Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry lose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.
- **Carl Sandburg**

**Creative Ministry**

**Pastoring at School When You're Not a Jock**
by Maylan Schurch, Washington Conference

I pastor a metropolitan congregation which, along with three or four other churches, is a constituent of Adventist elementary and high schools, both on the same campus. Over the years I've faithfully attended school board meetings and taken my turn with the other pastors in the chapel-talk rotation, but I've always felt I should spend more time at the school.

Problem. I'm not a jock. Basketball was never my thing, and four minutes of soccer - even if I knew how to play - would lay me up for a week.

So a couple of years ago I decided to devote four hours every Tuesday (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) to the school campus without fail, the only exceptions being a member's health crisis or a required conference meeting. Here's what happens:

At the beginning of the year I send out a group e-mail to all the teachers, explaining that I want to be considered not a looming "pastoral presence" but just another parent volunteer.

Each Sunday prior to a school week I send a group e-mail to the teachers, reminding them I'll be there Tuesday, and asking them to e-mail me with duties I can help with (first-come, first-served). Since sports are not my strong point, teachers have tended to ask me to grade assignments, essays or tests. I always insist on clear and understandable answer keys so I won't defraud the kids. And I always stand ready to perform more directly pastoral duties such as teaching baptismal classes and talking with students.

Another task I'm asked to do is to listen to kids read to me. I give each kid ten minutes, and remain ready with a pencil in my hand so that I can point to a word and ask them to repeat it. A good portion of my time is spent trying to help them sound out the words. Did you know that English is by far the world's craziest language?
For those Tuesdays I set clear ground rules for myself. I am always strictly on time, and I always arrive at a classroom exactly when I am expected. I always call the teachers by their last names, prefaced by "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss." I carry with me a lot of large paper clips and post-it notes, and a supply of green gel pens (to distinguish my grading from the teacher’s red marks). Since space is tight at the school, I will often grade papers in my car.

These Tuesdays have deepened my love for kids and what they go through in the classroom. I've seen appalling handwriting - and I've seen budding genius. I'm also far more appreciative of the work that teachers do, and I am tremendously impressed by what they're teaching our children.

Communications & Media

Do You Like Evangelism?
By Rajkumar Dixit

When was the last time you "liked" something on Facebook? It probably was a cute picture, or a funny post of a friend. By clicking on the LIKE button, you are expressing your feelings and sharing it with your online friends.

Social media has incredible power, of which most of us are only starting to recognize. Who would have ever thought that communication vehicles like Twitter and Facebook would contribute to the demise of a dictator ruled countries such as Tunisia or Egypt?

How can Christians leverage this influential medium to share the life-changing story of Jesus?

The average Facebook user has one hundred and thirty friends. Each one of those friends is influenced by the posts and pictures that they share with each other on the site. Every time you click on the LIKE button, you are encouraging your friends to consider your opinion on an idea. With your status updates; you are influencing what your friends see.

Would you consider LIKING the posts that come through your Facebook feed from your church or church organization? It could be an e-newsletter link, photo album, or link to a ministry opportunity. When you click on the LIKE button, your friends will be witness to your activity, and have the opportunity to check out what you like.

By clicking on the LIKE button, you are expressing your faith in Jesus and the church you attend. It’s that simple! Your spiritual influence may be the contributing factor in helping your friends to discover the same love you have for Jesus and your church. Now that is something to LIKE!

Rajkumar Dixit is a pastor, and the author of Branded Faith: Contextualizing the Gospel in a Post-Secular World. You can read more at rajkumardixit.com.

iPad 2 Winner Selected for Participating in Use of Media Survey

Watch as the winner is chosen at random to receive the iPad 2 prize for participating in the Best Practices media poll.

On March 9, 2011, the NAD Church Resource Center sent out an invitation to the Best Practices email list inviting subscribers to participate in a poll regarding the use of media in their congregation. As with any self selected poll the results only reflect the views of the 546 participants and do not reflect all of the pastors of the NAD.

Those who participated indicated that satellite broadcasts as well as the division wide media ministries continue to provide some benefit to their congregations. In addition many churches are using media locally in their mission. Websites led the usage followed by Facebook and email newsletter. Click here to see the whole graph.

When asked ‘what are your favorite media channels for receiving ministry support, the responses were fairly evenly divided between all of the channels. Books, websites and live training events were favored but other channels were close behind. Click here to see the graph.

An open ended question was included for pastors to name a church that was using local media effectively. Future Best Practices will highlight some of those churches.

Reading for Pastors
Small group quality is more important than quantity, says Baylor professor. Quote: "What matters is that the groups meet regularly; that members trust one another enough to divulge matters they would not to a stranger; and that they tackle tough issues in one another's lives."

Are you an innovator? Check yourself by the five habits of great innovators.

Is the "virtual church" something real, or a gimmick? At least one pastor takes the online community seriously for evangelism. Quote: "A major argument against internet churches is that they lack physical contact, Estes pointed out. But that same argument could be made against megachurches and any other church, for that matter, where people never really touch or come to know each other."

Forget broadcasting your services via cable TV. The next frontier is direct broadcast via Roku. Quote: "There's a burgeoning 'house church' movement in America. Making services available on Roku provides a way for individuals to gather together for worship in their homes that doesn't require huddling around a computer screen or complicated PC-to-TV hookups."

I just don't get Twitter, but it's apparently very popular - even among some pastors who use it to bring attention to the gospel. Do you use Twitter? How?

Six Biblical principles of worship - this would make a good sermon or seminar.

Darby's premillenialism (via the Scofield Bible) is the predominant eschatological belief among American evangelicals. (I love this line from the piece, by Roy Taylor, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America: "As far as predicting the approximate time of Christ's Second Advent is concerned, I have resigned from the Planning Committee and have joined the Welcoming Committee.")

New tools, new problems: Facebook linked to 20% of US divorces.

Humor, with some seriousness, too: Ten things to give up for Lent. Quote: "The truth is that hating others has become one of the defining marks of the American Church. No funny one liners here. This has to stop. Just because someone in another tradition/denomination/church doesn't agree with you particular theological outlook doesn't make them a heretic. The Christian on Christian violence has to come to an end... So if we are going to give up for Lent this year let us give up our hate for one another and never pick up it again."

To the Point

We should be taught not to wait for inspiration to start a thing. Action always generates inspiration. Inspiration seldom generates action.
- Frank Tibolt

Every improvement in communication makes the bore more terrible.
- Frank Moore Colby

There comes a time in every man's life and I've had many of them.
- Casey Stengel

He who praises you for what you lack wishes to take from you what you have.
- Don Juan Manuel

If knowledge can create problems, it is not through ignorance that we can solve them.
- Isaac Asimov

I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than to those attending too small a degree of it.
- Thomas Jefferson

If you don't know what to do with many of the papers piled on your desk, stick a dozen colleagues' initials on 'em, and pass them along. When in doubt, route.
- Malcolm Forbes

Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment.
- Barry LePatner

2 is not equal to 3, not even for large values of 2.
- Grabel's Law

I have been through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened.
- Mark Twain

News, Ideas & Reminders

- Cuteness off the chart! Watch this little girl tell the story of Jonah.

- The very creative Tony Romeo, pastor in Greater NY Conference, has started an organization called REACH NYC. There's also a weekly newsletter by Tony about what RNY is doing-some of the most creative outreach ideas you'll ever come across. Get on the RNY mailing list here.
Previous resource links:
- Andrews Study Bible
- Branded Faith, by Rajkumar Dixit
- The Hope of Survivors, ministry to victims of pastoral sexual abuse
- iFollow website
- Dissertation on house churches from Milton Adams
- NAD NewsPoints (formerly Friday Fax): by email, or on a web page.
- Worship paper by Lonnie Melashenko

Got a tool, resource, site, article or seminar that you like a lot? Share it with us at BestPractices@ameritech.net.

Upcoming NAD Events

Do you have an event you'd like to invite NAD pastors to? Send details to BestPractices@Ameritech.net.


Andrews University Music & Worship Conference. Mar 24, 2011 - Mar 26, 2011, Andrews University, 100 US 31 Highway, Berrien Springs, MI 49104. The eighth annual Andrews University Music and Worship Conference. If you're interested in exploring worship and worship music in ways that are theologically profound, practical, and inspiring, you will definitely want to join us. Sponsored by the NAD Church Resource Center and Andrews University's Department of Music, Department of Christian Ministry and Center for Youth Evangelism. Phone: 800-968-8428 x4 or 269-471-8352. For more information, email: worshipconference@andrews.edu.

Parents, Educators, Supervisors, & Ministry Leaders Invited to Attend IGNITION. Discover key principles for working and ministering with today's young adults at IGNITION Summit, April 4-6, 2011, Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX. Dr. Tim Elmore, president of Growing Leaders, will be among the featured presenters. To register and for more information, follow www.IGNITIONblog.wordpress.com.

United Youth Congress 2011 - iServe. Apr 6, 2011 - Apr 9, 2011, Orange County Convention Center, 9860 Universal Blvd, Orlando, FL 32819. Youth, young adults, youth leaders and parents/chaperones are invited to attend. We will have inspiring worship, training seminars, service projects in the community, an evening at Universal Studios, Saturday night concert, recreation, and much more! This package includes hotel and meals. For those who do not want hotel and meals, click here. For Sabbath Only, click here. Phone: 800-732-7587. For more information, email: events@adventsource.org.

From Walt Williams, Andrews University InMinistry Center Director, the list of Spring 2011 InMinistry intensive classes for each union - April 3-14

STANDOUT. Apr 15, 2011 - Apr 17, 2011, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. STANDOUT is a spiritual retreat for high school students, hosted on the campus of Andrews University. Throughout two days of spiritual exercises and group activities, we'll challenge you to tap into the amazing power of God so that you will STANDOUT and set your faith in motion! Phone: 269-471-6372. For more information, email: standout@andrews.edu


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Which of the following media channels is your congregation providing content for? Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>Number of Response(s)</th>
<th>Response Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>On Demand Video (YouTube/Vimeo)</td>
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<td>139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streaming Video</td>
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<td>55.4%</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<td>Podcast (audio or video)</td>
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<td>DVD</td>
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<td>198</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>539</strong></td>
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</table>
What are your favorite media channels for receiving ministry support and continuing education. Please rank them in order of usefulness with '1=least useful' and '10=most useful.'

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<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>Live training event that you and your members travel to</td>
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*The Ranking Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted rankings by the number of total responses.*
Newswise — WACO, Texas — Establishing small groups within a megachurch — heralded by some as a remedy to the drawbacks of burgeoning congregation size — is "good medicine," but not a cure-all, according to a national study by Baylor University sociologists.

"Simply having a small group program in a church is no guarantee of success," said Dr. Kevin Dougherty, an assistant professor in Baylor’s department of sociology and co-author of the article “A Place to Belong: Small Group Involvement in Religious Congregations,” published this month in the journal *Sociology of Religion*.

What matters is that the groups meet regularly; that members trust one another enough to divulge matters they would not to a stranger; and that they tackle tough issues in one another’s lives, Dougherty said. He and Andrew Whitehead, a Baylor graduate student in sociology, conducted the study.

Members of small groups — whether in small churches or “megachurches” with 2,000 or more members — are more likely to attend worship, tithe and volunteer, Dougherty said.

“Highly committed members make a church strong, whether big or small,” he said.

A growing number of Americans attend large congregations. Nearly a third of worshippers attend congregations with a weekly attendance of 1,000 or more, although fewer than 3 percent of the country’s congregations are that size. Past research by Dougherty and others shows that people in large congregations typically attend less, give less financially and feel less belonging than people in smaller congregations.

Dougherty and Whitehead tested the effectiveness of small groups at raising levels of participation and belonging. They studied the role of Bible study and prayer groups, using national data obtained from the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey, with 78,474 respondents in 401 congregations, as well as data from a survey of 1,014 participants within an unidentified megachurch referred to in the study as Central Texas Megachurch. The church began in 1999 with an emphasis on “cell” groups. Today the church has more than 100 cell groups and attracts more than 3,000 worshippers weekly.

Study findings support the importance of small groups.

“Any type of small group will benefit a church, whether it’s a Sunday school, a service group or a basketball league, because of the belonging and commitment they foster,” Dougherty said. "But small Bible study and prayer groups are better at promoting discipleship and spiritual growth."
Almost 90 percent of the nondenominational Central Texas church's participants are in a small group, with groups typically consisting of eight to 15 members, usually in the same life stage. They gather in homes to sing, discuss, pray and receive instruction. "Small groups are the center of the church — not just one of many programs," Dougherty said.

Frequency of attendance is more important for successful small groups than is length of attendance, he said, and "small size and regular interaction help foster trust. When people trust one another, they open themselves to deeper inspection and reflection. Great possibilities for change result."

At The Heights Baptist Church in Richardson, with about 3,000 weekly worshippers, many small groups have been started by worshippers who said they wanted to "go deeper," said Chris Havard, pastor of spiritual growth and formation.

He suggested topics they explore — such as prayer and building mates' self-esteem — and accompanying questions, Bible passages and books. "It's not tons of work, but it's practical," he said.

At Waco’s Calvary Baptist Church, with about 200 worshippers, “life groups” that began several years ago "just exploded," said Kessa Payne, who served on an interim basis in Calvary’s small-group ministry.

“Once the first group had been around for eight months, they started new ones, from four groups to a peak of 27 groups," Payne said. “Part of the philosophy is that you don’t lead a group until you’ve been part of one. Another part is ‘No one ever leads alone.’ "

They share meals and life stories and choose what they wish to study. Members are more apt to be involved on Sunday mornings and serve one another and the community — a low-income, high-crime neighborhood — during the week by mentoring youths or tending a community garden, she said.

A risk for small groups is crossing the line from intimacy to cliquishness. By constantly adding new members, “you can’t go very deep, because it takes time to build relationships and trust," Havard said. “But a closed group, while it’s good for intimacy, lends itself to being inward-based. We want them to serve and think outside themselves."

At First Baptist Richmond in Richmond, Va., with about 1,200 worshippers, church members are trying a “micro-church” approach as well as traditional worship and Bible study and small groups.


Somerville’s sermons are telecast and streamed live, but members also may meet in homes to view and discuss sermon clips, sing or incorporate other activities. While many churches have opened multiple campuses, the micro-churches "are an answer to multi-sites instead of opening full-blown campuses," Booth said. “It’s an open form of small groups. Our philosophy is that not everyone is ready for (closed) small groups."

The best way to get people into small groups is by personal invitation, Dougherty said, while the challenge is to help new members find a group.

“For growing churches, this can occur by regularly forming new groups,” he said. “A second approach is to limit the time period for which groups meet. For example, groups might exist for one year and then be expected to split or multiply or be reconfigured in some other way.

“In congregations where people are empowered to form groups around shared interests, there should never be a shortage of groups to join," he said. “And more groups mean more active members, if done right."
The Five Habits of Great Innovators

By Kaihan Krippendorff

This week I am preparing for a presentation to the Columbia Business School Alumni Club of New York, titled "The Five Habits of Great Innovators." The event is open to the public, but you must register to join [1]. (Watch my blogcast on this topic [2].)

For more than a decade I've studied history's most creative strategists--from Napoleon Bonaparte to John Boyd--and compared their thinking habits with those of their modern peers--Grameen Bank founder Mohammad Yunus or Tesla CEO Elon Musk. I have found five thinking habits that stand out:

1. Mental time travel
2. Seeing the interconnected system
3. Frame-shifting
4. Disruptive mindset
5. Influence

Mental Time Travel

As Albert Einstein once said, "It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

Interview someone who has had a major impact on their industry or the world and bring them back to the early days when they built belief in their cause. Ask them what was going through their mind, and they are likely to take you along a mental time machine that starts at the beginning and then fast-forwards to a desired future. These "outthinkers" are able to hold their minds at that hypothetical moment, exploring everything that would need to be true for their vision to be realized.

Cognitive scientists call this "mental time travel" and believe it serves as a key distinction between humans and animals. Most animals show no ability for imaging future states but most humans exhibit this capacity by the age of four. I believe that the greater capacity you have for "mental time travel," the better chance you have for impacting the world.

Seeing the Interconnected System

When Scipio Africanus took on the seemingly impossible task of defeating Hannibal in 205 B.C., he resisted the head-on assault that other Roman military leaders had tried before him. Instead he took in a bigger picture, and looked not just at the players but at their inter-dependencies.

By understanding the system, Scipio Africanus saw a master-stroke that would weaken his enemy with minimal effort. Rather than confront Hannibal head on, he turned his men to the ancient city of New Carthage (now called Cartagena), took the city, and thereby cut off Hannibal from his chief supply route.
In the West, we might call this "systems thinking" or talk of the "butterfly effect." The Taoists began speaking of this ability five millennia ago, advocating the point of seeing the interconnectedness of all things.

As I mentioned in my last blog [3], "outthinkers" seem to think in terms of a system, often a simplified one that keeps them focused on what is most important. The CEO of Knoa software, for example, follows a four-step process for building a business: get a customer, make them happy, get a referral, and repeat.

Regardless of how far you are willing to take this--from building a simple map to embracing the Taoist view that everything is connected--it is worth taking a pause before you begin problem-solving to look at the system, looking at what depends on what, building out the web until you see clearly the fronts of your battle, the levers you must turn, to realize your vision.

**Frame-Shifting**

I was running late, but I could not find my car keys. I looked in all the usual places but they were simply gone. Desperate for ideas, I dropped to the floor and looked around. They were right there, under the couch.

Sometimes just changing your perspective reveals the answer.

Innovative thinkers shift their perspectives more often, drawing from a more diverse set of experiences, than the rest of us. They are able to handle more complexity and ambiguity because they recognize more patterns. Grandmaster chess players, for example, recognize ten times as many situations as expert chess players. By bringing more perspectives to their game they are more likely to see that winning move when their opponent freezes in confusion.

I've found that if you can shift a group's perspectives seven times on a single problem, they can produce between four and ten times as many possible solutions to that problem.

**Disruptive Mindset**

How did Rosetta Stone emerge from relative anonymity to become the leading provider of language-learning software in less than ten years? They saw the white space--the opportunity that no one with the capability would be willing to pursue. They saw that technology would be better used to replicate the immersive, natural experience of learning a language than as a tool to replace the classroom. They knew that existing language-learning players were too invested in the old classroom-based model to pursue this opportunity quickly.

It is this same thinking that transformed Sony from a maker of electric teapots into an electronics giant, or RIM into the leading smartphone maker, or Google into ... Google.

"Outthinkers" think not just about what customers will want but also about what competitors will not pursue. Understanding both allows them to see the white space, the uncontested territory.

The higher up I go when working with a good organization, the more often I hear conversations about the competition, what they will and won't do, what they will and won't defend. It is not enough to know your customer. You must grow equally acquainted with your competition and then focus on the few unique opportunities your competition will not defend or respond intelligently to.

**Influence**

The fifth habit is a big one. Innovators are nothing more than dreamers if they cannot convince others to
live out their dreams. It is only when others believe in and act upon their dream that it becomes reality.

I don't have space here to dig into the key aspects of influence—I believe great innovators do at least four things differently here—but if there is one thing that stands out more starkly for me it is that "outthinkers" step into the minds they are seeking to change. They speak in the same language, use the same metaphors, appeal to the same values of the people they are seeking to win the support of.

The rest of us do the opposite. Rather than stepping across the line into "enemy" territory, we stand on our side of the line, use our language, metaphors, and values to lure people over to our side.

There are five specific habits that innovators seem to have in common. If you are willing to retrain yourself to think in these terms and adopt these habits, then you too will achieve true success.

Links:
Brick-and-Mortar Pastor Defends Virtual Church as Real

Wed, Oct. 28, 2009 Posted: 06:20 PM EDT

The Christian church is engaging far less than 1 percent of the 70 million people who are active in the virtual world. This means the virtual world is by far the largest unreached people group on planet Earth, says one pastor.

Douglas Estes, a pastor from San Jose, Calif., has no vested interest in virtual or internet churches – a relatively new phenomenon – but given the large "unreached" population on the internet, he says he has a desire to see healthy churches proliferate "regardless of context."

Although he leads a brick and mortar church (Berryessa Valley Church), Estes defends virtual churches against critics in his newly released book, *SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World*, maintaining that they are real churches with real people.

He summed up his argument in a recent post on Christianity Today's Out of Ur blog: "People are led to believe that members of online churches all connect to their video-game church as anonymous zombies in a Tron-like world. Supposedly these virtual (fake) Christians never really know each other, it's all a facade, and that this is the sum and total of a virtual church."

"The real truth is that every virtual church I've ever attended has flesh-and-blood people in virtual (real!) community with other flesh-and-blood people whose primary meeting place is in synthetic space."

In recent years, Christians have begun to take on the internet by building church communities in virtual worlds like Second Life and The Sims and launching internet campuses where anyone from around the world can join weekend worship services live on the Web. The growth of virtual worshipping communities, however, has sparked debates on whether such churches are effective and biblical.

A major argument against internet churches is that they lack physical contact, Estes pointed out. But that same argument could be made against megachurches and any other church, for that matter, where people never really touch or come to know each other, he argued.

Virtual churches, critics say, also don't have real community.

Estes, however, pushed back by pointing out that church isn't about where it meets. "Isn't church supposed to be about people in communion with God rather than the building? ... Since when does the location of a church determine the quality of its community?"

"Virtual churches may meet for services in the virtual world, but they are not the one-dimensional illusion that critics like to easily prop up so as to knock down for their friends to applaud," he maintained. "And here's the irony: Even as virtual churches seek to create community in both virtual and physical space, so too do their critics use virtual space when it is convenient for them in their brick and mortar ministries."

Bob Hyatt, pastor of the Evergreen Community in Portland, Ore., didn't buy Estes' argument.

He stressed, "It's not where we meet, but that we meet," according to his post on Out of Ur.

"And whether people are actually meeting together – that is, whether you and me watching the same video stream, silently reading the comments in the chat room as we sip our individual portions of grape juice and eat crackers, rises to the level of 'ecclesia' and the picture of Acts 2:42 – has yet to be determined.

"In other words, I have yet to be convinced that simultaneity equals community," Hyatt stated.

Hyatt has major concerns over the threat virtual churches or video venues represent to the overall "maturity of the Body of Christ." A virtual church, he contended, fails to engage in discipleship and leadership formation as well as church discipline.

"The worship, equipping, and discipling ministries of the church simply can't take place through the internet. Pieces of them can, but eventually the jump has to be made," he said. "A truly biblical Church requires that we heed the biblical call of Hebrews 10 to not give up gathering together and being present to one another in real, actual life."

For Estes, as long as the people of God are meeting together for the purpose of glorifying Him, it's a real church. And in the end, he believes a local church could not really reach the whole world. Virtual churches, however, will have that kind of reach, he says in his book.
Notably, Estes doesn't believe virtual churches will or should replace real-world churches. Both accomplish ministry objectives that the other cannot. But he hopes that in the future, real-world churches will adopt more virtual elements and virtual churches will create real-world ministry teams to reach people in the real world and in the virtual world. Moreover, he hopes people will view virtual churches not as a form of church different from real-world ones, but see both as just churches.

Lillian Kwon
Christian Post Reporter
Each and every weekend, about a hundred people all across the U.S. dress up to attend church — only to sit down in front of their TV and reach for their Roku remote control to access live worship services via the Northland Church channel.

Northland broadcasts live from one of its Florida-based churches, but its ministers routinely start services by welcoming everyone watching online as well. Welcome to the next generation of televangelism, which is using Internet set-top boxes to bypass large cable networks.

Churches like Northland have been embracing the Internet as a means to reach out to its members for years, and they’ve been very successful. “Nearly one-third of our congregation of 15,000 worships with us via the web,” Northland PR Director Robert Andrescik told me via email. The church has been using traditional web video and Facebook as well as a number of mobile phone apps for these online services.

Northland added a Roku channel to its mix of multi-media outreach tools last October, and Andrescik was especially excited about the mainstream appeal of the device. “There’s a burgeoning ‘house church’ movement in America,” he told me, adding, “Making services available on Roku provides a way for individuals to gather together for worship in their homes that doesn’t require huddling around a computer screen or complicated PC-to-TV hookups.”

Northland was the first church on Roku, but word quickly spread, and others followed within weeks. Three months later, Roku is featuring its own “Religion and Spirituality” category with ten channels from churches and other religious entities. “It really happened so quickly,” said Roku Director of Corporate Communications Brian Jaquet, who attributes much of this to Andrescik reaching out in the religious community.

One of the churches that followed in Northland’s footsteps is Georgia-based Community Bible Church (CBC), which until two years ago was using a local access cable TV channel to broadcast its services. “(We were) realizing that for about the same cost, we could reach the world with our message instead of just our county,” said CBC Online Campus Pastor Kenny Snow. The church ditched cable and started to stream its services online, and it launched its very own Roku channel last month.

“The simplicity and low cost has really opened up a lot of doors for people to reach out to people right from their homes,” said Snow about Roku. To be fair, a lot is relative; CBC says its channel has been downloaded
more than 6000 times, and Northland’s Andrecik puts the number of channel downloads above 5000. 

Lifechurch.tv, which launched its own Roku app in October, has so far clocked 7700 channel downloads.

That’s small potatoes when you compare it to mega-church televangelists like Joel Osteen, who reportedly reaches some seven million viewers via the Trinity Broadcasting Network’s cable channels. However, many smaller churches that lack access to Trinity and other mass media outlets see a unique opportunity in devices like Roku. In fact, Roku’s Jaquet believes this new way to access the TV screen is leveling the playing field. “It’s allowing them to compete on a larger scale with these mega-churches,” he said.

Cord cutting also hasn’t been lost on churches. “We recognized that a growing number of Americans are cutting out cable and satellite and replacing these services with set-top devices that stream TV shows and movies from the Web,” said Andrecik.

Some churches have also started to build apps for other TV platforms, and in some cases, worshipers have taken the matter into their own hands. Boxee, for example, features an “Unofficial Mormon App.” With both Roku and Boxee, having an open app platform seems to have been key in attracting smaller churches without big budgets.

Jaquet knows other churches are already working on their own channels, and he wouldn’t be surprised if eventually one of the mega-churches with access to cable TV also embraced a platform like Roku. “There’s a lot of opportunity here, and it’s starting to spread,” he told me.
November 9, 2009

Twitter Theology
What do tweets reveal about what pastors really value?

by Scot McKnight

Social media like Facebook and Twitter have received an abundance of critique, not the least of which is that social media users are self-absorbed. But I wonder if we might turn answers on Twitter to the question “What are you doing?” or on Facebook’s status update into an opportunity for self-examination. It might even be an opportunity for Twitter and Facebook users to examine not just what they are doing but how it aligns with our mission.

I’ve spent some time observing pastors who tweet or regularly update their status on Facebook, and I’m far from convinced it’s simply self-absorption or an attempt by little people to make themselves famous. But these updates do reveal what is uppermost on the mind. But let me begin with a confession: I use these social media tools to draw folks to my blog and to the concerns I have there. In addition, on Facebook I have a good time with my “Friends” discussing sports or the news.

And I’m not alone. The idea of both Facebook and Twitter is to share with friends – real friends and not just cyberfriends – what you are doing. We all know that this can slip into silliness with tweets like: “Having a chocolate macchiato latte, double shot espresso with a raspberry scone” But we should also admit that tweets can be a valuable communication form. And another thing is clear—Twitter and Facebook are here to stay. Over time the craziness will wear off and the abilities of social media will become more clear.

Still, there are observations to make about what we see from pastor tweets. Over time I’ve noticed that many pastors tweet links to business people and leadership gurus, Seth Godin being the most common. We discover plenty of emphasis on news items, especially controversial ones. Pastors often became “green” in the recent Iranian student revolution. Pastors tweet a lot about sports. There seems to be a near obsession in pastor tweets with terms like “creativity” and “innovation,” and a corresponding neglect of our great tradition or our heritage in the Church.

Pastors tweet quotes from their reading, and inform us of what they are reading. Sunday tweets tend to be gratitude tweets. We also regularly discover who is meeting with whom (and the “whom” is always a notch above the “who”), or where someone is traveling. We hear about accomplishments but almost never any failures or disappointments, making the Twitter world largely a happy face community.

I have seen some gospel in Facebook updates – some tweets about Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection, but very few about how Israel’s story came to its goal in Jesus. Very few, in fact, about the Old Testament at all. There is some theological orientation. Even if it is hard to reduce theology to 140 characters, the limit of a normal tweet, it can be done and it has been done well. The issue is how infrequently pastors and religious leaders provide such theological orientation and how often the links to such messages
6 Biblical Principles for Corporate Worship

The New Testament is clear that God’s people are to regularly gather for corporate worship. This is apparent both through the frequent use of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which simply means gathered assembly of God’s people.

Likewise, Hebrews 10:24–25 commands, “let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as the habit of some, but encouraging one another.” When God’s people gather for corporate worship, church leaders must ensure the methods they employ align with six biblical principles for worship.

1. **Corporate worship is to be God-centered**

Worship is not an occasion for us to hear sermons about us, sing songs about us, or focus on how to make ourselves feel happily inspired. Since we are prone to worship ourselves as idols, corporate worship is an important occasion to redirect our worship back to God.

2. **Corporate worship should be intelligible**

Worship should be intelligible. This means that not only is the service conducted in the known language of the hearers, but also that technical doctrinal terms are explained so everyone understands what is being said and sung. This also means the pastor should not seek to impress the congregation with his vast knowledge of Greek and Hebrew terms, but as John Calvin and other Reformers argued, love his people by speaking...
to them plainly; the pastor should want the people to be impressed with Jesus Christ rather than himself.

3. Corporate worship is to be seeker-sensible

Because there are non-Christians present in corporate worship meetings, people leading those meetings need to be hospitable to non-Christians. This would include the preacher presenting the gospel to the non-Christians, someone explaining why the church meetings have certain elements such as communion or singing, and explaining Christian terms in a way that allows the non-Christian to understand what the Bible says. This does not mean that the entire service is to be seeker-sensitive and designed mainly as an evangelistic rally, but a sincere effort is made to help non-Christians understand and experience the gospel.

4. Corporate worship is to be unselfish

If someone wants to express their personal response to God in a way that draws undue attention to them and distracts from others responding to God, they should do that kind of thing at home in private. The meeting is for corporate response to God, not just individual response. In worst case scenarios, God gives to his people truth, love, hope, and the like, and anyone who distracts others from receiving what God has for them and focusing on God needs to be rebuked so they may mature and learn to consider others more highly than themselves, as Scripture says.

5. Corporate worship is to be orderly

While the Bible does not prescribe or describe any church service order, it is important that such meetings actually function with enough administrative foresight to be useful and not frustrating and distracting for the worshipers. While no church is perfect, nor is the goal of corporate worship meetings an impressive performance, musicians who cannot keep time, singers who cannot sing, audio speakers with continual feedback, long awkward pauses because no one knows what is happening next, and people speaking in tongues or prophesying out of turn in ways the Bible forbids are all things that distract people from being able to focus on God and falsely portray God as chaotic.

6. Corporate worship is to be missional

Human beings are, as God's image-bearers, culture makers, receivers, and interpreters. Subsequently, it is nonsensical for Christians to ignore culture or assume Christianity, is in itself, a culture that exists completely separated from the cultures in which the church exists. To be missional a church meeting has to fit the culture it is in rather than being a subculture imported from another time or place. This does not mean that old traditions (e.g., hymns, creeds) are not used, but they are used because they contribute to informing faithful worship of God rather than perpetuating a dated form that is no longer best for ministry. Still, this must be done with great theological reflection so as to not turn artistic expression and music into idols.

Remember the elements of corporate worship

When God's people gather, the church leaders are also required to ensure that what the Bible commands be done in worship actually be done. There are certain elements that Scripture prescribes for gathered corporate worship services as the church. Many theologians refer to these elements of corporate worship, and they include the following:

1. Preaching (2 Timothy 4:2)
2. Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Table (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34)
3. Prayer (1 Timothy 2:1)
4. Reading Scripture (1 Timothy 4:13)
5. Financial giving (2 Corinthians 8–9)
6. Singing and music (Colossians 3:16)
God in his great wisdom has given clear principles and practices to guide the corporate worship of his people.
A majority of evangelical leaders believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth and then reign with his followers for 1,000 years, a new survey shows.

This end times theology is called premillennialism and 65 percent of surveyed evangelical leaders identify with it.

As part of its monthly poll, the National Association of Evangelicals surveyed its board of directors, which include the CEOs of denominations and representatives of a broad array of evangelical organizations, on their eschatological beliefs.

"It's in our human nature to want to prepare ourselves – physically, emotionally, spiritually – for what might be ahead," said NAE President Leith Anderson.

The poll, released this week, found that 13 percent of those surveyed are amillennialists – believing that the non-literal millennial reign of Christ is happening now as Christ reigns at the right hand of the Father.

Four percent believe Christ's second coming will occur after the 1,000-year period during which the nations will be progressively converted to Christianity. This is postmillennial theology.

Seventeen percent, meanwhile, identify with "other" end times theology.

While most of the evangelical leaders hold to a premillennial belief – in which the 1,000-year period is one of worldwide peace and righteousness and precedes the end of the world – even within this belief system there are variations.

Premillennialists disagree on the timing of the rapture, whether Christians will rise and join Jesus during or after the tribulation period – which comes before the return of Christ.

Nevertheless, many evangelical leaders agree that focusing on the specifics of the last days can be a distraction from living faithfully in the present, according to the survey.

Roy Taylor, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America, commented, "As far as predicting the approximate time of Christ's Second Advent is concerned, I have resigned from the Planning Committee and have joined the Welcoming Committee."

Also, given the various views on the end times, Open Bible Churches, an association of evangelical Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, amended its Statement of Faith to give ministers and constituents greater freedom in teaching eschatology.

Open Bible Churches' faith statement on the second coming of Christ simply states: "We believe the second coming of Christ will be personal, visible, and triumphant."

Audrey Barrick
Christian Post Reporter
If you’re single, Facebook and other social networking sites can help you meet that special someone. However, for those in even the healthiest of marriages, improper use can quickly devolve into a marital disaster.

A recent survey by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers found that Facebook is cited in one in five divorces in the United States. Also, more than 80 percent of divorce lawyers reported a rising number of people are using social media to engage in extramarital affairs.

“We’re coming across it more and more,” said licensed clinical psychologist Steven Kimmons, Ph.D., of Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Ill. “One spouse connects online with someone they knew from high school. The person is emotionally available and they start communicating through Facebook. Within a short amount of time, the sharing of personal stories can lead to a deepened sense of intimacy, which in turn can point the couple in the direction of physical contact.”

Though already-strained marriages are most vulnerable, a couple doesn’t have to be experiencing marital difficulties in order for an online relationship to blossom from mere talk into a full-fledged affair, Kimmons said. In most instances, people enter into online relationships with the most innocent of intentions.

“I don’t think these people typically set out to have affairs,” said Kimmons, whose practice includes couples therapy and marriage counseling. “A lot of it is curiosity. They see an old friend or someone they dated and decide to say ‘hello’ and catch up on where that person is and how they’re doing.”

It all boils down to the amount of contact two people in any type of relationships – including online – have with each other, Kimmons said. The more contact they have, the more likely they are to begin developing feelings for each other.
“If I’m talking to one person five times a week versus another person one time a week, you don’t need a fancy psychological study to conclude that I’m more likely to fall in love with the person I talk to five times a week because I have more contact with that person,” Kimmons said.

Stories of people whose marriages were destroyed by affairs that began on social networking sites abound on the Internet. It’s enough to make some people swear off online technology for life. Though there are no hard-and-fast rules to follow, there are some safeguards couples can apply to decrease the chance of online relationships getting out of control. For starters, do a self-assessment of why you’re using online sites.

“Look at the population of the people who are your online friends,” Kimmons said. “Is it a good mixture of men and women? Do you spend more time talking to females versus males or do you favor a certain type of friend over another? That can tell you something about how you’re using social networks. You may not even be aware that you’re heading down a road that can get quickly get pretty dangerous, pretty fast to your marriage.”

Another safeguard is to spell out from the beginning with your online contacts what your expectations are of social networking relationships. Also, it’s a good idea to not engage in intimate conversation with someone who is not your spouse.

“From the start tell your online friend that you’re not looking for anything more than establishing old contacts with people to find out how they’re doing,” Kimmons said.

In some instances, couples could share passwords with each other and place the computer in a common area in the house or apartment.

“It’s not that people are going to read what you’re writing but they’ll see what you’re doing,” he said. “Then it’s not a secret.”

Couples can also set parameters around how much time and when they are online each day.

“If you’re doing this at 2 o’clock in the morning with no one watching because you don’t want anyone else to know about it, that should be a signal to you that this is something approaching a boundary line or you’re at least moving in that direction,” Kimmons said.
25 Responses to “Facebook Linked To One In Five Divorces in the United States”

1. personne March 19, 2011 at 6:45 am #

   “Improper” use? Is this a science blog? Really?

   Here’s another thing that can keep marriages together: a coma.

   Reply
   → m March 28, 2011 at 8:37 pm #

   “coma” the ultimate bliss. 😊

   Reply
   → m March 28, 2011 at 8:48 pm #

   It is not “science Blog” it is “Minds blog”. Exploring minds of humans 😊

   Reply

2. Debbie Williams March 14, 2011 at 4:22 pm #

   I can attest to the fact that this article is true. I am divorced due to my ex husband falling “in love” with a woman he met on Facebook. I firmly believe it is better to turn in towards your marriage no matter how much work has to be done, than to turn out away from your marriage to another person with different baggage to deal with.

   Reply
   → Mike March 22, 2011 at 9:16 pm #
Very good point… so… what are you up to tonight? 😊

Reply
- m March 28, 2011 at 8:46 pm #

This funny face is the most naughtiest. 😆

Reply
3. john woods March 2, 2011 at 4:17 pm #

This article is very true. People don’t realize that the existence of facebook is more harm than good, from ruining healthy marriages, to excessive advertising, to identity theft, to young girls being abused, to ruining careers, to recruiting drug carriers, to ruining computers by running flash plugins that cause computers to overheat, etc. The list goes further than this.

Facebook is a fad that should die out shortly, and it should be banned from homes as it is now banned from schools and corporate networks. Facebook does not even have a way to prevent pop up chat from locations that require it, forcing administrators to block facebook completely.

Reply
4. WaitingRoom March 2, 2011 at 12:29 am #

Great article. The timing is quite interesting since WaitingRoom (http://waitingroom.caraso.com) just launched and our goal is to nudge people to make sure they’re in the right relationship. It is truly unfortunate that the divorce rate is so high and hopefully WaitingRoom can help.

Reply
- m March 26, 2011 at 4:50 am #

habit of chatting online makes people the worst and addicted and its difficult to come out of this circle...it makes you crave for more and more and make you the most depressed. Most of them come for fun and exploit your emotions and you dont know even who is a male and who is a female....very funny...at the same time very sad indeed!!!! beware!!!! it would make you go out of right path and may lead you to wrong path anytime.....so cultivate any other good habit like reading or watching world affairs or spending time with kids or going to a park or to a nearby picnic spot with family members and being with good hearted people and above all being spirituall make us realise and find out the “inner peace” we have within us and ultimately give us the most soughted life full of comfort.

Reply
- m March 28, 2011 at 8:45 pm #

my goodness!!!!! what the hell is going on here? 😳

Reply
5. Stan March 1, 2011 at 6:41 pm #

@Micheal

I don’t think anyone is immune to the having an affair. Like the article says between the lines most people would never think of it if they were not presented with the opportunity. It does start out innocently for most
people that have affairs that have their roots online. I know a few people that have had problems that started with online relationships, this is actually not new, chat rooms have been around a lot longer.

Prevention is always best, if that is talking openly to your spouse about what happens online or setting limits or ending online contact all together it depends on the couple. Prevention is always best.

Reply
○ m March 26, 2011 at 4:41 am #

   I agree with you….prevention is the best policy…we should be like kind of Banyan tree…strongest ever to grow more and more, hold the burden and still….stand still having the root so strong…we should not be like the plantain tree which would fall down and perish away anytime. 😊 Will power is the must.

   Reply
6. Michael March 1, 2011 at 3:54 pm #

   You could try asking for permission to have an affair as well. Some marriages can handle such freedom. But chaperoned affairs are probably not as exciting for some. 😊

   Reply
○ m March 26, 2011 at 4:36 am #

   i like this face above a lot with mouth wide open…how to make such face? i am curious….never before seen..funny people…i dont want to be serious. whoever made these funny faces should be encouraged to make further funny faces…go ahead!!!!

   Reply
○ m March 28, 2011 at 8:52 pm #

   Wife to husband. “permission not granted, be my slave forever, you are destined, you get that honey 😎

   Reply
7. Chiggers March 1, 2011 at 1:01 pm #

   😎

   Reply
○ m March 28, 2011 at 8:39 pm #

   i wrote about this face 😎 message sent wrongly to someone else. I want to adopt this face for life.

   Reply
8. Matt March 1, 2011 at 12:52 pm #

   I try to include mention of my wife regularly so that everyone knows we are a pair. My Facebook pict is even a picture of the family. Also for the statements above, If you are even enjoying thinking about the possibility of an affair, than something is not right. You have already gone too far. Refocus that back on your wife.

   Reply
9. Michelle March 1, 2011 at 12:33 pm

This article misses the point. Whatever avenue people use; online or in-person, the susceptibility of a partner in a relationship to cheat depends entirely on that person. Superficial boundaries implemented to protect against possibilities of infidelity don’t address the real issues in a relationship that put someone in a position of indiscretion. Trust protects against infidelity, and if it isn’t there, then a greater issue has to be discussed in the relationship and addressed either through “couples work” or splitting up, not cheating.

Reply

10. Joyce March 1, 2011 at 12:13 pm

@Micheal…unless the opportunity presented itself. Here, finished it for you.

Reply

11. Michael March 1, 2011 at 11:28 am

Also, you don’t have to react on or have sex with everyone you have feelings for.

Reply

Rumours of Lord Krishna (hindu god) flirting with countless Gopikaas (female fans, girl friends) have made most of all the hindus copy him. 😕 so everything have started from india. the world is spoiled too. countless hearts broken for being copycats. but for some FUN. do not fall into the pit of darkness. Angles please come down on earth.

Reply

Rumours of Lord Krishna (hindu god) flirting with countless Gopikaas (female fans, girl friends) have made most of all the hindus copy him. 😕 so everything have started from india. the world is spoiled too. countless hearts broken for being copycats. but for some FUN.

Reply

Leave a Reply

Name (required)
From Our Bloggers

- Papps Noble Gas engine – a ZPE cold engine?
- Anti-determinism on the march!
- Identifying FLCN mutations
- Searching for Martian DNA
- Science Blogger and Author to Appear in Harrisburg PA April 2

Spot a #winning star in Los Angeles. LA StarSpotter now available in the iTunes store for the iPhone and iPad.
*Charlie Sheen sightings not recommended.

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Top 10 Things to Give Up for Lent

March 7, 2011
tags: Commentary, Steven Anderson, Rob Bell, Jesus, American Jesus, American Christianity, Justin Bieber, Love Wins, KJV, Lent, Top 10 Things to Give Up for Lent, Things to Give Up for Lent, Charlie Sheen, Tigerblood, Winning, KFC Double Down, Bieber Fever, KFC, Internet, Shouting, Hate, Westboro Baptist, Chocolate, David Beckham, 1611, King James Bible
by Zack

Lent begins this Wednesday which means you have less than 48 hours to figure out what you’re going to “give up” for the next 40 days.

It can be difficult trying to figure out just the right thing to give up for Lent. So, in the spirit of good ‘ole fashion American Chrisitanity we have decided to do all the work for you.

Presenting the Top 10 Things You Should Give Up For Lent:

10. Charlie Sheen

Honestly, this might be the most difficult one of all. After all have you read his tweets?? Also, tiger blood is very addicting and we all need something to fight off the warlocks with. But, for the sake of humanity, your soul, and Charlie Sheen you should probably give up Charlie Sheen for Lent.

9. Book reviews for books that haven’t been released
It may be your spiritual gift to decide for others what they themselves think, but can we agree to put that gift on hold at least for Lent.

Of course, this one shouldn’t be too hard as HarperCollins pushed up the release date for *Love Wins* since it has skyrocketed up Amazon’s best seller list.

Wait a second….doesn’t that mean that love wins is “winning”?? Could it be that Charlie Sheen actually wrote *Love Wins*?? Or maybe Rob Bell and Charlie Sheen are actually the same person!! Ahh!! My head is going to explode!!

**8. The King James Version of the Bible**
Speaking of books, can we (and by “we” I mean the fundamentalists) please agree to give up using the KJV as the primary version of the Bible. As shocking as this might be the Bible wasn’t written in King James English. Equally as shocking NO ONE ON PLANET EARTH speaks King James English. Furthermore, thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls we have MUCH older texts to translate from then King James’ people did.

Long story short it is a profoundly outdated version of the Bible. You can keep using to quote Psalm 23, but can we keep it at that at least for Lent. Or better yet, as Matthew Paul Turner points out this year is the 400th anniversary of the KJV, so in celebration let’s give it up for Lent……..and then never pick it up again!

7. Bieber Fever

Justin Bieber is everywhere. So much so that it has apparently led to the creation of a new disease called “Bieber Fever.” For the sake of public health can we please agree to give up Justin Bieber at least for Lent? After all what’s so great about that amazing hair cut, his boyish charm, catchy tunes, and……..dang it! Now we’ve got Bieber Fever!! Forget it, the Biebs can stay for Lent!!
6. Pretending to see Jesus EVERYWHERE

Apparently Jesus is turning up everywhere lately. He’s been in a rocking chair, a tree, a Cheeto, and even on the back of David Beckham. Considering no one actually knows what Jesus looks like can we please give up seeing Him everywhere, at least for Lent?

5. KFC Double Down

We’re always looking for a food item to give up for Lent. So, look no further than the KFC Double Down. Then again, if eating too many of these sandwiches is a struggle for you then you probably have bigger problems than what you should give up for Lent.

4. The Internet
Tired of getting shown up by all of your friends when it comes to who gave up what for Lent? Then here’s your chance to be the best Christian during Lent this year. Give up the internet! We mean the whole thing. That way when your friends start telling you about how they gave up watching TV, using facebook, or tweeting their every thought you can look down all of them with pride and declare “I have up the whole freaking internet!” After all, do you really need it for anything?

Oh wait, how are you going to read American Jesus?? NEVERMIND!! KEEP THE INTERNET!! KEEP THE INTERNET!!

3. Predicting the Second Coming of Jesus

Don’t get us wrong, there isn’t much we enjoy more than a good Third Eagle of the Apocalypse video. But it seems that everybody else is jumping on the prophecy bandwagon too. Apparently, most of them are in agreement that Jesus is coming back in just a couple of months, May 21st to be exact. Which is really
amazing since even Jesus said He didn’t know the date He would return.

So if you’re looking for something easy to give up for Lent try this one, after all it looks like the date has already been figured out for you.

2. Giving up cliche things for Lent that in no way help you grow in your faith

I’ll confess. I’ve been guilty plenty of times for giving up random and inconsequential things for Lent. We all do it. Maybe it’s chocolate, caffeine, or Justin Bieber. (dang that Bieber fever!)

At the end of the 40 days of Lent we pat ourselves on the back for not doing x, y, or z, but in reality what have we really accomplished? Honestly, nothing. The whole idea of Lent is to prepare ourselves for Easter. Self denial during Lent should be about trying to understand in part the self denial which Jesus undertook that led Him to the cross. Sure it might be difficult for a few days to go without a Coke, but if we really want to prepare ourselves for Good Friday and be ready to truly celebrate on Easter Sunday then maybe we should try giving up some of things that Jesus gave up: pride, ambition, greed, hate, jealously, time…..

1B. Shouting
Most of us are pretty good at being polite in public. Or at least we can fake it well. If we disagree with someone it usually takes a long time for the conversation to devolve into shouting. Apparently that isn’t true online. Read something online you don’t like? Then obviously you need to respond in the comment section immediately with slander, WORDS IN ALL CAPS, and as many exclamation marks as possible. Can we all please agree to give this us for Lent, or even better, for ever?

Which leads us to…

1. Hating everyone that doesn’t agree with you

When it comes to Christians hating other people most of us immediately think of groups like Westboro Baptist church or people like Steven Anderson. But the truth is that hating others has become one of the defining marks of the American Church. No funny one liners here. This has to stop. Just because someone in another tradition/denomination/church doesn’t agree with you particular theological outlook doesn’t make them a heretic. The Christian on Christian violence has to come to an end.

Likewise, and perhaps more so, we have to learn to love people outside the church especially when the say
and do things we profoundly disagree with. This is life Jesus lived and then called us to “go and do likewise.” This doesn’t mean we can’t or shouldn’t disagree. We can and sometimes we should, but we have to learn to do it with love and respect and that doesn’t mean adding a tag line to your blog comment “i say this in love” followed by “your’re going to hell”. Love has to be practiced not just talked about.

So if we are going to give up for Lent this year let us give up our hate for one another and never pick up it again.