

Foursquare Department of Christian Education

DIRECTIONS

A Newsletter for Christian Educators

Winter 1994-95

KNOWING WHAT YOU'RE DOING

Not far from our offices is the world famous "Tommy's Original World Famous Hamburgers" a standard for excellence when it comes to chili-cheese burgers. Tommy's, has gained world acclaim and wealth for the quality of ingredients, cheap price and fast service. In fact, watching Tommy Jr. slam two beef patties with a ladle of chili and a slab of cheese on a hamburger bun in a mili-second was fascinating. Needless to say, he knew what he was doing.

Building lives in Jesus and building a great hamburger are greatly different and yet both require certain ability in "knowing what you are doing." As a Christian leader you do many things well. They meet and exceed expectations because of God's grace and your understanding of what needs to be done. One area that is always up for evaluation is how standards of ministry are set. Standards are needed for recruitment, training, curricula and even facility use.

The immediate can press us to lower the standard of potential that God has for us and those who serve. For example, you make a frantic call three days before Labor-day weekend saying, "I'm sorry I'm running late, but would you like to teach the 8th grade class next week? It doesn't take much preparation. You can do it. It doesn't matter that you never have taught before. It's a cinch!"

That standard is no way to get anyone to reach their potential. **IT'S WRONG TO OFFER PEOPLE EASY WORK AND SUGGEST THAT THEY REALLY DON'T HAVE TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING!** Few things are more insulting than to be offered an easy job.

Max Depree, corporate business leader and author of "Leadership Jazz" writes that the church where he and his wife attended was having some special problems with a high school class. These kids were tough as nails. So they asked a capable, experienced woman in the church to help. "Mary," they said, "we'd like for you to take this class. They're unmanageable, and we don't know what can be done with them." They challenged her in a wonderful way.

She knew what she was doing when she said, "I'll take this job on one condition: That you ask Max DePree to teach it with me." They said, "Why don't you ask him?" So she did—caught me completely by surprise. But what impressed me was when she said, "This is the toughest job in the church. I've agreed to do it only if you'll help." She challenged me and I accepted. We put together a program for those kids. She had a lot of good ideas, and things turned out beautifully.

Higher standards challenge us onward and upward to a "better way." Higher, attainable standards cause us to process the past and present with an eye on the future. Hebrews shows us how the heroes of faith accomplished a tough job in a "better way" through faith and hard work. **WE CAN TOO!**

"Go through, Go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; Build up, Build up the highway! Take out the stones, Lift up a banner for the people!" Isaiah 62:10

Together may we look to Jesus in setting a standard that is worthy of God's redemptive grace and working of the Holy Spirit.

Rick

Caring When You Don't Understand

Quarterly, I facilitate a two-hour support group at the Queen's Medical Center which is part of an eight-week course titled, "Living Well with HIV/AIDS." My specific topic is spirituality.

Michael, arrived late, settled in his chair, and began to study the group. He focused his attention on me and asked "Excuse me, who are you and are you HIV positive?" I explained my role within the group, and the responsibilities I have as the coordinator of hospital ministry with Interfaith Ministries of Hawaii at Queens Medical Center. I then told him I was not HIV positive.

"God," he continued cynically, "I haven't been to church in years. Maybe I should leave and come back next week because I don't have much good to say about Christianity." I assured him that I had come to listen to anything the group members wanted to discuss. I then invited him to share.

He introduced himself and shared that he had been living with HIV disease for eight years. He told us he had attended over 25 funerals the past year of loved ones who died as a result of complications from AIDS. He said he would be added to, what he called, "an endless list of souls freed from hell" in the near future.

I thanked Michael for sharing then listened intently as others gave their horrifying details of living with HIV. They expressed anger and hurt toward family, friends and professionals for either rejecting or stigmatizing them.

Throughout the session, I presented a calm exterior. Internally I was an emotional wreck. The stories were heart-breaking. When the class ended, I felt drained. I was ready to return home to my wife, Kathy, and put the group behind me. As I headed towards the door, Michael asked for a moment of my time.

Immediately he hugged me and began to cry. He said, "Pastor, I was fully prepared not to like you. I thought that you were another person doing the politically correct thing by running a support group for us poor AIDS folks. But tonight you proved that you really understand what those of us living with the HIV disease are experiencing."

Michael's comments felt good, but I knew they were not accurate. I have no idea what it is like to live with the HIV virus and all the stigma that go along with this terrible condition.

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Ministry often occurs outside of one's realm of understanding, beyond the reaches of one's intellect. We are called by God to be with others who find themselves in physical, psychological, and spiritual trenches. A literal hell on earth.

When I attempt to make sense out of the many tragedies humans encounter, I become overwhelmed. When I try to use my brain to figure out how I am going to care for: a man living with HIV; a woman in the process of remembering being sexually abused as a child; a teenager who has just been told that his parents died in a car accident; or a couple whose child died shortly after she was born, I become immobilized. A power greater than me has to take over my being. In my own theological belief system, this power is God.

To Michael, I appreciate the sincerity of your words. I am pleased that you found comfort in my presence. But let me set the record straight. God empowers me to be with you in the midst of your struggles. Without God's Holy

Spirit guiding me, I could not provide support to you or anyone else. I don't have a clue about what you are experiencing. It is your pain, not mine. That anyone would have to suffer with any condition, seems senseless and cruel. I really don't *understand*, but I do care.

Al Miles is an ordained minister in the Church of God, Anderson, IN. Article excerpted from *Caring While Not Understanding*. Printed in the Leader Newsletter May-June 1994

Catch THE AGE WAVE

The age wave will bring hundreds of opportunities to minister to senior citizens, but the church must prepare for it. Here are five beginning steps for those churches who are willing to paddle hard:

Realize that your traditional senior adult group is probably unable to reach the secular, unchurched senior adults in your community.

Create new senior adult groups. Newly retired, or soon to be retiring person have no interest in joining a group with members ten or more years older. Therefore create new groups for them.

Examine your group's style of evangelism to see if it is effective for senior adults.

Change the way your church thinks about seniors, what they need and what they are capable of. For example, senior adults don't need caretakers, they are caretakers.

Appoint an adequately trained director of adult ministries who has a genuine concern for older adults and a vision for using their abilities.

Encourage your group to become service and outreach-oriented, not entertainment-oriented.

From *Catch the Age Wave*, Ministry Magazine Spring 1994. Reformed Theological Seminary.

Latch Key:

Ministry Potential for Churches

Your Church: A Force for Good in the Community

Every church should be known in its community, just as schools, businesses, and other agencies are known. In every neighborhood there are needs, and every local church should be known as a place where needs can be met. Your church, should be more than a presence--it should be a force dedicated to improving the overall quality of life spiritually, socially, physically, and educationally in the community.

Jesus commanded us to GO and make disciples of all nations, How is your church going to your community with the message of Christ's love? Too often our strategy is simply to open the doors on Sunday morning and hang out the sign that we're open for business; which really says to the community, "Come to us."

Target Group Ministry

One of the most effective ways for a church to go to its community is through target group ministry. The strategy is to identify particular groups of persons in the community for whom the church can provide needed services or programs. Latch key and day care programs are examples of such ministries. This earns the opportunity to build relationships with unchurched persons.

Child Care: The Growing Need

According to a recent survey conducted by AT&T, 60% of all mothers with preschoolers are in the work force, and a larger percentage with school age children work (68% according to the Department of Commerce). Research also suggests that well over half of working moms work out of necessity; they are single parents or married to men who earn less than \$15,000 per year. It is estimated that up to 75% of working mothers have trouble finding child care.

A growing area of need for child care is before and after school. National surveys indicate that 20% of all school age children up to grade 5 have either inadequate supervision or no adult supervision after school. These children are often described as "latch key kids."

After School Programs:

Before and after school programs are excellent areas for church ministry. They are more easily organized and operated than day care centers for the following reasons:

1. The time frame is limited (3-4 hours per day).
2. No meals involved which lowers licensing requirements.
3. Fewer staff and resources are needed.

With 25% of the time and resources it takes to start a day care program, even a small congregation can begin an after school program.

For information on Latch Key programs, call the Board of Christian Education, Church of God, Anderson, Indiana 1-800 848-2458. A manual is available for \$15.00.

Excerpted from Latch Key: Ministry Potential for Churches Leader July/August 1994

Single Adult Ministries

Dealing With Odd People

by Howard Sugden and Warren Wiersbe

A strong singles ministry will often attract some difficult (and even strange) people who may have real needs and emotional problems. You can never tell what your ministry of kindness will mean to them in the midst of their pain and loneliness. So how do you handle these needy suffocating individuals who want to monopolize your time? Here are several suggestions to consider:

- *Be kind and loving, but be honest and firm.*
- *Speak the truth in love. Let them know you appreciate them, but that you cannot devote your whole attention to them.*
- *Ask them to pray for you.*
- *Greet them when you see them.*
- *See their good qualities, not just their bad ones.*
- *Train two or three of your key leaders to rescue you during those times when a needy person is attempting to monopolize your time.*
- *Don't laugh about or belittle them behind their backs.*
- *If they approach you after a meeting, suggest they phone you during the week, or make an appointment right then and there.*
- *Seek to minister to their needs.*
- *Refer them to counseling or the appropriate individuals who can make a difference in their lives.*

Some of your greatest opportunities for ministry may be found in situations that, to you, seem out of place. Jesus was approached by all kinds of problem people. But he received them kindly and sought to meet their needs.

Adapted from Dealing with Odd People Single Adult Ministry SAM Journal, Colorado Springs, CO. Issue #104. Original information from Confident Pastoral Leadership, Baker Books, 1993

"The key to dynamic relationships in the fellowship of believers is daring to minister to one another as if to Christ."

John Lloyd Ogilvie You Are Loved and Forgiven Regal Books 1977
Page 211

Action Points from Promise Keepers

Here are some highlights from the 1993 conference held in Boulder, Colorado:

"When you get to the end of yourself, you get to the beginning of God." (Luke 15:11-32) Pastor Greg Laurie

"When the enemy attacks, use the Word of God. Hit him! Hit him! Hit him!" (Matthew 4:1-11) Rev. E.V. Hill

"Pray that God will bring a Paul, Barnabas and Timothy into your life." (II Timothy 2:2) Dr. Howard Hendricks

"What matters at the end of your life is who loves you and whom you love." Dr. James Dobson

"We've been in the war, but not at war. It's time to go to war [against sin]" (II Corinthians 10:3-6) Coach Bill McCartney

P—Present yourself to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

R—Raise your hands in thanks (I Timothy 2:8).

A—Audibly express your praise (Psalm 5:3).

I—Invite the Holy Spirit into your work and home life (Ephesians 5:18).

S—Sing a new song in worship (Ephesians 5:19).

E—Exercise your priestly office in the public arena (Psalm 100:4).
Pastor Jack Hayford

Going it Alone?

A quick way to "burn-out" in children's ministry is to be a LONER. We win by interacting with others who share our passion and hope for children.



The first step of a Children's Ministry or Sunday School growth emphasis is the formation of a Christian Education Committee or steering group. This group should not be too large, so that understanding of task and the adoption of plans will not be difficult to achieve. Nor should it be too small, as you lose the networking and cooperation needed to succeed.

Some of the functions of the group to provide the right direction and resources might be:

Recruiting a task force - **PEOPLE**

Identifying what needs to be done - **WORK**

Understanding the rationale and background of ministry - **CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

Establishing a purpose - **FOUNDATION**

Making a calendar for accomplishing goals - **PLAN**

Creating a door for other people in the church - **VISION**

Planning for change and increase - **GROWTH**

- Rick

BUT WHAT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING...

It's amazing to look back and see where we have come from and where we are now with VBS. Our first VBS was in June of 1986, we had 4 Directors and 10 teams of 10 kids each, grades 1-6. Half of the kids were unchurched. God accomplished so much in the kids and in all the volunteers. 12 children made a decision to follow Jesus for the first time. We knew then that we would expand as much as possible each year, with more kids and more volunteers. So began our VBS journey.

We've experimented with different themes, different sized teams, a variety of special events and a couple of daily schedules. From finger play to shrink art, from farm animals to wild animals, from wagons to fire engines, from simple choruses to dramatic productions, we've learned so much, and yet it seems like there is no less to learn.

Our VBS journey has brought us to VBS 1994 with 33 Directors, 50 teams and about 250 adults. There were about 500 children involved. God always has great plans for us, and we continue to learn and grow in our efforts of providing a fun, action-packed, memory-filled VBS. In a place where the children feel safe and secure, they meet their God and learn of His love for them.

From a pioneer church to an established church, we have learned that God always make room for the children, and provides us with ways to teach them, help them and love them. As a church family, we trust people and put them in a place where they will be challenged and stretched. They learn how to believe and trust more in God, and begin to walk in who He has made them to be. So much can be accomplished in willing hearts.

- Excerpted from a letter from the Coastlands Foursquare Church
Aptos, California

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