

# THE BARNABAS PAPERS

**Discover, Develop, and Deploy.** These are the three elements of the vision for the Grand Crossings Baptist Association. Through the last 8-9 months of the year, we have been walking through the first step of Discovery. I have been working at learning who every church is, their pastor, and our ministries from across the GCBA landscape. We have taken closer looks at what we are doing as churches in the fields of Gospel knowledge and proclamation, our communities around us, and our need to work together for the Kingdom of God. We will always in some way, be discovering what God has called us to do here in the Callaway and Audrain counties of Missouri.

The next step is our development of those churches, pastors and ministries. The main questions we are asking to achieve this goal are: What is a healthy church? What is a healthy pastor? And what is a healthy ministry? The annual meeting kicked us off in this direction with the Church Revitalization Conference. I greatly enjoyed the challenging messages Dr. Henard, preached to us about our need to understand where we are right now in the life of our church and our personal walk with God. I loved the statement he made. "There are two things every pastor can do, Preach the Gospel and Pray for your people." On the road to being healthy, these are two major aspects.

When I presented my message on Saturday afternoon of the meeting, I challenged the pastors to keep accountable to the proclamation of the Gospel in their communities. I described this past year's accounts of baptisms as an indication that we have lost the urgency of the Gospel message. So as a way to help keep accountable, I set a goal of 300 baptisms over the next year. This is not to put a number on each person's life, but to remind us that we have a job to do to in reaching our communities.

The reality is that there some of our churches that have yet to baptize someone for years on end. If you are a pastor of a GCBA church, I will begin calling you in November, and every other month after that, to get a count of how many you have baptized in that time. If you are a church member, the responsibility does not lie totally on your pastor to reach and save the lost. You have the same calling to take the Gospel to the nations as any one else.

This is a whole Association goal. I am happy to say that I have pastors already calling me to say that they are baptizing people left and right. Did you know that a public baptism in a church is a great witnessing tool? I have seen many times where God uses a single life being changed and their public testimony to spark a revival of evangelism in a church. Let me ask this; "Is your baptismal already filled in anticipation for this Sunday?" or maybe I should ask; "What are you personally doing to make sure the waters of that baptismal are moving this coming Sunday?"

The last element of our vision is the deployment of our churches, pastors and ministries into the world. Please read the article on the Willis' on pages 11 and 12 to see a glimpse of what the elements of develop and deploy looks like from right here in GCBA. May God continue to use us in *servicing churches in our Association to Advance the Kingdom of Christ.*

It is such a joy to serve you as your Associational Missionary.

*Preston*

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## Ministry Spotlight - Camp Cedar Crest

I was seven years old the first time I stepped foot on the camp grounds of Camp Cedar Crest. Everything was new to me. That summer I fell in love with the camp. I fell in love with the camp chant, the swings, singing the fun camp songs, my leaders, and even the pond. That summer and each summer after have continued etch itself more and more onto my heart. I know that I am not the only person who holds this place as a special part of their lives.

The camp just celebrated its 77<sup>th</sup> birthday. We have had 77 years worth of people experiencing, improving and growing the camp. When the camp first started there was no dining hall or chapel. They had the land and some tents, and they loved it. The camp was begun by what is now called Grand Crossings Baptist Association. In 1960 the Camp Cedar Crest Baptist Corporation was formed with the partnership of Mid Missouri Baptist Association (Little Bonne Femme).

If you have been out to the camp recently, you will see that there have been quite a few updates made. Some of the major additions took place between 1989 and 2004. In 1989 the chapel was built. In 1994 the dining hall was completed. Then ten years later in 2004 the craft building was finished. In 2013 Campers on Mission came and added the low ropes course. This year they built us some new bunks and added a new roof onto Whispering Pines (the old block building).

Each year we have more and more people come through the camp. The spring and fall months are especially popular for groups to rent out the camps for a weekend retreat. Our summers consist of having the association's youth a children's camps. We have students who come from all over Mid-Missouri. These students come from all different types of households. Some have strong parental influences in their lives and other students are begging to be noticed by someone, anyone.

We have a mission field right here in our back yard! There are so many opportunities to get involved in camp! You can help out as a leader, pastor, worship leader, kitchen volunteer, on the camp committee or board, or come up with the recreation games for the children. You don't even have to go seek the students out, they come right to you. They (most of the time) are even excited to come to you. What other type of mission are you going to come across where students literally line up to have you teach them? There are so many times when we have to go seek someone out to tell them about the Gospel. At camp they come, they hear what you have to say, they learn something and they get to have fun while doing it. We put them in small groups where they get to know new people and can learn about what God is doing in the lives of the people around them. A lot of times they find someone to confide in. They feel safe. These students are looking for someone to love them. You can see it in their eyes. We get to give that to them. We get to be the person sitting there, talking to them, hearing their story and sharing ours. We get to love on them. The best part is we get to tell them that Jesus loves them. There is nothing better than seeing someone understand Christ's love and sacrifice for the first time. We get to witness it. I want to invite you to be a witness to it too.

There has been a countless amount of people walk through the gates of Cedar Crest. The camp has had a long life before us, and I pray it has a long life left after we are gone. My prayer is that this will continue to be a camp that is dedicated to teaching, discipling and loving students in the name of Jesus. We can make that happen, but we have to do it together Church.

Julie Blankenship - Camp Board President and Youth Camp Director

## Pastor Spotlight - Where to Find the Next Generation of Pastors

The below article is focused on finding church planters but it is a great reminder for seeking the next generation of pastors, deacons, and Sunday School teachers in your church. The reality is that we are in need of reproducing or training up our leadership in our church both now and in the future.

### 5 Places to Find Planters in your Church

Adapted with permission from Matt Rogers, *Next: Discovering, Developing, and Deploying Future Leaders for God's Church* (Alpharetta, GA: The Send Network Team, 2015).

#### ***Where do I look for planters to send?***

Future leaders do not simply appear; they are discovered. Your church provides fertile soil for the discovery of future leaders and some of the best training ground for their development. For this to happen, current leaders must assume the responsibility for both recognizing and exhorting young leaders to the vital work of church leadership.

Here are 5 places to look for church planters within your church:

#### ***Look Around You***

Look around you with fresh eyes. Look to see where God is *already* at work among the leaders He has *already* given you. You're not going to find what you're not looking for, so look intently within your congregation for potential church planters.

#### ***Look for New Believers***

Often, new believers still have relationships with those far from God and are ready to make radical sacrifices for God's mission. Pastors should seize this opportunity to challenge new believers to consider how God is calling them to steward their lives for his mission.

#### ***Look for Godly Character***

Do you see a pattern of change, repentance, and growth in one's life? Look not for perfection here; look instead for clear brokenness over sin, a trust in the gospel, and a battle for holiness. These mark one's growth in understanding and applying the gospel to their life.

#### ***Look for Proven Faithfulness***

Proven faithfulness can only be observed over a period of time among the church. Look to develop people who naturally lead without a title. Leaders are not leaders if no one is willing to follow them. Sheep recognize shepherds. They see them lead and want to follow.

#### ***Look for Passionate Desire***

Anyone willing to lead among challenging church situations must be willing to trust God and take faith-fueled risks for His mission. This means future leaders will often have a desire for more. For this reason, future leaders may make their desire to lead known. They aspire to lead and serve because of a God-given passion more than simple prideful posturing.

To read more from *Next: Discovering, Developing, and Deploying Future Leaders for God's Church* (Alpharetta, GA: The Send Network Team, 2015), download the full eBook at [namb.net/send-network-blog/next-discovering-developing-and-deploying-future-leaders-for-gods-church](http://namb.net/send-network-blog/next-discovering-developing-and-deploying-future-leaders-for-gods-church).

## Pastoral Ministry

A couple of years ago a former pastor published a long blog post on his journey from what he described as “faithful Christian living” to atheism. This man grew up in a Christian home, prayed to receive Jesus as his Savior at a young age, felt called into ministry, even went to seminary. He married a young Christian lady, had several kids with her, and pastored a few different small churches. While he gave several reasons for abandoning his belief in God, the primary one he kept coming back to was that in his experience Christianity just didn’t really work. For example, he refers to his childhood and describes how when he became a teenager he really liked this girl but she didn’t like him back. So he prayed and asked God to help him win her heart, but it never happened. If God was there, why wouldn’t he answer this well-intentioned prayer?

This man describes several things like that, but it was really when he became a pastor that he began to believe that Christianity just didn’t work. His main reason was that the churches he pastored didn’t grow. He describes how he learned in seminary, and became convinced through Scripture, that churches needed to rely on God for growth: sharing the gospel, being witnesses, trying to reach their community, and trusting God to bring salvation. The problem was that all the churches he knew that actually did this were declining (of course, his own prominent among them), they were relying on God and dying. On the other hand, churches that looked to a particularly charismatic leader or the latest business model or a flashy worship style seemed to be the only ones growing. He came to believe that church growth had everything to do with methods and gimmicks and marketing, just like attracting people to movies or new restaurants, and nothing to do with God. Rely on God to grow your church and your church will die. If God were there, how could this be the case? While today this man’s wife is still a Christian and trying to raise their children to know and love Jesus, he is convinced atheist, out of the ministry, and dedicated to leading people away from God instead of to him.

When we get down to it, it seems as if this man’s conviction that Christianity “doesn’t work,” and therefore God doesn’t exist, comes from his struggle to accept that God is at work even when we can’t see him, that God knows best what should happen in our lives even when we don’t understand what he is doing. It might be that you right now are struggling with this. When God doesn’t meet our expectations, our ideas of what is good for us, we get mad at him, we blame him. We don’t see how God is working in our everyday lives or how it is that he is faithful because he’s not conforming to our ideas of what his work and his faithfulness should be. Until we begin to believe that God knows best and we don’t, that God can and does bring about the best for us even in hard and difficult times, we will struggle with doubt, with fear, with anger, with giving up, or even turning against him.

God always knows what is good for us, and through his power he is able to bring about good for us, even in hard times. Don’t give up. “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things” (Rom 8:32)?

Gary L. Shultz Jr.

## Ministry Highlight - Bible Drill

Are you doing Bible Drill this year? Do you have questions or need help? Contact me and I will be glad to come to your church to help or train. Not doing bible drill yet, but want to know more about it? Now is a good time to consider this ministry for next year if you are not already doing it. Let me come and talk to your church to show you how it can benefit your children, youth and congregation. Please consider this ministry to train your children in the Word of God. You should order materials and be ready to begin by January 1, 2017 for the children's level or by November 1, 2016 for the youth/high school level.

Bible Drill is a basic Bible memorization and Bible use ministry. Teaching our children and youth to use the Bible and memorize Bible verses will benefit them all the days of their lives as nothing is more important than hiding the Word of the Lord in our hearts. It is not an easy program but I am amazed at how hard children will work to memorize and learn quick use of the Word of God with the proper coaching and encouragement.

Ask yourself, "If the Word of God were to be taken away from me as it has been from countless Christians in other parts of the world, how much would I be able to remember?" We have no guarantee that this will not happen to us. It is very important that we help our children memorize God's Word.

You can check out more information and materials at the GA Baptist Convention website (click on Bible Drill).

The associational drill will be held at Rising Sun on March 26 at 6:30 pm. Church drills should be done no later than March 15 and results reported to me as soon as the drill is complete. The youth and high school state Bible Drill will be held on April 8 at Harmony Heights Baptist Church, Joplin, Mo. The children's state drill will be held on May 6 at 9 am at Richland Baptist Church, Kingdom City, MO.

If your church is planning to participate in Bible Drill, please let me know, so I know to keep you informed of any changes in schedule and so I can pray for your team.

Susan Burns, Associational Bible Drill Leader  
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## Worship Ministry

### SAVED PEOPLE LOVE TO SING

An article by Kevin DeYoung, September 6, 2016

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2016/09/06/saved-people-love-to-sing/>

If you've been in church your whole life you may not realize how strange it is that when Christians get together they spend a good chunk of time just singing.

Where in our culture do you find ordinary, untrained people gathering to sing? Maybe the National Anthem or your school's fight song. Happy Birthday, I suppose. In the car on a road trip, I guess. But really, when do adults in large numbers belt out the same song? A concert may be the closest thing, but even here the primary point is to be entertained as someone else sings. I'm not sure where you would go this week for more than three minutes of organized singing except to church.

There are many ways Christians are a peculiar people. One of them is that we almost always sing when we're together.

There is a familiar pattern in the Bible: God saves, and his people sing. "The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing" (Isa. 51:11). And so we have songs by Moses, Miriam, Deborah, Barak, David, and Hannah. In the New Testament there are hymns to Christ in John's Gospel, in Romans, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and in Hebrews. There are doxologies scattered throughout the Bible and songs in Revelation 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, 14, and 15. And did I mention the Psalms?

The Bible has a lot of different people singing different things, but in another sense the Bible only has one song. The song of Moses is the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). They are one and the same. They both praise God for his great acts of judgment, for his fearful holiness, for his righteousness revealed, and for the salvation his works on behalf of the redeemed. The song Moses sang on the shores of the Red Sea we will sing one day by the sea of glass (Rev. 15:2). Eternal praise for the God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

There was singing at creation. The Lord says to Job that when he laid the foundation of the earth "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). All the angels sang for joy at the birth of Jesus (as did Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon). Now we sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to each other (Col. 3:16). The drama of redemptive history is actually a musical. Will you join the chorus?

Is the Lord your strength? Is he your song? What is your personal anthem? What do you sing about when you are free to sing about whatever you want to sing about? Sing about the Red Sea. Sing about God's justice. Sing about his power and might. Sing about his salvation. Sing about the cross and the empty tomb. Sing now, sing later, and never stop singing. "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty!"

Saved people love to sing.

*Article submitted by Brad Kerr*

## Church Highlight - Why Do People Choose Your Church?

### **Seven Key Reasons People Choose a Church** found on [ThomRainer.com](http://ThomRainer.com)

Why did you choose to come to this church? I ask the question hundreds of times each year, especially to people who joined a church within the past year. Now we have new research that gives us specific reasons why people decide on a particular church. As I noted in my previous post, I am grateful to Pew Research for their massive study on the behavioral patterns of members and guests.

In their most recent study, the respondents noted seven key reasons for choosing a church. They were allowed to offer more than one reason. Here are the top seven responses:

**Quality of sermons (83%).** The primacy of the pulpit is the number one factor for those looking for a church home. These results are very similar to my research published in the book, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, fifteen years ago. Unfortunately, the demands on many pastors make it difficult for them to put the time they need in sermon preparation.

**Feeling welcomed by leaders (79%).** It is so important for pastors and staff to take the lead in welcoming guests. No, they are not supposed to do all the welcoming, but their role has a huge impact.

**Style of services (74%).** I would love to be able to unpack this response a bit more. One thing, however, is clear. People are still choosing churches by the styles of worship of the congregations. The numbers are overwhelming. Three out of four church seekers say worship style is a factor for the church they choose.

**Location (70%).** I want to be careful not to say things these numbers don't mean to say. But I would surmise that location is more important today than it was ten years ago. This reality would at least partly explain the dramatic increase of multi-site churches. Churches are going to the communities where the people are. It also prompts us to follow the trends of large regional churches. Will people more and more prefer a church in their own community rather than driving to the regional church?

**Education for kids (56%).** This number is incredibly high, especially since many families do not have kids at home. Obviously those who do have children at home consider this issue vitally important. "Education" likely refers to more than the teaching ministry to children; it probably encompasses the total scope of children's ministry. I have said on more than one occasion the first staff member I would bring to the church after the pastor would be a children's minister.

**Having friends/family in the congregation (48%).** Relational connections are very important. We see this issue to be so important that we created a ministry (Invite Your One) to engender an attitude of inviting. Those same connections play a crucial role in the assimilation process in the church as well.

**Availability of volunteering opportunities (42%).** This factor was very encouraging to me. People no longer want just to sit and soak; they want to get involved. If guests know there are opportunities to get involved quickly in the church, they are more likely to choose that church. I have no doubt the Millennials are instrumental in this number being as high as it is.

From my perspective, these seven factors are not huge surprises; they are really affirmations of much of what we have been sharing with you. The real issue is not the intrigue of this research; it is what you and your church will do about it. I would love to hear your comments and ideas.

# Church Revitalization

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM WALT DISNEY WORLD?

The other week, I was listening to a podcast interview with Lee Cockerell, former Exec. VP of Walt Disney World Operation. This is the man that was once responsible for all of the cast members and daily operations at Walt Disney World. During the interview the host asked Lee Cockerell why he thought that Disney was doing better and better each year. At the time of this interview Disney World had over 50 million visitors a year. Lee's response was simple, Walt Disney World has excellent customer service and leadership.

Having been to Disney World two times in my adult life and been on three Disney cruises, I can testify to this. My family is a Disney family. Being the only man in my house, I know all of the Disney princesses and know all of the hit songs from Radio Disney. But to be honest, I love it. I am man enough to say that I teared up a little as we were driving through the gates of Disney World.

Disney is growing every day. With new parks opening in Tokyo and other parts of Asia, the purchase of both Marvel and Star Wars, and movies coming out every year, Disney's Stocks are only going up.

So what can our churches learn from Disney World? We need to learn their excellent customer service and leadership techniques.

When one talks about customer service within our churches, it sounds odd and people think that it does not fit with church. The reality is that it is something that we do all of the time, we just don't call it customer service. But it's true, we tend to work to make the members happy, give them a place they enjoy coming to, encourage them to bring others with them, and all the while stay true to the gospel message. However unlike Disney World, most of our churches are not pulling in 50 million visitors a year. In fact, we are closing more churches each year than we are opening. So what can we do?

We can learn to do things differently. When asked, "What is Disney doing differently?" Lee Cockerell gave two very powerful but very basic answers. First, it pays attention to the culture and second, it humanizes the brand. These are the two answers that Lee named for making Disney World a dream vacation spot for millions each year. By using these concepts, our church can also be a place where people keep coming back and not just to fulfill their weekly routine. So let's take a moment to see what Disney World did in these areas and see how we can adapt them in our church.

### Pay Attention to the culture

First, we need to look at the biggest almost failure of Disney, Disneyland Paris. Disneyland Paris opened on April 12, 1992 and for the next three years the park was in constant financial struggles. It even lost 25% of their workforce by May the same year it opened. Nothing was looking good for the park and it was obvious to everyone that it was going to be one of the biggest failures in Disney history.

Although things were looking bad, in 1995 there was a turnaround. Disneyland Paris became the dream vacation for many in Europe. Lee Cokerell pointed to two things that made a huge improvement for this park, less American food and wine.

At the beginning of Disneyland Paris, it was a carbon copy of Disneyland USA. American attitude and appetite does not always translate to other parts of the world. This was the primary issue with the park. American food was not working in Paris, and if you have been to Disney you know they make a lot of money off the food.

# Revitalization.....(continued)

Disney was not paying attention to the culture around it. They took an American theme park and dropped it in Paris. Sometimes our churches also lose touch with the culture that surrounds the church. In our communities where our churches are, we have to be aware of the changes that happen. Changes are constantly occurring. New people move in, the old people may move away. There are new places to eat or maybe even a whole new atmosphere that surrounds our places of worship. When we realize that changes have happened, we then have to make changes to reach the new community without changing the gospel.

## Humanize the brand

If you have been to Disney World in the past few years you will know that technology is a big part of the park. With the introduction of the Magic Bands, life in the park is much simpler. The Magic Bands are everything from your Hotel key (if you stay in the park), it links to your credit or debit card so you can pay for souvenirs and food with a flick of your wrist, and even acts as your fast pass to get through lines to rides faster. This one piece of technology has improved your day in Disney World.

Even with all the help that technology gives us, the people at Disney World realize that it's not about technology but is about the human interactions. I knew a cast member who worked in the Magic Kingdom and one of the things that he loved was talking to the guests. All of the cast members are friendly and easy to talk to. They want to make your visit a fun and memorable one. They will go above and beyond to make sure your experience is magical.

This is even more evident when traveling on the Disney Cruise Line. My family and I always take the time to get a picture with our nightly dinner servers. During the cruise they make it a point to get to know you, not just your food and drink choice, but they strive to know you personally. By the end of the cruise they have become our good friends and we want to remember them always. They have made a connection with us!

Too many times in our churches, we focus on the technology within the church. We try to have the best looking website, the coolest cell phone app, the nicest sound system, and the best media presentation on Sunday morning. But the truth of the matter is most people want a pastor and staff that are down to earth and will take a minute or two just to connect with you. Instead of pointing people to the "meet the staff" section on our websites, we should point them to the physical staff to meet. We cannot lose focus that we are all sinners in the need of a savior. We are human and as humans, we like to talk and get to know others. We need to make those lifelong friendships instead of just being another face in the pew.

It's the little things that will save our churches from shutting down. A little knowledge and a smile is sometimes all it takes to bring new members into the family of Christ. No matter what you think of Disney World, you can agree that they are doing something right. We can learn something from their business model and use it to help the church see new life.

*Article written by Wil Hoffmann*

# Technology in Ministry

## 5 New Rules for Effective Church Websites

An article from Justin Trapp, January 22, 2016

<http://pastors.com/5-new-rules-for-effective-church-websites/>

Your church website may be breaking some unspoken rules. If you follow these rules they will dramatically impact the way your website functions. Your church site should be an asset used to generate results. Most church websites are simply a window for viewing static info. Your website is a tool to connect with people in your community and beyond.

If you want your website to work for you, follow these 5 rules.

### 1. Get rid of the homepage slider

I have had so many pastors make the case for the slider in the name of, "We want people to see things are happening.1" The problem is, no one clicks on the slider. In fact, some studies have shown only 1% of people will click on your slider. Don't take up valuable real estate on your website with something that continues to generate low results.

Sliders also don't work well on mobile devices or smart tablets. The rise of one-page websites has risen dramatically with mobile traffic.

### 2. Build A Site For Outsiders

Filling a slider with your church's "current events" caters to insiders. We have done testing with our church clients and found, the majority of traffic came from non members.

People who have never been to your church care about a few things.

1. What are the service times?
2. Where is the church located?
3. Who is the pastor?

Your homepage should answer all 3 questions quickly for the visitor.

### 3. Showcase Great Photos

When someone visits your site, you want them to commit to attending a service or at least contact you. People are more hesitant to commit if they don't have a clear understanding of what to expect. Humans are hesitant of the unknown. Great photos of your church, pastor and community transcends information on a page. They give your perception life and color. I can guarantee your staff/leadership is in the top 3 most visited pages on your site. You need to have professional, warm photographs all over your site.

### 4. Add Value to Your Visitors

Also known as, content marketing. **Content marketing** is a strategy for creating and distributing valuable, relevant content. When a new family moves to your area and are looking for a church, chances are, they will visit your website. What would be helpful to them? How about an ebook with a list of restaurants, local parks and activities for the family. You could do something really crazy and include other churches as well. What you have done, is added value to their lives. Adding value creates a level of trust and trust is a powerful currency. People are more likely to at least visit a church if some sort of trust already.

### 5. Call Your Visitors to Action

The worst thing that could happen is a visitor comes to your site, sees a bunch of information and then moves on. You don't know who they are. You don't know if they are interested in your church. You aren't able to answer any questions they may have. Creating a call to action forces them to make a decision about their interaction with you. They could leave, or they could give you their email address for more info and perhaps a call from one of your pastors.

Here is a fantastic article on the psychology of CTA's. (<https://blog.kissmetrics.com/psychology-of-the-cta/>)

The best use of a call-to-action is a focused landing page. Give the viewer two options. They can leave or they can give you their email address so you can connect. Anything more leaves room for them to get distracted and just leave without you knowing who they are or where they came from.

Article submitted by Brad Kerr

## Missions and Ministry

The following article is one that I am very excited to bring to you. One of the parts of our vision and plan for the Association is to deploy our churches, pastors and ministries out into the world with the Gospel. This article is from someone who grew up in GCBA, was developed and is now being deployed. At the end of the article there is an opportunity for you to come alongside them as they serve. This article serves to highlight what God is doing in our churches and to encourage you to be developed and deployed.

*Preston*

### THE WILLIS' SERVING WITH THE JESUS FILM PROJECT

Greetings Pastors and Churches of the Grand Crossing Association,

My name is Michaela Willis, the oldest daughter of Gary and Judy Crawford. I grew up attending Rising Sun Baptist Church in Hatton. My parents hold a deep love for the Lord and taught me who Jesus was and how to follow Him. When I was eight years old I understood that I was a sinner. As much as I strived after my own perfection I realized it was unreachable, so I turned and placed my faith in Christ. Since the Lord has come into my life, He has brought me to a place of brokenness for those who have yet to learn the name of Jesus Christ.

I can still remember the first time I shared the gospel with someone who had never heard the name of Jesus. I was in high school and had the privilege to go on our association's mission trip to North Dakota. In my time spent there I mostly interacted with kids who just desired to feel loved by someone, anyone. I went to the same town each day and spent time with many different kids, but grew to have a special friendship with a little girl by the name of Sage. She stuck out like a sore thumb with her red hair and had the cutest smile.

One afternoon when I was playing with her, I started to ask her silly questions like, "Who do you think built the playground?" or, "Who do you think put up that stop sign?". Then I asked, "Who do you think made you?". She pondered for a little bit and said, "I don't know?". So I began to tell her about God, the Creator, and how He made you and me. I shared how we all have a chance to know God, but have been separated by our sin. So, I started to share the Good News about Jesus and how He came and died. Though before I could get to the resurrection it hit me, as Sage waited expectantly, that she had never heard the good news of how Christ had risen again. She had no idea who Christ was, never even a whisper had been told to her about the name of Jesus. Wow! It brings me to tears even now to think of a little girl never having heard the name of Jesus Christ before, "The Name to which every knee will bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" Philippians 2:10-11(ESV). This experience forever changed my life, and the Lord used it to call me into full time ministry.

I want to thank the churches of our association from the bottom of my heart for following the Lord's leading and participating in youth missions. I have experienced firsthand how trips like these can impact the lives of those who live on the reservation as well as those who our association sends. Since sharing with Sage, the Lord has continued to burden my heart for those lost in darkness who have yet to catch a glimpse of the light. Someone needs to tell them, someone needs to go. At this stage in life, I sit humbly before the Father and say, "Here I am Lord, send me."

Now a few years later I have graduated from Hannibal-LaGrange University and was married in July to my husband, Peter Willis, who holds the same passion for taking the Gospel message to the least reached people groups in the world. The Lord knew what He was doing. He took two kids from the Midwest, who grew up 100 miles apart, and instilled in them the same desire to take the Greatest News, to the least reached.

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## Missions and Ministry .....continued

As we begin this new chapter in our lives, we would like to share with you where we believe the Lord is leading us. We feel called to work with the Jesus' Film Project, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ (or Cru). The film *JESUS* is like no other film ever made. It walks through the Gospel of Luke using the very words of Scripture as its script. Today there are more than 3 billion people that remained completely cut off from the Gospel message. These image-bearers of God have little or no access to the Gospel. There are many barriers such as language, culture, and illiteracy that hinder the spread of the Gospel to this vast group of people. The mission of the Jesus Film Project is to shatter these barriers through sharing the message of Jesus in the heart languages of people all over the world. To date, the film *JESUS* has been translated into over 1,400 languages.

The Jesus Film Project strives to do exactly what we desire to do: take the Gospel message of Jesus to the most unreached areas in the world, accelerate church planting, and equip and train the local believers in evangelism and discipleship. To do this they have pioneered various tools to share the Gospel, and have developed a short film network to use in face-to-face evangelism. These tools are available for free for anyone. The Jesus Film Project also partners with over 1,500 missions organizations around the world to help fulfill the Great Commission. Their goal is to reach every tribe and every touchscreen with the message of Christ. They do this in three ways. First, they partner with churches and missions organizations. Second, they have developed a media platform which is available online and through their app. Third, they plan and implement strategic short term Gospel centered mission trips. The Jesus Film Project takes about 40 trips each year which are 2-3 weeks long and target the most unreached, unengaged areas within the 10/40 window. Native missionaries and churches around the world send the Jesus Film Project requests for teams to come to reach their region with the Gospel and to equip the local believers in evangelism and discipleship. The Jesus Film responds by sending a team to meet the specific needs of the request.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15:20, "It has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known." Like Paul, we hold the same conviction and desire to help fulfill the greatest ambition in the history of the world, the Great Commission. (Matthew 28: 18-20) In light of this, we will be moving to Orlando, FL to work at the world headquarters Campus Crusade for Christ in the international office of the Jesus Film Project. However, before we are able to report, we first have the privilege and honor of raising all of our personal and ministry expenses.

Currently, we are seeking to partner with individuals, families and churches who will prayerfully and financially support us in our ministry on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. We are seeking 50 partnerships at \$50 a month, and 15 partnerships at \$100 a month. Our goal is to raise all of our special needs and monthly support by the middle of December so that we can report to our assignment in January. We would love to personally come and share with you, your church, and/or your mission's team more about our ministry vision and answer any questions you may have about our ministry.

If you would like to learn more about our ministry, feel free to visit our website at <https://www.gcx.org/willis> . If you have any questions or desire for us to come and share with you and your church feel free to contact us. If you would like to know more about the Jesus Film Project itself, you can check out their website at <http://www.jesusfilm.org>. We pray that you have been encouraged by how the Lord is continuing to raise up young men and women from your association who are committed to serving Him and taking the Gospel where Christ is not known.

May God continue to bless all of you and your churches as you continue to serve and honor Him.

Until the Whole World Hears,  
Michaela & Peter Willis

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# Youth Ministry

## My kids aren't listening - Part One

I wish I could say that every time I get up to speak, the students quiet down in anticipation of the awesome things that I am about to say to them.

The truth is that most weeks I hope that at least some of my students even care that I have something to say and I am pretty sure that your students are just like my students.

They have different names, they may look different, but the problem is the same. Their brains are developing, they are very busy, their hormones are freaking them out and they have heard all the major Bible stories several times, so they are pretty sure that they don't need to hear what you have got to say.

I'm sure that that was very encouraging, but stay with me and let me give you a few things to consider that have helped me.

**Be honest:** Years ago I made a commitment to my students that if I did not have anything to say, I wouldn't waste their time.

That meant that some nights, I have cancelled the Sunday Night Youth Bible Study! Life happens. Sometimes it was for personal reasons; the kids and the wife were all sick. Sometimes it was because I had ministry needs that consumed my time. Don't just pull something out of a file or off the internet. Students love honesty.

**It's OK to be short:** I have had Sunday School lessons that came out of the quarterly that just were not that good and after I cut out the stuff that didn't seem very applicable, I was done 20 minutes early. If you have 30 minutes of good information, only take 30 minutes to say it.

**It might be just one of those days:** If it has just started snowing and the chances are good that school will be cancelled tomorrow... things might not go so well. I have had nights and mornings when I got home and wondered if any of the kids got anything I was trying to say. I knew I had a great topic and corresponding scriptures to go along with it, but it just flopped. It has happened before and it will happen again; love the kids, go home, and come back next time.

**Too many Bible words:** I have had quite a mix of kids over the years. Valedictorians to drop-outs and everywhere in between. I grew up using the King James Version. Most of the verses I have memorized are from the King James Version... I never use the King James Version! Reading and comprehension levels are generally very low. Ask yourself this question; what are the chances that my students have used the words I am going to read to them in a conversation with their friends?

I wish it were true that kids knew what sanctification, justification and Propitiation were. Please teach these concepts, but use a vocabulary that your students and their friends will understand. It is my experience that if a student feels like they are dumb because they didn't understand you, they won't ask questions, they will just shut down.

You don't have to feel alone. In our association there are lots of folks that love students and are trying their best to lead them and they would love to talk with you about what they do, what has worked and what hasn't.

You probably don't know who all those people are; contact Preston Thompson and ask him to connect you with someone in your area that you could talk to. He would be glad to help.

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, email him.

[mstukenborg@hotmail.com](mailto:mstukenborg@hotmail.com)

# Evangelism, Missions and Discipleship

This article was published on the Small Church Leadership Network's webpage on Apr 9, 2011

## DEVELOPING EVANGELISTIC PROGRAMS

The week long service had been carefully planned for months. The speaker was an itinerant evangelist who had been scheduled to speak nightly for the whole week. To prepare for the services the people were asked to invite at least one other neighbor. In the local weekly newspaper there had been the announcement of the services. Posters were placed in the grocery store, the Post Office and the cafe. In preparation for the event, the church was asked to spend a week in prayer, with a special day of prayer planned the Sunday before the services were to begin. Although the plans were faithfully made, the services were disappointing. Instead of having the unchurched attend, the services were attended only by the 'faithful few' of the church. The pastor was embarrassed by the low turn out and the people were discouraged because all their efforts seem ineffectual. While the task of the individual Christian is to be a witness in the community, the responsibility of the church is to develop programs and ministries that are evangelistic in purpose. However, because the small church has a limited number of people to perform even the most necessary ministries within the church, evangelistic programs are often neglected. Because small churches struggle with maintaining present ministries, people are unenthusiastic about new programs, even ones as critical as evangelism. For evangelism to occur within the small church, it needs to be intentional. Evangelism does not naturally happen, even within the ministry of the church.

## DEVELOPING EVANGELISTIC STRATEGIES

Strategy #1: Integrate evangelism into existing programs. Developing the priority of evangelism begins, not with new programs, but with the integration of evangelism into every program already existing within the church. By incorporating evangelism into present ministries, people are able to be involved in evangelism without the added burden of trying to run new programs. Encourage Sunday School teachers to invite and visit children who could attend, but are not presently doing so.

Strategy #2: Develop a prayer base. Prayer is the basis for evangelism. Without prayer, the church will not have the divine empowerment or divine motivation to be involved in evangelism. The early church was effective in reaching their world because they first prayed for their world and for the boldness to proclaim Christ fearlessly (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 6:19,20).

Strategy #3: Develop programs for different stages of responsiveness. People are at different levels of responsiveness. Having programs and ministries only for those who are ready to receive the gospel of Christ is only part of the evangelistic process. Not all evangelistic events should have the direct appeal to accept Christ. For the antagonists, such an appeal would only further turn the individual off. For the ignorant, such an appeal would be confusing. Before the harvesting the fruit needs to be ripe. Harvesting unripened fruit only results in spoiled fruit. In evangelistic programs, the church needs to plan to help people in the process of ripening, not just in the process of harvesting.

Strategy #4: Develop multi-faceted ministries. Since every individual within the community is different in terms of personality, background, experiences, spiritual sensitivity, etc., evangelism requires different methods for different people. The smaller communities are no longer as homogeneous as they use to be. To be effective, the church needs to understand the differences and tailor ministries to different groups. The church in the book of Acts, tailored the evangelistic efforts and message to the people they were reaching. The method used to reach the Jews was different from the method used to reach the Gentiles (for example see Acts 2 and Acts 17).

Strategy #5: Focus upon community. Often the smaller church exists in areas where there is a strong emphasis upon community. Rural communities pride themselves in their demonstration of mutual concern and care for one another. Farmers assist other farmers in harvest; people give generously to those going through a crisis; business are supported faithfully because they are "locals" even though the prices are not competitive. That which strengthens this sense of community is welcomed; that which threatens it is fiercely opposed. For the church to be effective in outreach, it needs to become part of the community, and be a center for fostering a spirit of community within the region. Being a good neighbor is the springboard for evangelistic efforts (John 13:35). Having a bake sale for a family going through a medical or financial crisis not only is a testimony to that family, but to the whole community.

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## Evangelism, Missions and Discipleship.....continued

Strategy #6: Programs must be social and relational. The strength of the small church is its relationships. It is this that not only binds the church together, but is that which attracts others as well. In many small communities, the church is both a religious and a social center. Social and fellowship events can not only be opportunities for developing the church community, but can also be evangelistic events. By having evangelistic events focused upon social interaction rather than "evangelistic preaching" the gospel can be presented in a clear manner yet in a way that does not violate the value of privacy within the small community.

Strategy #7: Focus upon people rather than programs. Doran McCarty correctly points out that, "Small-church approaches to evangelism need to be people centered. This is the pattern and strength of the small church. Super churches attract people through their winsome pulpiteer and their glamorous programs. The small church attracts through the contacts people have with its members." (Doran McCarthy, *Leading the Small Church*, p 142).

Strategy #8: Minister to needs. If community is the central value to the social structure, practicality is the value marking its work ethic. What determines the value of anything, or anyone within the small community is their contribution to the productivity, health and well being of the community. If the community does not see the church contributing to these values, they will question the value of the church. Consequently, the church should not only think of how it can contribute to the spiritual and physical well being of people within the congregation, it needs to consider how it can contribute to the physical and spiritual well being of people within the community. The Christian life must be demonstrated practically, not just argued and preached theoretically and theologically. Proclaiming Christ to the lame involves both the gospel proclamation as well as helping the lame walk (Acts 3:6-7).

Strategy #9: Quality programming. There is no substitute for quality in the ministry of the small church. Scripture commends the church to perform all its duties in such a way that it reflects one's worship of God (Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:17). Ministries conducted haphazardly and slovenly reflect poorly both upon the church and the Christ the church is proclaiming. People today expect quality in every aspect of life, from their shoes to their entertainment. Anything that does not reach their standard of quality is considered insignificant. Therefore, in planning evangelistic events, the church needs to make sure that the program has a high standard of performance. Quality does not mean being the best, but doing the best with the available resources and abilities.

Strategy #10: Focus upon faithfulness rather than results. Evangelism in the small town community is difficult, requiring diligent labor to attain fruitfulness. If those involved in the small church focus only upon results, they will soon become discouraged and unmotivated to witness. Since producing fruit is the responsibility of God, then the focus of the church should be upon faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel to the lost (see Isaiah 6:9-13).

### PLANNING EVANGELISTIC EVENTS

**1. Determine the target group.** Since evangelism in the church requires careful preparation and intentional effort, the first step is to determine who it is the church is desiring to reach. The methods used to reach people will be determined by the cultural, sociological, spiritual and religious backgrounds of the individual. Before planning an evangelistic event, the church needs to have a clear picture of who they are wanting to reach.

**2. Determine the purpose for the event.** Is the event pre-evangelistic, that is, is the primary purpose to build relationships? Is the purpose of the event to bring them to a point of decision? Since people are at different levels in their spiritual sensitivity and responsiveness, the church should plan 'evangelistic events' that are designed for different purposes.

**3. Decide upon the event.** Once the target group and purpose is identified, the next step is to decide upon an event that is appropriate to the target group and provides a context for accomplishing the purpose which the event is to achieve. Events that are not matched with the target group and purpose will be ineffective. If the target group is elderly women, having rap music as the entertainment followed by a discussion on fly fishing might not obtain much of a response.

**4. Determine the location.** Not all events can nor should be held in the church building. Some events might be more effective held in the local school or park. Unchurch people are less likely to feel comfortable in a church, therefore neutral sights can be more favorable for inviting them. They are more likely to attend an event in a park or someone's home than they will in the church.

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## Evangelism, Missions and Discipleship.....continued

**5. Outline the event.** *Preparation is the soil for quality.* Having a clear picture of how the event will be conducted will assure a quality event where people are not in confusion. Careful planning includes organizing the event, assigning responsibilities, and developing a clear time schedule for the event. In developing the program it is important that the planners keep the unchurched in mind and plan activities that are geared for the unchurched not the church.

**6. Publicize the event.** The publicity that the event is given will be determined by the location, purpose and target group. Publicizing the event may include personal invitation by congregational members, having posters placed in visible locations, articles appearing in the local paper, running advertisement on radio and television stations, as well as other creative ideas developed by the congregation.

**7. Follow-up the event.** Evangelism is not merely presenting the gospel; it is the process by which the church assists people, who are outside the kingdom of God, in becoming genuine life-long disciples of Christ (Matthew 28:19,20). Careful consideration should be given to how the church will follow-up those who attend the event. Every event should have some type of follow-up, although the nature of the follow-up will be different, depending upon the purpose of the event. Following up those who attend pre-evangelistic events may include personal visitation for the purpose of developing relationships with members within the congregation. For any who make a personal decision for Christ, there should always be follow-up in the form of discipleship.

**8. Evaluate the Event.** After every event, those who planned the event should evaluate it. Did the event accomplish its purpose? Were unreached people present? What was most effective about the activity? How could the event have been more effective? Was there adequate follow-up? Were people moved forward in their understanding of the gospel of Christ? Post evaluations are crucial for developing further ventures and should be a part of all evangelistic efforts. Program evangelism should always be the result of intentional, careful planning that works in conjunction with personal evangelism. It should never be a case of either/or but of both/and. Program evangelism is used in partnership with the evangelistic efforts of individuals so that the church is assisting people in bringing to fruition their work at personal evangelism.

### Five major problems faced by small churches:

1. Low self-esteem and apathy.
2. Lack of vision for the future.
3. Lack of concern and love for "outsiders."
4. Finances and stewardship of resources.
5. Issues of power and interpersonal conflict.

-Ron Crandall, *Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church*.

### TEN ESSENTIALS FOR MINISTRY

1. The foundation of Ministry is character.
2. The nature of ministry is service.
3. The motive for ministry is love.
4. The measure of ministry is sacrifice.
5. The authority of ministry is submission.
6. The purpose of ministry is the glory of God.
7. The tools of ministry are the Word of God and prayer.
8. The privilege of ministry is growth.
9. The power of ministry is the Holy Spirit
10. The model for ministry is Jesus Christ.

-Tom Cowan, *Worship and The Word*

Apr 9, 2011, 11:44 AM

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## Church History - The Offering Plate

**Passing the Plate**, article by Mark Rogers, posted March 12, 2009 on Christianity Today.

America ended state support of churches in the early 19th century, the collection of "tithes and offerings" became a standard feature of Sunday morning worship.

As instrumentalists play or a soloist sings, as ushers file slowly down the aisles, congregants give money as an act of worship and to support the ministry of the church. If the people don't give, then the pastor goes unpaid, the building never gets built, and the missionaries stay home. When Christians go to church, most expect the collection of an offering as much as they expect preaching, singing, and prayer. Unlike preaching, singing, and prayer, however, the weekly offering did not become a fixture in American worship services until the late 19th century.

Colonial American churches did not depend on voluntary, weekly giving from their members. Instead, as had been the case in Europe, the government established churches, sanctioning certain congregations and supporting them financially. Most New England colonies established Congregational churches, while the Southern colonies along with New York, New Jersey, and Maryland established the Anglican Church. Most of the colonies could not imagine a state without an established church. A prosperous society depended on having citizens of good character, and the people expected churches to create virtuous citizens. Since churches served the public good, it made sense to fund them through public taxes and fees—such as poll and property taxes—rather than voluntary offerings.

Public funding of American churches did not cease immediately after the American Revolution. While the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment prohibited Congress from establishing a national church, the states still supported churches through taxes. In the years following the Revolution, men like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Leland fought against religious establishment in Virginia. Isaac Backus and other Baptist ministers led the charge in New England. Only in 1833, when Massachusetts rescinded its religious tax, was every state church in the Union officially disestablished.

### **On their own**

Religious disestablishment, which historian James Hudnut-Beumler calls "the largest instance of privatization in all of American history," forever changed the way American churches did business. Churches and pastors could no longer look to the government for money. They had to come up with new ways to raise the funds they needed in order to survive and thrive in the free market of 19th-century American religion.

Churches used a variety of methods to raise money. For example, while some Christians today act like they own the pew they occupy each Sunday, many Christians in the 1800s actually did own their pew (or at least rented it). Some churches rented pews by auction each year, while others sold them to pay for the building and then taxed the value of the pew for annual revenue. The most expensive seats were in the front, and the cheap seats were in the back. Free seats were available in the back or the balcony, but a free pew carried a social stigma.

Other groups, such as the Baptists and Methodists, often preferred to use a subscription book, which listed the total funds needed in the front. A church would pass the book around, and the members would record how much they pledged to contribute that year. Some churches used free-will offerings in the early 1800s. Churches collected them only occasionally—maybe at Thanksgiving or Communion—to support missions or the poor, not to pay for regular church expenses.

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## Church History - The Offering Plate.....continued

### **A biblical mandate**

As pastors and other Christian leaders sought to motivate people to give, they increasingly looked to the Bible for support. Now that the government no longer compelled giving through taxes and fees, many rediscovered the depth of biblical teaching concerning money and stewardship. Some, like Parsons Cook, pointed to [1 Corinthians 16:1-2](#) as "a rule which binds all to the principle of setting apart, every Sabbath, or at least [regularly], a portion of their income ... for charitable uses." Others, like Charles Finney, taught that God was "the owner of all" and that the believer "should hold all at the disposal of God, and employ all for the glory of God." Hudnut-Beumler explains that after the Civil War, the idea of "the tithe" as God's minimum standard became popular. Pastors exhorted believers to bring their tithes and offerings into the "storehouse" ([Malachi 3:10](#))—the local church—as an act of worship and commitment to God.

In the late 19th century, people had come to see giving as a biblical mandate, a spiritual matter, and an act of worship. Therefore, it made sense to incorporate the collection of offerings into Sunday morning worship alongside preaching, singing, and prayer. By 1900, most American churches took up weekly offerings. A dedicatory prayer or the doxology normally preceded the collection. Members enclosed their money in preprinted, two-sided envelopes. By this point, churches depended on these weekly offerings for most of their funding.

The weekly offering has remained the chief method of church funding for over one hundred years. Today, more and more churches are making online giving available; nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that the weekly offering plate will ever lose its privileged place in American worship.

*Mark Rogers is a Ph.D. student in historical theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.*

