

Synergy

a newsletter for pastors & wives

Vol. 6, No. 1

A note from John and Daria . . .



Dear friends,

When we served as pastor and wife, every visitor who attended one of our church services received Christ and became a vital member of the church. We wish this were true! Unfortunately, we've had our share of the revolving door syndrome, which the Toolbox article, "Assimilating New Members," addresses. We trust that as you read this issue of *Synergy*, you'll recommit to reaching people for Christ and helping them to stay in the church for discipleship.

In service with you,
John & Daria

Toolbox

Assimilating New Members

I have a disturbing thought—that of our church becoming a revolving door where folks visit but don't stay. To prevent that type of exodus, we work on assimilating new members. Here are some methods that have worked for us.

Make friendly first impressions. While God sees the heart, visitors cannot. They see buildings, decor, and people. The size of your congregation is not the determining factor in bringing folks back as much as is the friendliness of the people. When asked, "Why do you want to join our church?" prospective members often respond, "Your people are so friendly!" Our doctrine is not always the thing that draws them. Rick Warren was right: "Long before the pastor preaches, the visitors are deciding whether or not to come back."

A friendly church adorns its doctrine with smiles and greetings. Pastors, take the lead in friendliness! Nobody likes a grumpy preacher or one who hides out in his office before the service. You can also attract repeat visitors by creating an honest, aggressive greeter system. Don't ask for volunteers—recruit the brightest, friendliest personalities you've got. Our greeters keep a watchful eye for visitors, welcoming them warmly and giving them a church brochure and a

card to fill out and drop in the offering plate. Warning: Most churches think they are friendly; the church's return ratio of visitors is an accurate indicator of friendliness.

Conduct a fervent worship service. No matter what style of music you use in the worship service, ask yourself, "Do our people lift their voices in song?" Visitors should leave with the distinct impression of, *These people are in awe of their God!* When you preach the Word of God, are you adorning it? The proclamation of God's Word is the most important part of your worship. Give visitors something worth taking home and coming back for!

Carry out an aggressive visitation ministry. Follow up each visitor with a letter, a call, and a visit. Pastors, lead the way by scheduling and promoting calling nights. Keep up-to-date records on calls. Pair the skilled callers with the unskilled. Contrary to popular opinion, folks appreciate the time, effort, and encouragement you extend when visiting their homes. Most of the souls we are seeing saved have received Christ during personal visits.

Mandate a membership class. Our membership class is a requirement for anyone desir-

(continued on page 2)

IDEA Exchange

Temple Tots

One hundred twenty-five children enjoy our Temple Tots preschool and state-certified kindergarten program, with fifty children on the waiting list. Temple Tots not only provides Christian education and loving care to students, but it also serves as an outreach of our church to community parents whose children attend.



To prepare for the program, we examined governing laws and surveyed available Christian curriculum. We retained a lawyer to guide our steering committee of schoolteachers, deacons, and parents from the congregation. Within the space of several months, this project came together. We appointed a board of trustees and formed a separate nonprofit corporation, allowing the church to control the ministry but not assume legal liability.

For 3- to 5-year-olds, our school provides an educational program using A BEKA curriculum and offers a hot breakfast and lunch. We employ a licensed dietitian, nine staff members, and a full-time administrator. Our church provides the rooms, pays for the utilities, and gives \$100 per month for support for the school. The rest of the finances come from tuition fees and two annual fund-raising events. We would be glad to provide copies of legal documents, forms, and bylaws free of charge. Call 740.353.6859.

John Gowdy, pastor
Temple Baptist Church
Portsmouth, Ohio



Together We Can Accomplish More **G A R B C**

T o o l b o x *continued*

ing full membership, even for people coming from other Baptist churches. The word “assimilate” means to “make similar.” This class helps to assure that prospective members’ views are in line with the church’s position.

A few suggestions for the class include

- You as the pastor should teach the class.

Cast your vision and passion before the prospective members. They will enjoy meeting with you informally.

• Conduct the class in one session for 3 or 4 hours with breaks. This one-shot approach allows you better use of time, eliminates the need for review, and promotes consistent attendance for all topics.

- Be open about doctrine and practices.

Deal with prerequisites, covenant, history, articles of faith, and controversial issues.

Administer care groups. Churches may believe in the concept of care groups but have a

difficult time implementing them. This issue was so important to us that we brought on an administrative pastor. (Warren Wiersbe said this would be the first person he would hire if he were starting a church today.) Whether or not you have a pastor in charge of this area, people are looking for friends who demonstrate loving care. Because we have a Sunday School hour (a great form of assimilation), our care groups provide fellowship, encouragement, and opportunities for evangelism. We keep the groups small (5 or 6 units) and periodically meet with the leaders, who are deacons and wives and other spiritually strong couples.

We realize that we can’t win everyone. Yet we are working to assimilate the people God wants us to keep for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

*Pat Nemmers, pastor
Saylorville Baptist Church
Des Moines, Iowa*

BIGGER Isn’t Better—Better Is Better!

As a culture, we’re big on bigness. We take pride in saying that we have the biggest used-car lot, the biggest retail store, or the biggest burger. We’re impressed with big homes, trucks, malls, TVs, cities, bank accounts, crowds, salaries, and universities. Bigness is not wrong in itself. However, we have a tendency to think that bigger things are better things. This “bigger is better” thinking can impact our view of churches and ministries. Aren’t bigger churches better churches? Don’t big crowds mean better ministries? Big offerings, attendances, youth activities, choirs, and sanctuaries are impressive. However, while some churches have become large because of God’s blessing on faithful ministry, others have grown at the expense of truth. Crowds aren’t hard to draw if we are not bound by a Biblical message and principled methods.

Please don’t misunderstand; smallness in itself is not a virtue. In fact, some churches are sinfully small due to a failure to evangelize, an ingrown perspective, or an unwillingness to appropriately change ministry methods to reach an ever-changing culture.

Let’s make it our goal to have better ministries. Our churches can become more effective through a growing commitment to relevant equipping and outreach. We’ll leave the matter of “bigness” in God’s hands. After all, bigger isn’t necessarily better . . . better is better!

*Jim Vogel, pastor
South Baptist Church
Flint, Michigan*



T E C H Soup *Consider this seed idea for evangelism:*

Do you have stay-at-home moms in your church who would like to influence their neighborhoods for Christ? Perhaps these moms might like to form “playgroups” to get to know other moms and children in their neighborhoods. An Internet resource for finding, starting, and managing a playgroup is www.onlineplaygroup.com.

Reach Out

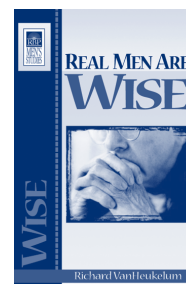
Easter Event

Our church’s annual Easter event provides a gateway into our community. The Saturday before Easter we share the gospel message inside our church building with unchurched parents and children. While the families are inside, our people hide plastic eggs filled with candy and golden eggs containing larger prizes including a week at a Christian camp. We rope off a special area for toddlers and release the other children at intervals from the youngest to oldest age groups to find the eggs. Afterward we serve hot dogs, chips, and cookies and we chat with the families. We provide response cards so that our guests can comment on the event and inform us of their interests (more outreach ideas!). This is an incredible friend-making opportunity, one that our community has come to expect every year.

*Bill Mattox, pastor
Meadowood Baptist Church
Madison, Wisconsin*



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ABCs to Help Us Become Better Pastors in the New Year

- Aggressively Active**—Make things happen; push for progress.
Biblically Balanced—Avoid extremes; keep your equilibrium.
Cautiously Counseling—Be careful; stay within the safety zone.
Diligently Doing—Perform your duties faithfully; let God decide the outcome.
Earnestly Enduring—Keep at your work, even when it's difficult and discouraging.
Faithfully Fellowshiping—Involve yourself and your church in state and national associations of Regular Baptist churches.
Graciously Grateful—Be thankful; send notes of appreciation.
Humbly Helping—Do not allow others to put you on a pedestal.
Intensely Interceding—Pray fervently.
Joyfully Jolly—Laugh, and learn to enjoy your ministry.
Kindly Keeping—Maintain your doctrinal position charitably.
Lovingly Living—Love people; become known as the pastor who loves.
Meaningfully Managing—Care for details; develop your management skills.
Narrowly Networking—Work together with churches of like faith.
Orderly Overseeing—Do things “decently and in order.”
Passionately Preaching—Put some fire and enthusiasm in your preaching.
Quell Quitting—Resign only to God's will; your calling is for life.
Regularly Reading—Peruse books and magazines; they are your tools for preparation.
Submissively Serving—Accept God's assignment and serve Him where placed.
Tactfully Talking—Be courteous and never rude; choose your words carefully.
Urgently Urging—Encourage and prod; people desperately need your prompting.
Visually Visiting—Be out and among your people and community.
Wisely Witnessing—Testify about the Savior; awaken your sluggish soul.
Expositionally Exhorting—Expound and explain as you explore the Scriptures.
Yearly Yielding—Surrender yourself anew to be used of God in 2002.
Zealously Zipping—Rid yourself of laziness and lethargy during this coming year.

“To what are we to be consecrated? Not to Christian work, but to the will of God, to be and to do whatever He requires” (Watchman Nee). Whether or not the world will get better in 2002, may the Lord help us to be better men of God as we pastor our churches.

Craig Golden, state representative
Empire State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches

IDEA Exchange

Spotlighting Marriage

During two Sunday services prior to Valentine's Day, I spoke on the sanctity of marriage and on the meaning and permanency of the marriage covenant. To culminate this emphasis, I arranged for the succeeding Sunday morning service to function as a wedding ceremony in which couples recommitted themselves to their marriages. We provided wedding music, decorated the auditorium with flowers and candles, and followed the order of service of a wedding. After I gave a challenge to the “bride and groom,” the married couples stood, joined hands, and repeated their marriage vows. Our couples responded positively to the service. Some who married during WWII said this was their first church wedding. On the following evening, our church hosted *The Reception*, an outreach Valentine's dinner that included a gospel presentation.



Donn Mogford, pastor
Berean Baptist Church
Nampa, Idaho

TECH Soup



Check out these helpful Internet sites when looking for books:

- www.abebooks.com searches for used, secondhand, rare, and out-of-print books.
- www.bestbookbuys.com provides instant discounts on books.
- www.bibliofind.com combines with Amazon.com to find rare and used books.
- www.bookfinder.com searches the search engines.

Wayne Booker, field representative
Illinois-Missouri Association
of Regular Baptist Churches

New! The GARBC Annual Service Award Program

Each year at the GARBC Annual Conference and in *The Baptist Bulletin*, we will recognize faithful servants of the Lord who have served their GARBC churches with distinction. We desire to honor vocational ministry personnel such as pastors and wives, missionaries, and church staff members, as well as laypeople. Please submit a one-page nomination of a deserving person or couple. Include the nominee's name and address; the church's name, address, and phone number; and a statement of the reasons for nomination (GARBC churches only). Send by March 1 to GARBC, 1300 N. Meacham Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4806; fax: 847-843-3757; or e-mail: garbc@garbc.org.

Reach Out

Blue and White Sunday

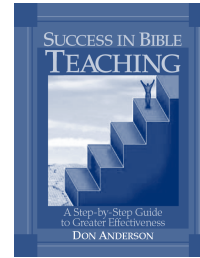
To publicly honor police officers, corrections officers, judges, and prosecutors, and to create an opportunity to share the gospel with them, our church hosted Blue and White Sunday. On that day, our members wore blue-lined ribbons in honor of the law enforcement professionals. Greeters, some in uniform, welcomed our guests and manned the registration. A police color guard presented the colors. During the service, we honored all officers with a certificate of appreciation. Four officers received plaques for outstanding service. The state police post commander presented life-saving awards from the State of Michigan to two officers. Mark Rizzo, director of FREEdom Flyer Ministries, preached a message. Afterward, our church family hosted a dinner for the officers.

Prior to that Sunday, we prayed for the event and sent letters inviting police chiefs and department heads and their department members and families to this tribute service and dinner. We met with various chiefs of police to have them nominate officers to receive the recognition awards. (FREEdom Flyer ministries, www.freedomflyer.org, provides a step-by-step manual on how to conduct this event.)

Forty-two guests attended, and two received Christ as their personal Savior. Many officers expressed their gratitude for a wonderful morning.

*David Hill, pastor
First Baptist Church
Lapeer, Michigan*

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