March 5, 2012 - Networking church members and leaders with ministry resources, ideas and people

Reaching Secular & Postmoderns

CSPS (Center for Secular & Postmodern Studies) exists to help the Seventh-day Adventist church better understand secular and postmodern people, explore new evangelistic methods and provide practical, relevant tools to make disciples through a real experience with God.

Visit CSPS website | Leadership article, The Church in Secular Culture

WestPoint 2012

WestPoint - April 8-11, 2012, San Mateo, California - "The only constant in life is change." And change is happening all around us in ministry. The challenge for church leaders is remaining positioned to meet that inevitable change with enthusiasm and optimism. We do that by connecting with people who can help us acquire the tools we need for success.

Visit online | Watch video
Your Story

Everyone has a story that needs to be told. StoryHarvest focuses on stories that include God—how people come to find and know him. We are presently looking for stories to share on StoryHarvest that are based upon true-life experiences (i.e. an encounter with a physical illness, an accident, a time of rebellion or whatever) that in some way led you closer to God. All stories should be told in a first-person form of story-telling.

Read more details

Improving Your Church

Any pastor committed to their calling and to serving in the place where they've been planted will concur that ministry is not static. Rather, it is a process that must be continually developed and adjusted. In February 2012 The Barna Group featured a research report on what pastors plan to do within the next year to make their churches better. It is an interesting read.

Read Barna report

Resources & News You Can Use

Kondoot - Emerging technologies is creating new opportunities for ministry. Here is one worth keeping an eye on.

Politics in the Church - Should there be politics in the church? Is not the idea of politics in the church contradictory? The linked article explores this important question and presents principles to help us deal with the politics we face, yes, even in the church.

inSpire - If you are an Adventist poet, artist or songwriter, you are invited to join our Facebook community. Help us discover how to use the arts to share the gospel.

Public Domain Music - Learn why using PDM can be beneficial. Save money and headaches.

The Role of the Printing Press in the Reformation - When one enters any Christian home or church today he will find an abundance of Bibles. However, there was a time when Bibles were only in Latin, copied by hand, and owned only by the church. A Christian layman who owned a printed bible in his own language was denounced as a heretic and publicly burned by the church.

the One project reflections - Japhet De Oliveira currently serves as the Director for the Center for Youth Evangelism, as Chaplain for Missions at Andrews University and as an adjunct professor in youth ministry at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. He is co-founder of the One project, that focuses on Jesus’ centrality in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has gatherings all over the world.

Invitation Greeting Card - Church Support Services has developed a special greeting card that can be personalized and sent to a non-attending member or former member. The key word here is “personalized.” These are not designed for mass distribution. They require someone sitting down and writing a personal note on them that conveys a message to the recipient that an Adventist friend (or member) still thinks and cares about them. Pacific Union Conference churches may request a free sample.
ChurchApplied Facebook - Please LIKE our FB page and help us transform how we share God's love with our world. Follow this link

International Children's Care - The beginning came at the end of a deadly, earth-shattering event. In 1976 an earthquake measuring 7.5 and lasting 45 seconds, literally ripped open Guatemala City, Guatemala while indiscriminately razing the infrastructure of the city and many of the surrounding towns. 23,000 lives were lost while the heaving ground was left broken and twisted with open wounds.

Pacific Union Recorder - Click here to view Recorder Archives.

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As co-director of the Centre for Public Christianity (CPX), John Dickson (author of *Humilitas*) works to engage Australia's mainstream media and general public with thoughtful content that explores the relevance of the Christian faith for the modern world. Marshall Shelley and Drew Dyck sat down with Dickson to discuss what American church leaders can learn from his experience with CPX.

**How would you describe the public’s perception of the church in Australia?**

In recent years it's become a dominant perspective to say that religion starts all the wars, religion rapes and pillages, and religion is damaging for society. The subtitle of a Christopher Hitchens book—How Religion Poisons Everything—has become a secular mantra.

Recently in Australia a TV talk show was discussing the problem of drugs. One of the hosts said, "Let's put this in perspective. Drugs have not killed anywhere near as many people as religion. Religion is far more damaging to society than our drug problem." And it got applause from the TV audience. What a sad day we've arrived at when you can get away with that and, worse, get applause.

**How does the Centre for Public Christianity try to counter this perception of the church?**

CPX is trying to communicate that there's another story here. We can concede the bad stuff that the church has done. As an historian, I know the bad stuff, and we will freely admit it. Yet we also want to tell about the positive contributions Christianity has made in Western history. We try to articulate that some of the things we love most about Western secular democracy are actually gifts of Christianity to Western culture.

**What advice do you have for church leaders in America about how to engage the broader culture effectively?**

I think the very first thing is to do is adopt a stance of mission instead of admonition toward the world. Here's an example. In the Australian context, there are church leaders who remember the glory days when about 20 percent of the nation went to church. They look at how Australia is secularized today, and their stance toward the world is basically admonition, the way you would talk to a backsliding Christian. How dare you slide away? How dare you legislate against Christian morality? I call that the admonition paradigm.

What's wrong with this approach?

I reckon that's how you kill your mission, because if you speak with a sense of entitlement, you won't be flexible, you won't be humble, and you won't take hits and just bear it. You'll want to strike back. And people will think you're arrogant. Quite rightly, probably.

What do you recommend instead?

When you move out of admonition into mission, you realize Australia is no longer Jerusalem; it's Athens. Then you instantly adopt a humbler approach to non-Christians. You don't expect them to live Christian lives if they don't confess Christ. You don't expect Parliament to pass Christian-specific laws. But as a leader, you try to persuade the nation with winsomeness, with gentleness and respect, as Peter says in 1 Peter 3:15.

**What does this mean for Christians who want to influence legislation?**

Don't say, "This is our right" or "You ought to live this way." We can say we think God's way is best for all of us and invite others to
follow God's path. But then we just live as an alternative community that embodies the things we claim to be true. And don't worry about the loss of power.

I've often said to my Christian friends here in America, please do not confuse loss of legislative power with loss of gospel opportunity. The early church, of course, had no legislative power and they did amazing things. In China today, they have no legislative power, and a third of all Bibles are sold in China. This is not to say don't go into politics, don't speak up. But do it in mission mode, not admonition.

So how do you know you're making progress?

Sometimes what looks like a win is actually a loss. I'll give you a very recent example in Australia.

We have had Scripture teaching in State schools, because all education in Australia was conducted by churches until about a hundred years ago. When the government took over schooling, the churches said, "You can take over schooling, as long as you just leave us an hour a week to teach religious studies." So for the last hundred years we've had little old ladies volunteering from the local churches to teach Scripture for one hour a week in schools. This is how I got converted, having never been inside a church.

There's now a move to get rid of Scripture or, at least, to introduce an ethics class for kids whose parents don't want them to go to the Scripture-teaching classes. Now a Christian politician in Australia has said to the government he will not support key industrial relations policies unless they overturn the people being allowed to teach ethics in the classroom. And the government cowed to him because he had the casting vote in the House.

How has the public responded to this situation?

The media around this is shocking. This politician thinks it's a win for Christianity. The reality is, it is a huge loss for Christianity, because people think Christians reckon they have a right over everyone else. They reckon they can keep even non-Christian kids from a normal ethics. This politician has actually, in my view, hastened the secularizing process by what he thinks is a win. A real win, I think, would have been if this politician had made a case for Scripture in schools and refused to use his vote to bully the nation into doing it. If he had been able to make that case, I think it would have been a win for the gospel.
Everyone Has a Story >

Story Telling

You have something no one else has—your story! We all have stories, but each one is different. From birth onward we encounter a mix of people, circumstances and challenges that makes our stories unique.

So what is your story—particularly as it relates to God's work in your life? We’ve set out to harvest as many stories as possible in the belief that reading and sharing these will bring us closer to one another and closer to God!

While space doesn’t allow sharing your entire life story, there’s certainly room for the chapter on how you found God, or how God found you.

Guidelines for submitting your story

We're looking for stories based upon your true-life experience (i.e. an encounter with a physical illness, an accident, a time of rebellion or whatever) that in some way led you closer to God. All stories should be told in a first-person form of story-telling.

Keep in mind that the purpose of sharing your story is to provide encouragement to others who may be struggling with a similar experience. The ultimate purpose is to introduce readers to God for the first time, or to inspire those who already know Him to want to know Him more!

We Want to Hear From You

Written stories should be 250 - 500 words (roughly), and told in a first person format.

Your story may include one or more of the following elements:

(1) A dramatic encounter (2) A spiritual awakening (3) A physical healing (4) A personal discovery

Click here for tips on how to prepare and share your story.

Send your questions and stories to: css@puconline.org.
Today's organizations face pressure to stay current, efficient and relevant. This is especially true for nonprofit organizations, like churches. A new Barna Group study examined how pastors of Protestant churches plan to improve the strategic, operational, and administrative aspects of their ministries.

The nationwide research project was conducted by asking pastors in what ways they are likely to improve their churches in the next year. Respondents were presented with 12 possible activities and asked to rate the priority of each activity. Many, though not all, of these 12 activities related to getting assistance, expertise or resources from organizations outside the church.

Assessing
Looking at the big picture of the research findings, pastors revealed that assessment was a significant strategic priority of today's faith leaders. Of the dozen priorities examined in the study, pastors are most interested in getting clarity about their organization's vision and mission. In all, 59% said they were "definitely" going to "assess your church's vision and mission" in the next year. Out of the 12 improvement priorities assessed in the study, this easily ranked as highest.

Pastors also rated other forms of assessment higher than they did other priorities. This included "assessing their church's reputation in their community" (38%) and "measuring the demographic and spiritual needs of their community" (31%). These ranked two and three out of the dozen priorities.

Overall, the sixth-ranked priority was "conducting an assessment of spiritual transformation in your church," noted by 22% of pastors.

Revamping and Investing
When it came to upgrading and retooling their organization, the most common priorities of pastors were "focusing on safety and security issues" (25%) and "revamping the budgeting and spending process" (25%).

Other priorities that could be categorized as upgrading their church's ministry capacity and tools include investing in "facilities and equipment for children" (22%), "audio and visual equipment" (19%), "facilities and equipment for youth and teens" (18%), and "technology and digital media" (18%).

Funding and Staffing
The third tier of priorities related to the use of fundraising and staff development experts. Just 6% of churches said they would definitely "work with an organization to help increase giving" and only 2% were inclined to "hire a search firm to help you hire the right person." While more than seven out of 10 churches (72%) rely on at least one outside consultant each year, getting such assistance for fundraising and staffing were generally perceived to be rare needs.

Church Size and Leader Age
The size of the church often plays a role in pastors' priorities, but not as much as one might expect. Among churches with fewer than 100 adult attenders, most of the dozen priorities were of equal importance to those of larger church leaders. Yet small church pastors were less inclined to want community demographics, less focused on safety and security issues, less likely to change budgeting, and less inclined to invest in technology.
Mid-sized churches (100-250 adults) were more likely than average to plan on investing in equipment for children, youth and teenagers as well as upgrading their audio and visual tools.

Large churches (251-plus attenders) were more likely than average to want to measure demographics, revamp financial processes, and work with fundraising consultants. These leaders were less inclined than average to purchase audio-visual equipment, perhaps figuring that their current set of tools are adequate for now.

Some differences were found by the age of the pastor as well. Pastors under 45 were more interested than average in technology and digital media, while those between the ages of 45 and 63 expressed above-average interest in fundraising help. Pastors who are ages 64 and older were higher than their peers when it came to measuring spiritual transformation.

Research Implications

David Kinnaman, who directed the research study, commented on the research: "Like other organizational leaders, pastors are trying to right-size their efforts to the new economic, technological and social realities. Most pastors are open to changing their ministries, yet many of them are struggling with the foundational questions of mission and vision. In other words, they want a clear direction to pursue, not necessarily just more ministry resources, like facilities, equipment, technology or ministry tools.

"It is also significant that faith leaders are prioritizing their church's local reputation and their community's profile," the Barna president concluded. "In an era of skepticism toward the institutional church, these leaders seem to recognize that the most effective churches are those that are aware of needs and active in their communities."

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCH IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES</th>
<th>% of Protestant pastors</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definitely</td>
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<tr>
<td>assess your church’s vision and mission</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>assess your church’s reputation in the community</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>measure the demographic and spiritual needs of your community</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>be more focused on safety and security issues at your church</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>revamp your budgeting and spending process</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>conduct an assessment of spiritual transformation in your church</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>invest in facilities and equipment for children</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>invest in audio and visual equipment</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>invest in facilities and equipment for youth / teenagers</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>invest in technology and digital media</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>work with an organization to help increase giving</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>find a search firm to help you hire the right staff person</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Survey question:
I am going to read a list of ways that church leaders work to improve their churches. I would like to know which of the following efforts your church is likely to do in the next year. The (first/next) is (READ OPTION). How likely are you to do this in next year: definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not?

### CHURCH IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES, BY SIZE

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<th>Size of Congregation</th>
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<td>assess your church’s vision and mission</td>
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<td>find a search firm to help you hire the right staff person</td>
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### About the Research

This report is based upon a nationwide, random sample of 614 senior pastors of Protestant churches throughout the continental United States. The study was conducted via telephone interviews. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with each aggregate sample is ±4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Minimal statistical weighting was used to calibrate the aggregate sample to known population percentages in relation to regional and denominational variables.

### About Barna Group

Barna Group (which includes its research division, the Barna Research Group) is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization under the umbrella of the Issachar Companies. It conducts primary research, produces media resources pertaining to spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries.

Located in Ventura, California, Barna Group has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984. Additional research-based resources are also available through this website.

If you would like to receive free e-mail notification of the release of each new, bi-monthly Barna Update on the latest research findings from Barna Group, you may subscribe to this free service here.

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Kondoot: A video social network worth keeping an eye on

Summary: A startup from Australia has built a social network around live video--and it's already in 137 countries. The key challenge, of course, is to get more users.

A new social network--yes, I know, I know [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites]--is on the scene, this one coming from Australia. And it's worth keeping an eye on.

It's called Kondoot [http://kondoot.com/], a play on the word conduit, and it's all about video--more specifically, live broadcast. The site (there are also mobile apps for iPhone [http://reviews.cnet.com/iphone/] and Android [http://www.cnet.com/android-atlas/]) doesn't want you simply to upload and share your videos, a la YouTube, and it's not going after straight live broadcasting via
the Web, like [Ustream](http://www.ustream.tv/cnetlive).

Kondoot wants users to broadcast live events, big and trivial, and it's built a social network around that. You can search, like, connect, follow, and instant-message—all the things we've come to expect on that other social network to which the duo behind [Kondoot like to compare themselves](http://blogs.wsj.com/dealjournalaustralia/2012/01/03/move-over-mark-zuckerberg-and-eduardo-saverin/).

"The big guys—Facebook, Google+++are all doing social, and [Livestream](http://new.livestream.com/) and Ustream are doing live video," said co-founder Mark Cracknell, 21. "We're trying to combine them...There was no one hub."

That hub is what Cracknell and 25-year-old Nathan Hoad, a friend from college in Brisbane, set out to create. The pair spent 16 months in stealth mode before launching in August. Kondoot opened up to the United States in December, and the startup now claims members in 137 countries, with particular strength in the States and across South East Asia.

It all sounds promising, but it's hard to tell exactly how promising. Kondoot isn't yet releasing meaningful metrics, such as how many actual users the network has, though he says those details will soon be disclosed, due to fund-raising efforts. Cracknell did reveal that the majority of Kondoot's traffic comes from people clicking on links shared on Facebook—showing that creating a social network without Facebook's help is impossible at this point.

The key challenge, of course, is to get more users. Good content will lead to more members, and more members will lead to better content. I just logged on, and the selection for live videos was slim. It included one of someone broadcasting her fish tank under the headline, "Fish World."

Kondoot has raised 1 million Australian dollars (about $1.1 million) via the [Australian Small Scale Offering Board](http://www.assob.com.au/members.asp?action=notLoggedIn&pageReturn=offerings%2Easp%3FofferId%3D210%26board%3D1), which
makes is a quasi-public company. Demand has been strong, and Cracknell said Kondoot is now trying to raise another 10 million Australian dollars—a process that will force it to share more about the business.

Another thing that distinguishes Kondoot from other social networks is its business model, which doesn't rely on advertising. The company is promoting its just-launched live-broadcasting system, through which anyone can sell tickets and let fans attend virtually, with Kondoot taking a 20 percent cut of revenue.

Kondoot wants music festival to broadcast via its system.

Kondoot's sales team—the startup now has 10 people in all—is trying to land music festivals as customers, but it's also hoping to appeal to anyone who wants to charge to watch a live event. A seminar speaker, for instance, could create an event, sell tickets, and then use the whole system to broadcast and interact with viewers.

Clearly, there's an opportunity here, but the challenges are substantial. It's also not hard to imagine Google trying to beef up Google Hangouts [http://www.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-57335103-93/google-offers-free-phone-calls-from-within-hangouts/] in a way that quickly makes it easy for, say, public speakers to live-broadcast their events. Or it could make YouTube more social than and it already is, adding live broadcasting as a feature for users.

But Cracknell remains undeterred. He and his team are amping up Kondoot's presence in the United States, with plans soon to open an office in New York. Then they're going after Europe. He said he's had talks with venture capitalists in Silicon Valley but that Kondoot doesn't need the money right now.

So is this a long-term play or a startup built to flip, as has become so common?
"From day 1, we've said that we want to make a company that could run for 100 years and could be sold tomorrow," Cracknell said.
Politics in the Church

Should there be politics in the church? Is not the idea of politics in the church contradictory? The following article explores this important question and presents principles to help us deal with the politics we face, yes, even in the church.

Finding the balance

Politics is the process of balancing competing interests in a social system. For example, on the island nation of Fiji, two main ethnic groups—native Fijians and Asian Indians—coexist. The two groups have little in common. Native Fijians are darker skinned (Melanesian) and have lived in the Fijian islands from antiquity. The Indians are lighter skinned and arrived during the colonial period. The Fijians tend to farm and live in the countryside; the Indians tend to be in business and live in the cities and towns. The Fijians tend to be Christians, while the Indians are usually Muslim or Hindu. When it comes to dividing up the island nation’s resources, the interests of the Fijians and Indians almost always diverge. So the political way to keep the peace is to make sure that the respective political interests of the Fijians and Indians are kept in “balance,” however difficult for that balance to sometimes be achieved.

In a similar fashion, there are competing interests in any religious organization. Growing up in New York City, I remember the tensions in my own conference between Hispanics and Caucasians. The power in the conference had historically been held by Caucasians; but as the Spanish-speaking membership rose in numbers, they felt that they were often left out in the distribution of power and resources. They demanded greater representation or they would secede and form their own conference. Today, there are strong and continuing efforts to make sure the composition of leadership in that church organization roughly reflects the ethnic makeup of the membership. Whether we like it or not, this is politics in the church.

Competing interests

Theological differences can also create competing interests. Among Seventh-day Adventists, for example, there has always been some tension between a healing and service focus as opposed to a doctrinal focus based on the study of biblical apocalyptic. Both foci are grounded in Scripture and the instructions of Ellen White, but they tend to lead in somewhat different directions theologically. The healing side of Adventism tends toward an outward focus of engaging the world to make it a better place; the apocalyptic side tends toward an inward focus of avoiding contamination from the world. Naturally, when Adventists from both sides get together, there can be tension. Theological discussions are easily politicized when the outcome of a theological discussion could favor the interests of one side or the other.

Is there any way to avoid such politicization? Does God express His will through the outcome of political debate or does political discussion make it harder for people to hear the voice of God? Is
it possible to balance competing interests in the church without conflict? Is politics in the church always a bad thing?

**The evidence of the New Testament**

On the surface of the New Testament, the obvious answer would seem to be No. Jesus’ teaching seems clear: “If someone strikes you on one cheek, offer the other for a second strike.” “If someone curses you, offer instead a blessing. If someone abuses you, pray for him or her” (Matt. 5:39, 44). This seems to leave little room for competing interests in the church. All subgroups in the church should adopt the self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus toward others.

Yet a careful look around the New Testament suggests that the Sermon on the Mount was not often followed—even in the earliest church. Within a short time after Pentecost, competing interests arose in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6). It seems the Jerusalem church set up a safety net for the widows in the church who may have been abandoned by their families when they accepted Christ. The Greek-speaking members complained that the Greek-speaking widows were not getting their fair share of food. The complaint was brought to the apostles, and they responded that it was not their responsibility to turn away from preaching and focus on food distribution instead. They invited the church to appoint seven men—deacons—to take care of the matter. What is of interest are their names: all these deacons had distinctively Greek names, which means that, possibly, they were added to the leadership to ensure that the interests of the Greek speakers were fairly represented.

The problem in the church was competing interests; the solution was to make sure the neglected segment of the church was represented in the decision-making processes of the church. Sounds like a political solution, does it not?

Later (Acts 15:36–39), Paul and Barnabas are contemplating a second mission trip together. The previous trip had been hindered somewhat when John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, abandoned the apostles at a difficult time. Barnabas wanted to give him a second chance, but Paul would have none of it. There arose such a sharp disagreement between the two apostles that they separated. Barnabas took Mark with him and Paul sought out a different companion. Could not one or the other of the apostles have turned the other cheek? Maybe they could have, but they did not. Instead they chose to go their separate ways, pursuing a “political” solution to their dispute.

A less well-known story has to do with Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:16). Paul, Luke, and a number of others, including at least one Gentile Christian named Trophimus, came to Jerusalem and stayed at the house of Mnason, an early disciple of Jesus (probably one of the 70 mentioned in Luke 10). The text tells us “the brothers received us warmly” (Acts 21:17, NIV).

At first glance, Paul and company seem quite welcome in Jerusalem. The next day, however, it is clear that thousands of believing Jews in Jerusalem did not yet know Paul was there (v. 22) and these were believing the worst about him. Following the advice of the apostles to appease this other group of believers, Paul is arrested in the temple and his public mission in the book of Acts is brought to a close.
Clearly, the church in Jerusalem remained divided between Greeks and Hebrews many years after Acts 6. Mnason, a Greek believer from Cyprus, was happy to welcome Paul. The rest of the church in town disagreed, and Paul ended up jailed.

This brief survey of just one book of the New Testament makes it clear that politics in the church are the norm rather than the exception (see also Galatians 2:11–14). If the apostles themselves could not avoid it, church leadership today should not be expected to totally eradicate politics from the church, either.

Politics and faith

If politics is the norm rather than the exception, even in the church, how can we manage politics in a way that does not undermine the gospel? While individuals may at times turn the other cheek or adopt the self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus, groups of people with a common ethnic or theological interest rarely do. Politics is not the ideal but a fact of life.

So, how can leaders of the faith manage the politics that comes with competing interests in the church? I would like to offer four principles that have helped me manage politics through the years.

1. The leader must practice humility and self-distrust. Paul discusses such an approach in a powerful passage, 2 Timothy 2:24–26: “The servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but rather gentle toward everyone; teachable, bearing slander without resentment, in humility instructing those who ‘oppose themselves,’ in the hope that God might give them repentance leading to knowledge of truth, and that they might escape the trap of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

“Difficult people” in the church cannot free themselves from Satan’s trap. Nor can we free them. Only a miracle of God can. Not by coercion or by shame talk can politics be managed, but only by exhibiting the self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus in our own behaviors as leaders. No group will deny itself unless led by self-denying leaders. When we shame people, they raise walls of defense. When we practice humility, gentleness, and meekness, the way opens for God to transform the hearts of others. Self-denial is not natural; it is a miracle whenever it occurs. The best counter to politics in the church is not to demand our fair share of whatever, but to be willing to yield our rights for the sake of the whole.

2. The leader must learn and exhibit empathy. Genuine empathy is also a miraculous event, whenever it occurs. By nature, selfish human beings are primarily concerned with their own interests and welfare. But an immersion in the grace and mercy of God can open our eyes to the suffering of others. A negative example of this is the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21–35). Not appreciating the mercy of the king, the unforgiving servant did not see that his fellow servant was in the same position in relation to him as he had been with the king. Seeing that fellow servant through the eyes of the king would have given him new glasses with which to see and understand the heart of another. We develop empathy when we experience the empathy of God. We learn compassion from the compassion that was first shown us. We love because God first loved us. We forgive because we have been forgiven. Empathy enables us to see and
care about the interests of others and thereby to find a way to balance those interests in a way that unites people rather than divides them.

3. The leader must have a passion for fairness (justice). Some people have, by nature, more of a passion for fairness than do others. But we can all learn to be more fair. In a way, fairness is not possible until we have discovered both humility and empathy. A learning spirit, combined with empathy, will produce a passion for justice. When we have determined the facts of a situation (as far as that is possible) and care deeply about all involved, we will be able to move people toward the fairest possible outcome. When the people know that the leader intends to be fair, they are more willing to trust the process.

4. The leader must distinguish between the clear and the unclear. This is particularly relevant when theological discussions become political. While the Bible is the rule of faith and practice, not everything in the Bible is equally clear. Understanding the difference between what is clear and what is unclear in the Bible helps us to avoid arguments over ideas that are not clearly established in the text. One side of a discussion may see one side of truth clearly, but not the other. Truth is often a tension between poles rather than an either-or directive. When people see that the Bible often clearly teaches things that strike us as opposites, we come to realize that many of our political conflicts arise from competing groups seeing the side of truth that appeals to their personalities, and then trying to eliminate from the group those whose personalities incline them to see the other side. A commitment to Scripture over our opinion about Scripture, a willingness to subject all that we believe to the text, is one of the best ways to manage theological politics in the church.3

Conclusion

It would be nice if politics could be eliminated from the church. On the other hand, that might cause us all to become theologically lazy. Often in the heat of conflict people open their Bibles with a fresh willingness to learn and grow. Often in the heat of conflict we are forced to engage the other and discover that they are partly right. The One who sets up kings and puts them down is well able to manage the mess that human politics can create, even in the church.
The Role of the Printing Press in the Reformation

By Jane Grey

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-4, 14

When one enters any Christian home or church today he will find an abundance of Bibles. However, there was a time when Bibles were only in Latin, copied by hand, and owned only by the church. A Christian layman who owned a printed bible in his own language was denounced as a heretic and publicly burned by the church. Forgotten was God’s admonition to His people to “impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

By the end of the reformation, however, God’s word was available to both clergymen and laymen, rich nobles and poor farmers. The common people were given the holy Scriptures to read, interpret, and apply for themselves. God’s law became a part of nearly every home, and culture saw a goal shift from paganist to godly.

Several key instruments were used by God to cause this great reform of culture, but the most pivotal was in the form of written communication of the Word. First, the invention of the moveable-type printing press made it possible for Bibles to be owned by many common people, and also efficiently circulated the writings of the Reformers. Second, the diligent work of several Bible scholars produced translations of the Bible in many of the common tongues of Europe.

Printed and reproduced Bibles allowed the common people to interpret the Scriptures for themselves.
The state of the church before the Reformation is described by John Foxe, in his famous *Book of Martyrs*:

> "The law of God was seldom read and never understood, so Christ's saving work and the effect on man's faith were not examined. Because of this ignorance, errors and sects crept into the church, for there was no foundation for the truth that Christ willingly died to free us from our sins: not bargaining with us but giving to us."

At this point in history we must admire God's wisdom, for just as the church fell into ruin because of the ignorance of its teachers, and shortly after the burning of John Huss and Jerome, God gave his church the art of printing, which restored the truth of God's word to the body of Christ and decried its false teachers.

Gutenberg's printing press opened up new vistas in culture's conversation and the effectiveness of God's truth.

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### The Printing Press

In Mainz, Germany, an invention developed under the hands of a man named Johann Gutenberg which would change the course of history forever. Gutenberg was a strong Christian who had a vision for all men, everywhere, to soon be able to own and read the Bible in their own homes. His own words will do best:
“God suffers because there are such multitudes of souls to whom His sacred Word cannot be given; religious truth is captive in a small number of little manuscripts, which guard the common treasures instead of expanding them. Let us break the seal which binds these holy things; let us give wings to truth that it may fly with the Word, no longer prepared at vast expense, but multiplied everlastingly by a machine which never wearies --to every soul which enters life!” (The Modern Age, p. 30)

Previous countries which had experimented with the printing press found it less economical than hand-copying. Korea, China, and Japan had all used wooden blocks for printing since the 700s, and Korea even used metal letters, but the great amount of characters which their languages used made the printing press impractical and expensive. But when Johannes Gutenberg combined moveable metal letters with an oil-based ink and a wooden hand press, he created the first practical and widely used printing press. (Humanists and Reformers, p. 39)

This man “broke the seal to the treasure house and let the truth fly with the wings of the Word,” yet he died a penniless man. However, the effects of this invention, though small at first to a largely illiterate Europe, soon grew to massive proportions. All of culture was changed and became defined by this new invention. Information could be printed in mass quantities, people could analyze and study the Bible outside of the church, and reading now became the culture’s “conversation.” Literacy rates for sixteenth century Western Europe averaged from %5 to %10 of males and grew to %50 after the invention of the printing press. (Humanists and Reformers, p. 43).

Forms of media favor particular types of content, and are therefore capable of taking over a culture.

Postman, a communications theorist, readily links a culture’s intellectual and social concerns to the form of communication it uses:

“In studying the Bible as a young man, I found intimations of the idea that forms of media favor particular kinds of content and therefore are capable of taking command of a culture...It is, I believe, a wise and particularly relevant supposition that the media of communication available to a culture are a dominant influence on the formation of the culture’s intellectual and social preoccupations.” (Amusing Ourselves to Death, p. 9)

This was indeed true in the case of the printing press, as the culture undertook drastic changes economically, intellectually, socially, and religiously. I will describe a few of these religious changes below.

The Bible readily accessible to the common man
gives wing to the concept of "the priesthood of all believers."

Priesthood of All Believers

Prior to the printing press, manuscripts were copied laboriously by hand and were only owned by nobility, princes, and scholars who could afford to pay for a scribe. People went to church to learn what the Bible said, but were given false doctrine. Many of the Reformers realized the error in the church, yet it was hardly possible to combat the error, as the common people couldn't read the Scriptures and had no standard to measure the teachings by.

With the coming of the printing press, reading suddenly became a vital part of the culture. Bibles were distributed, theological schools opened, the Reformers' works were published and eagerly devoured. Common people began to read and reason on their own. The result was a society that could now see the lies of the Roman Catholic Church, the foolishness of the "Divine Right" of kings, and the greatness of God's gracious plan of salvation for His people. The Bible trained and educated the people until many could exclaim with David, "Oh, how love I Thy law!" because many now knew exactly what it said.

Historian John Foxe relates a few of the changes that took place in God's kingdom:

"Through the grace of God, men of wisdom were now able to communicate their thoughts accurately and widely so others could distinguish light from darkness, truth from error, religion from superstition. Knowledge grew in science and in languages, opening a window of light for the world and clearing the way for the Reformation of the church. (Foxe's Book of Martyrs, p. 65)"

From Image to Text
For a culture that had been primarily “image” based, the rational and analytical nature of reading was at first a shock. One cathedral received the first printed book on its shelves full of hand-written manuscripts and an observing scholar exclaimed, “This book will destroy the building!” (Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, 1831)

He was correct in the sense that the people would no longer need the church’s images to understand the truth of the Bible. Gargoyles, statues of saints, candles, incense, stained glass, white and delicate cathedral walls, and rich tapestries had all been used to teach the people about eternal concepts. Gregory the Great, the first of medieval popes (590-604) referred to images as the “books of the uneducated.” (Humanists and Reformers, p. 43)

The printed book is said to have brought an end to the age of the cathedrals influence on culture.

“If the printed book brought an end to the age of the cathedral, one of the ways in which it did so was by becoming the building. Printed paratexts took a wide range of textual edifices across the threshold and into even the humblest home.” (*Agent of Change* p. 81, eds. Baron, Lindquist, Shevlin) Now these humble homes could read and reason through these ideas in the clearer, more rational form of the printed Word. Luther called the coming of printing “God’s highest and extremest act of grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward.” (Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, p. 32)

The business of the gospel, in this case, was to reach with long and sensitive fingers into every fiber of Renaissance culture, to the rich, the poor, the kings and plowboys, and confront them with the pure and unadulterated truth of the Word. Now there could be no ignorance without excuse. The reality and logic of the printed Word held a force that could not be counteracted easily. The preparation of “languages and letters” for the Word of God, as Luther called it, made it so that, as both he and Erasmus had hoped:

> “The farmer might sing snatches of his Scripture at his plough, that the weaver might hum phrases of Scripture to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveler might lighten with stories from Scripture the weariness of his journey.”

*(Erasmus, quoted in The Modern Age, p. 31)*

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For the One
One Life. One Jesus. One Project.

Post Seattle 2012 Reflections....
Posted on February 20, 2012 by Japhet De Oliveira

Over the last few days I have just been enjoying reading all the survey responses, FB posts and articles in various communities. Even those who go to great pains to denounce all we are trying to do. But the overwhelming response after response, has simply been ...."this Jesus I know”.

Knowing Jesus only means one thing....we just can’t hold it to ourselves. I want everyone to know my Saviour (UK spelling) and with my One life I will use all I have to do that.

Sabbath past was over the top!

It started Sabbath morning when in my time with Jesus I understood with peace what I should do next in my work life. I met Chaplain Tim Nixon and Chaplain Jose Bourget for prayer that morning and we all heard the same message.

Two hours later I was back at my Church (One Place) listening to one of the pastors David Ferguson preach on John 17. This is how Jesus speaks to me at times. Some had posted online and even suggested that we were so enthralled by Jesus that we ignored the Father and Holy Spirit. Even though I did not feel that could be a possibility, it was perfect when David talked about his personal earthly father. How his greatest wish is you would catch a glimpse of him by seeing David. This is the One project....proclaiming Jesus. All. includes revealing the character of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

That evening Becky and I were having dinner with friends at this super little place, Soe Cafe near Sawyer. We were the only Adventists and found so many beautiful moments through all the great conversation to know that Jesus loves every single person. Granted my title “Chaplain” at Andrews University, usually opens or closes conversations. But this evening I was in a different gear. I am simply enjoying breathing in Jesus and waiting for his direction.

So how do I know if the One project gathering in Seattle was successful? I know that Jesus is real and I hear his voice in my life – that is success. I know that hundreds are experiencing the same thing – that is success. I know that many are struggling and delving deep into their own walk – that is success. I know that 168 have already registered for Chicago – that is success. I know that I can’t stop talking about Jesus – that is success.

There is a real hunger to come to a place where all the clutter is removed. Where you can pause and stop and simply listen to Jesus. What is he saying to you? How will you respond?

One Life. One Jesus. One Gathering.

Japhet De Oliveira
From SBN airport

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**Weird: Because normal isn't working.**

Posted on December 8, 2011 by Japhet De Oliveira

Maybe you’ve read Craig Groeschel works before or heard him speak at Catalyst. His latest work “Weird: Because normal isn’t working” is a great push towards a life for Jesus first. With the incredibly subtle differences such as this:

“If we follow Christ, we’re not supped to be like everyone else. The whole point of sanctification is to become more like him instead of who we are when left to our devices and desires. So how do we discern the difference between a good choice and the best one?” p.31 or “...just because we can do something doesn’t mean we should.” p.33

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**One. Life.**

Posted on May 28, 2011 by Japhet De Oliveira

Started to read last week One. Life. by Scott McKnight, brilliant insight into a personal journey of faith application. I enjoyed this passage below.

Without love, society becomes a chaos of individuals.
Without love, society becomes a free for all.
Without love, society ceases being society.
With love, society becomes community.
With love, society becomes one for all and all for one.
With love, society becomes kingdom.

p. 54

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