to serve together.

There are a few people who seem to be naturals at seeing the need and doing physical acts of service, but most of us have to be taught. Your youth are no exception and it should be part of our normal discipleship process.

Don't forget, a process has a few steps.

Youth live in a selfish world. Selfishness seems normal to them. They need to be prayed for and taught specifically about giving to others. You already know that one of your youth can't seem to stop texting or snap chatting or posting something on their phone. You already know the student who barely says a word and prefers to sit quietly by themselves.

So pray for them. Pray specifically for what seems to be a reason that they would never give up a Saturday morning to do physical work for someone else.

Youth also need to be taught. Don't assume that your youth know that God cares about the work that they do for others; teach them.

For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. Hebrews 6:10 (NLT)

And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God. Hebrews 13:16 (NLT)

Create a plan.

Find something challenging for them to do, that they can do. Know what your kids can do and get a plan. You may have an older person in their church that would love some yard work done or flowers planted for them. Get a group together for the next work day at Camp Cedar Crest. Work with your town and see if you can volunteer to clean up at a park. If you are drawing a blank, you can always deep clean your church's kitchen! Contact the people in charge of it and ask if you can clean and re-paper the cabinets, clean behind the stove and refrigerator.

Make it an event.

Donuts before you start. Soft drinks at break time, and Hotdogs and chips afterwards would be something easy to do that connects the work that you do with a time to relax.

These are also great times to invite other adults you have been recruiting to help you in youth ministry. An informal time doing work, will help them get to know each other and let their personalities interact outside of a class room.

I hope this is enough to get you started!

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 specifically about service projects or you would like to stop by and see what a typical Wednesday night youth group meeting looks like for him email him. mstukenborg@hotmail.com. Or contact Preston Thompson and he can find a youth group that might be closer to your church that you could visit.

Church History - Reformation

Celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation By Terry Delaney

The largest two figures in the Reformation are undoubtedly Martin Luther in Germany and John Calvin in France. Yet, these two men were not the only ministers who led the charge in the Reformation, they are just the two most noted theologians. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a few other Reformed Leaders.

I share these short informational biographies on these lesser known men of the Reformation for a few reasons. First, they show that the Reformation was more than the two men we largely think of today. Second, we see the good and the bad of the Reformation in that there were major doctrinal disagreements between the many different leaders of the Reformation Age, but they all found common ground that the Bible was of such importance that these disagreements, as terrible as they were, were worth the effort bring the gospel of salvation in Christ alone to the people.

Third, God uses anyone and everyone who He has set apart for the gospel ministry to bring about Reformation. Though the Reformation began 500 years ago, there were many events leading up to it that set the table. Also, there were many more faithful pastors and men and women who willingly sacrificed their lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is still true today. Though these men are lesser known to us today, they are still worth reading about, especially for those of us who serve "in the shadows" so to speak.

Ulrich Zwingli (January 1 1484 – October 11 1531)

Zwingli was the most influential Swiss Protestant Reformer. He held to the authority of Scripture so much so that he applied what he understood the Bible to teach with rigor to every doctrine and practice in his life and ministry. He was a secular teacher who loved to read theology and was ordained into the priesthood in 1506. During his priesthood he would preach expositional sermons from the gospels (different than what the Roman Catholic Church demanded) which led to his leading the Reformation in Zurich, Switzerland.

In 1528, with assistance from Henry Bullinger (more on him below), he set forth 7 theses that formally began the Reformation in Bern, Switzerland. Those 7 theses were:

- (1) that the church is born of the Word of God and has Christ alone as its head;
- (2) that its laws are binding only insofar as they agree with the Scripture;
- (3) that Christ alone is man's righteousness;
- (4) that the Holy Scripture does not teach Christ's corporeal presence in the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper;
- (5) that the mass is a gross affront to the sacrifice and death of Christ;
- (6) that there is no biblical foundation for the mediation or intercession of the dead, for purgatory, or for images and pictures
- (7) that marriage is lawful to all

Though Zwingli had disagreements with the Reformation taking place in Germany and in France, he was all for the Reformation because the people needed to have open access to the Word of God. Zwingli, who had served as a chaplain early in his Catholic ministry resumed his role as chaplain in Zurich when he was killed on the battlefield in the Second War of Kappel with a battleax in his hands.

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Church History - Reformation (continued)

Heinrich Bullinger (July 18, 1504 – September 17 1575)

Bullinger also served as a Swiss Reformer. It was Bullinger who helped formulate the 7 theses with Zwingli and it was Bullinger who ultimately secured the Reformation in Switzerland. He was able to accomplish this through his correspondence with rulers like Henry VIII and Louis VI, both of England. In order to bring the three major strains of the Reformation together, Bullinger was instrumental in drafting the First Helvetic Confession (1536). This failed to bring the Lutherans together so he offered the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) which succeeded in bringing the Swiss and the French into unity and gave birth to what many today think of as the "Reformed Tradition."

Johannes Oecolampadius (?? 1482 – November 24 1531)

Oecolampadius (pronounced *echo-lamp-a-dius*) originally planned on attending law school but became enamored with the new theology of the Protestant Reformation. He decided to then turn his attention to Greek and Hebrew and theology in general. His greatest concern was found in his emphasis on the atonement of sins by Christ. He became noted for his ability to debate and converse with others that he, too, became an assistant to Zwingli. He also served as Professor of Theology at the University of Basel. He had great influence on Erasmus (publisher of the first Greek New Testament, 1516) and Zwingli as well as Bullinger and Calvin.

Evangelism - Continued

Recommendation

Christendom owes a great debt to Doc Reid for his humility and accessibility as an academic thinker on the topic of evangelism. More importantly than that, he has modeled for the Christian what consistent obedience to the Great Commission looks like in the local context of evangelism. As the evangelism team leader in my association, I have been looking for a resource that I could give to my pastors that they would want to read and implement in their own ministries. I have found that resource. I highly commend this book to everyone who calls on the name of Christ as their Lord and Savior and who wants to be a better soul winner in their own ministerial context.

NOTE: I found this book to be so powerful in its simplicity and style that I purchased enough copies for every pastor in the Grand Crossings Baptist Association as well as any other lay leaders, volunteer ministers, or anyone who might want a copy. If you have not already received a copy from me or from Preston please contact either one of us and we will get you a copy of this most important book.

Both articles have been written by Bro. Terry Delaney, Pastor of Union Baptist Church outside of Mexico, MO.

Technology in Ministry (Continued)

1 Have a clearly designated point person. If no one is responsible the social media communications of your church, the chances of being effective are low. Someone—whether paid or volunteer—should be responsible to see that schedules are followed, content is posted, and standards are being met. If your goals call for a daily tweet and nothing has been tweeted in two weeks, you need a structure of accountability in place to get back on track. Without a designated point person, church social media can be haphazard and will ultimately hurt the ministry and reputation of the church.

2 Understand the differences in the channels. It seems obvious, but Twitter is not Facebook, and neither of them are Instagram. Each social media channel has advantages and disadvantages and is best served with specific content for its audience and format. Twitter and Facebook are the most alike in that links and photos work well on these platforms. Quotes will fall flat on Facebook (but not on Twitter) and Twitter isn't the best for photo galleries or events (Facebook is). Speaking of photos and links, on Instagram photos links aren't active in the body of a post. When you post content online, remember what works best in each channel.

3 Integrate social media into your current communications plan. One big mistake many churches make in social media is separating it from what they are already communicating. Use your church's weekly newsletter or bulletin to shape the content in your social media channels. And while you match the type of content to the channel, always consider the "sharability" of the post. Think "if someone sees this, will they want to share it with their friends?" If the answer is no, consider a shift in content or the call to action.

4 Monitor channels for feedback and respond. Social media is not a one-way street. The entire purpose is for social media to be social.

This requires dialogue, listening, and responding to questions. While not every comment requires a response, if you find yourself getting asked the same questions time and again, consider adding an FAQ page to your church website or integrating those answers into existing content.

5 Have a clearly defined goal for each channel. While it's great to have an ever-growing number of followers online, having increased follower counts as goals isn't the best way to measure effectiveness. Set measurable and timely goals for engagement and effectiveness rather than simply trying to increase your follower counts.

6 Use tools for efficiency and analytics. Once you've set your goals, you need to track them. Using tools like Buffer and Hootsuite allows you to monitor, engage, schedule, and analyze your social media accounts. Also, spend some time in the analytics areas of your social media accounts. You'll be amazed (and possibly frightened) at what they can tell you about your audience.

7 Promote the social media channels through traditional means when possible. If you are going to use social media as a church, tell your members and guests about it. Put the logos and usernames for your accounts on bulletins, newsletters, and promotional materials. If you want your members and guests to engage with you online, they need to know where to find you.

Where has your church found success in social media?

Article has been provided by Brad Kerr, Association Pastor of Worship and Education at First Baptist Church in Fulton, MO.

Senior Adult Ministry

Validation Therapy – Part 2 (Respecting Presence)

By Dr. Frank E. Fain, The Baptist Home

Naomi Feil developed effective methods for communicating with people who have “Alzheimer’s-Type Dementia.” She identified four stages. The third and fourth stages require certain approaches which can create meaningful interactions with confused persons.

Persons in the third stage engage in repetitive motion. They may pace or wander as if they had endless energy. They may repeat certain words or sounds over and over again. They may make movements with the hands in a rhythmic fashion.

Since people in the third stage have lost speech and the ability to think logically, verbal techniques rarely work. Non-verbal methods such as appropriate touch, genuine eye contact, matching facial expressions to emotion, and linking behavior to universal human needs (to be loved, to be acknowledged, to be useful) help to restore, if only for a moment, the quality of life.

Mirroring the sufferer’s movements can spark immediate, direct eye contact. Copy the person’s body movements, breathing, hand and feet movements, and facial expressions. Follow the person’s lead and dance to his or her rhythms. However, be careful not to use mirroring in a mocking way. As with all people stricken with dementia, our purpose is to build trust and lower anxiety. Do not use mirroring if there is any sign of resistance or agitation.

A caregiver once encountered a lady who wandered the hallways of The Baptist Home. As she pushed her walker, eyes looking straight forward, she made annoying wooing sounds of a train whistle louder and louder. The caregiver walked with her matching the same gait and sound. Eventually, she stopped, made eye contact and said softly, “If you’ll stop, I’ll stop.” By matching her body movements, the caregiver was able to gain the attention of the confused person. Eventually, the caregiver worked with the repetitive mover to replace the annoying train whistle sound with the less disturbing rubbing of the hands.

Much of the same occurs for those in stage four, vegetation. Speech is lost, as well as the ability to think logically. Again, non-verbal techniques such as, touch, genuine eye contact, matching facial emotions and linking behavior to universal human needs is the most effective. Stage four people often do not acknowledge old friends or recognize family. Breathing is shallow and soft, the sufferer barely moves on his or her own initiative. He or she may lay in bed in a fetal position, eyes shut with an expressionless face.

Appropriate touching often kindles memories from long ago. The early, emotionally tinged memories are permanently stored in the brain and are sometimes stimulated by gentle touching. By touching different parts of the face and shoulders, memories arise of significant relationships. A gentle petting of the top of the head may evoke pleasant father-like memories or a tender touch of the cheek may cause lovely maternal thoughts. Signs of meaningful interactions are when the vegetative person awakens, turns his or her face towards the caregiver, eye contact is made, and the face of the sufferer is relaxed and warmly animated. Avoid touching if there is any sign of resistance or unpleasantness.

The use of soft music is beneficial in all the stages of resolution previously mentioned. Familiar songs learned in early childhood become permanently imprinted on the brain. Often these songs become associated with loving relationships and strong emotions. They can elicit pleasant responses and experiences of those in the final stages of dementia.

We must be careful to always acknowledge the person in a confused stage. That is, when we are in his or her presence we should never talk about them as if they were not there. We never know what people are able to perceive while in this state of mind. His or her soul may be alert and alive but in a wearied body that can no longer communicate effectively.