

# GROW IN GRACE

## NEWSLETTER

**Volume 39, No.32, August 6, 2013** / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

### A CONTRAST IN METHODOLOGY OF MINISTRY

**A FEW YEARS BACK I RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING EMAIL:** Dear Pastor Bell, I realize you do not know me, but please allow me a moment to introduce myself and ministry to you. My name is Sam Denning. I am a graduate of **Liberty University** in Lynchburg, VA and have been **in full-time comedy and concert ministry for over 20 years**. I am best known for my writing and work with comedian/singer **Mark Lowry**. I appear on his videos and did a year of national television with Kathy Troccoli and Mark on the INSP Network. What if I told you that you could reach 30%-40% visitors for an event and that event would cost you nothing? Would that interest you??

Well, I've teamed up with another Liberty graduate, Bob Lamb. He has put together a GREAT band that has the **recommendations of** Mark Hall (Casting Crowns) and **Andy Stanley** (NorthPoint Church in Atlanta). Bob also has over 20 years of experience in music ministry. His band has a **great sound and powerful vocals**. In addition to Casting Crowns, they have also shared the stage with **Jars of Clay** and speaker David Nassar. Together, we have developed a unique program called "What's Love Got To Do With It?" **This is a professional, energetic, fun and funny "show" featuring high-end sound and visual media**. It combines Billy's band singing **popular love songs, such as "The Power of Love," by Huey Lewis & The News** and "I Want To Know What Love Is," **by Foreigner**, plus comedy segments which I provide.

This event is designed to help you, as a local church, draw in the lost and unchurched people in your community. That is our desire. Our concert begins with each individual's search for that *One True Love* and leads into a life-changing Message of God's Love. This makes a PERFECT OUTREACH for ANY size church who wants to reach people in a new, unique way. And, we have devised a promotional plan to help you pack the house—**and it cost you nothing!!**

Now how is that for a great outreach!?!? That is our goal....to have a fun and exciting evening with eternal results! You will also find recommendations there from **Charles**

**Stanley to Mike Tait of dcTalk**, plus many more. Also, if for some reason you cannot view the online video, you can request a free demo DVD to be sent to you. We are booking many dates and would appreciate you considering having us. We have dates open for the Spring, Summer, and Fall and would love to help you *Reach More People* in your community.

Please call today to learn how this event can help you reach 30%-40% new people and be FREE for your church! Thanks so very much for your time! I do apologize if I have intruded. I just came across your web site and thought I would write. You never know what this simple email introduction might lead to! Please email me either way, and let me know if you may be interested. I look forward to hearing from you!

Reaching More People, Sam Denning

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**The RESPONSE I emailed back to Sam:** Greetings Sam! From what you describe, I have no doubt that your presentation would appeal to the lost— especially the lost masses in churches. It appears to be just the kind of thing that this generation loves— professional, energetic, fun and funny stuff with great visual media. From the same philosophy as yours, I received a flyer from a church which informed me that if I attended their church during a particular month— **I could have a chance to win \$15,000.00 in a basketball shoot-out!** Another church, with a lesser budget, promoted a youth meeting by giving away a **\$500 shopping spree** to a Mall. Somewhere I have a entire FILE FOLDER of ‘fun and entertainment’ promotions from churches. Truly, various forms of ENTERTAINMENT is a key, proven way to get crowds!

**HOWEVER, IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, at least some Churches/Christian ministries have a different philosophy and emphasis!** For example, in some of the Bible Schools in India graduating students must publically take THE MARTYR’S OATH during the commencement or they will not be given a diploma. At graduation **these graduates rise to their feet, raise their hand, and repeat similar words to the following ones:**

**“TODAY, I stand as a dead man.** I declare that in Jesus Christ, I am saved by His blood, and thus I am dead to sin and no longer dead in my sin. **TODAY, I stand and declare** that I surrender my will and my life to His will and His life. **I shall go where He sends me,** without asking questions. **I shall go to** whomever **He** sends me, without seeking fame. I shall preach to everyone, even if they hate me.

**I am an Ambassador of the Cross and I must deliver the Message. “I shall pour out my life** to reach my family, my friends, my neighbors and my city. **I embrace** the shame of the Cross and I fear nothing and no one but God. **I welcome** suffering, shame, persecution, beatings, imprisonment and death. I will not be silenced. If I am killed, I pray that my blood should result in a harvest for souls. **This is my city.** I dare not do less.”

Following their confession of the Martyr’s Oath, the students walk across the stage to receive their diploma and each graduate takes into his possession— **a new Bible, a new bicycle and a one-way train ticket to their field of service.**

**Sam, as I look at the contrast between your offer and their practice, I must say that I am not interested in so called Christian entertainment or Christian comedy—** the growing American practice of using fun and funny stuff and rock music to draw a crowd. I do not question your sincerity. **Yes, you have BIG NAME preachers who glowingly approve of your efforts. You have glowing statistics on your side.**

However, as I read through the Bible, I find that Noah did not attract a crowd! The prophets were hated while the false prophets were loved. And the crowds who followed Jesus quickly backed off because of His preaching! Sam, in reality there are two and only two churches in the world. Expressions of both may even be in one building! There is the true Bride of Christ and there is a Harlot. **Which church (Bride or Harlot) I am seeking to build, determines which philosophy and methods I use! Moreover,** the philosophy and methods I choose may reveal whether I am a false prophet/pastor (2 Peter 2:1-3) or a true servant of the LORD! (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

Robert Burnell, in *Escape from Christendom*, wisely states: "Never has it been more clear to me that two revivals are in progress on the earth. **One is the revival of the Spirit of God by which** dead men and women are freed from their sins by the blood of the Lamb and raised to a life which is the life of the sons of God, a life which bears God's nature, manifests God's mercy. **The other revival is the revival of religious flesh,** a revival which is so appealing and gathers such multitudes and wields such power in this world because it offers all the comfort of religion **while allowing you to keep your ego and all rights to yourself.**

**Surely each of us has to decide which revival he is going to be part of—** am I going to invest my life in some enterprise of booming Christian City? Or am I going to lose my life in the pursuit of God's will of mercy? Am I going to concentrate on building something that will cause the citizens of Christian City to sit up and take notice? Or am I going to spend my life bringing the poor and the maimed and the blind to the Master's table?" [I would also recommend that you search online for a copy of *Faithful Unto Death*, by Myron S. Augsburgver. It unfolds the stories of 15 young people who were not afraid to die for their faith in Jesus.] Grace to you! James Bell

**NOTE:** In the above letter from Sam— his and his partner's names are changed. My purpose in sharing his email is not to focus on a specific person but to focus on the contrast in methodologies of ministry. WHICH WILL I EMBRACE?

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## **THE CONDITION OF THE LOST MASSES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD**

**Regardless of the time, the Church of our LORD Jesus Christ is planted in a sin-darkened world. And the lost people are lost.** Lost people are dead in their sins. Lost people live in their sin and love their sin and they feed their flesh and they listen to the devil— even though they may not realize it. The lost follow the fashions that feed the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life. The lost obey this world's unseen ruler who works among the disobedient. They indulge the cravings of their earthly nature and carry out the prompting of their fallen nature and they abide under the wrath of God. (Read: Ephesians 2:1-3) Moreover, as "natural" men, women, youth and children they reject the teachings of God's Spirit. The things of God

are nonsense to them, they do not see the value of their souls; they are unable to grasp the truth of God about life, about God, about themselves, etc., (Read: 1 Cor. 2:11-16).

They may live in different cultures and in different centuries and they may have different likes and dislikes— **but what they have in common is that they are all dead in sin.** The lost love their own understandings, their own opinions. They are passionate about being the master of their own fate, about being religious by their own standards or not religious. These teeming masses love to have their egos stroked. Being spiritually dead, they live in the realm of their carnal emotions. They may live in the rich, pleasure filled, sports filled, carnality flooded WEST. They may live in some backward jungle. They may live in a land steeped with and dominated by manmade religions such as Hinduism, or Buddhism, etc., or with some form of massive, manmade, cultural Christianity!

**AN AMAZING REALITY! For about 2000 years, Jesus Christ has been and is building His church right in the midst of and from the population of such a world as we have described.** When all is complete, Jesus will have saved a numberless multitude out of every kindred, tongue, tribe and people! **MOREOVER,** JESUS plants and grows and harvests His glorious WHEAT while in the midst and simultaneously satan is sowing TARES... and not a few! **AT THE END,** MANY professing Christian pastors and people will one day hear Jesus say, "Sorry, I never knew you!" Jesus says so! (Matthew 7:21-23)

**THEREFORE, A MOST SIGNIFICANT QUESTION FOR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS THIS: HOW DO WE REACH DEAD FOLK FOR CHRIST... AND GET THEM ALIVE? How can "wolves" become sheep? How do "God haters" (Romans 8:7) become God lovers?**

## **TWO ANSWERS, TWO MODELS OF MINISTRY**

**Model One, which has an ancient history, says something like this:** We have to make the gospel relevant. The people of our day are just not "buying" the model of ministry that seemed to work so well in the early days of the Church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Yes, thousands came to Christ in those days and the Church spread almost like wildfire. However, it seems to us that their methods got many Christians killed. And it seems to us that the church is dwindling down to just a few, so we have to get relevant. Now, we ARE ADAMENT TO CLAIM THAT WE are not going to change our message! We are just going to change our methods. All we are after is relevant methods for a new generation!

**And so, many years back a great VISIBLE church burst forth with MASSIVE BAPTISMS and with GREAT IMPRESSIVENESS, as Constantine and the apostate church embraced the idols, the practices, the religion, the loves of the pagan masses!** Of course, they 'christianized' it all. And who can argue with success? The great visible church became BIG, POWERFUL, ALIVE AND EXCITING and no longer persecuted. Powerful effects of those days are still with us in 2013— thus, in 2013 there are a number of flesh feeding strategies being used as churches seek to be relevant.

REALITY: The lost masses of this generation are not turned on to Biblical Christianity. What can be done?

**A popular modern answer is to** keep the message but change the method! Of course, we will have some entertaining Bible studies! HOWEVER, we will capture their attention with extreme sports, drama, rock bands with hi-tech video, humorous drama, various sports events and competitions, etc. We will give them hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza and sports and stunts.... and, of course, then give them a high powered emotion packed "gospel message" by professionals who know how to get them down the aisle, lead them through a prayer and pronounce them saved. VARIOUS types of methods are also commonly used in efforts to attract children, youth and/or adults SO THAT THERE IS a rock concert/carnival atmosphere... granted, for the older crowd, the music flavor is often more 'country'...

And according to all the "evidence" that counts with Evangelical religion— these kinds of methods are highly successful and are set forth as models for others to follow. **Reality: 80%-90%** of all 'converts' from such efforts do not result in genuine followers of Christ.

**WHAT ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH? Frankly, there is no surprise and it is quite clear that the New Testament Church did not use such methods.** It is quite clear that they lived and set forth one treasure:

"When Jesus departed this earth He left His disciples but two things: An orally given message; and the memory of His ministry, His death, and His resurrection... and the Holy Spirit fused these two dynamics into a single gospel; and with this gospel experienced and lived out, those first disciples filled their towns and turned their world upside down! In this Gospel of God there was (And there still is!) quickening power to awake the dead and set prisoners free and make them lovers of Jesus. **Moreover, not only did the Apostolic Church use the GOSPEL ALONE to arrest the world's attention and bring men, women and youth to conversion, but she also relied upon the GOSPEL ALONE to hold men, women, and youth to their commitment and to build the Church!**" (R. E. Bieber)

CONTINUING WITH our specific question: **"How do we capture the attention of lost teens and/or capture the attention of adults?"**

## **Model/METHOD Number Two**

**1. The LORD may never call us to be a Martyr. However, the so-called 'Martyr's Oath' is a good Christ-honoring confession— let us make it:**

**"TODAY, I stand as a dead man.** I declare that in Jesus Christ, I am saved by His blood, and thus I am dead to sin and no longer dead in my sin. **TODAY, I stand and declare** that I surrender my will and my life to His will and His life. **I shall go where He sends me,** without asking questions. **I shall go to** whomever **He** sends me, without seeking fame. I shall preach to everyone, even if they hate me. **I am an Ambassador of the Cross and I must deliver the Message. "I shall pour out my life** to reach my family, my friends, my neighbors and my city. **I embrace** the

shame of the Cross and I fear nothing and no one but God. **I welcome** suffering, shame, persecution, beatings, imprisonment and death. I will not be silenced. If I am killed, I pray that my blood should result in a harvest for souls. **This is my city.** I dare not do less."

**2. God's method involves the HOME and CHURCH and ADULTS and YOUTH—TOGETHER FOLLOWING JESUS:** On June 10, 1535, a special proclamation was made, giving the decree that anyone who had baptized others and refused to recant would be put to death by fire. And any who aided the Anabaptists with hospitality would be beheaded, or in the case of women, drowned... all of this to the end desire that this "damned sect of Anabaptists" might be exterminated. And so, hundreds were burned, beheaded and/or drowned.

**One day a 14 year old lad joined a crowd who were watching an Anabaptist being executed at the stake.** The man was chained, but he had an obvious expression of peace, if not actual joy, on his face. With a clear voice he affirmed his faith in Christ; and as the tormentors were about to light the fire, the man prayed: **"O Father and LORD, endue me with thy Spirit for this trial. Do not punish these who mistreat me today, but bring them also to the faith of Christ. Accept me now in thy grace."** And so, he died a martyr for Christ.

**As the 14 year old lad left that scene, he was awed by the man's faith.** Not long afterwards, this lad, Cornelis Aertsz de Man, found a gathering of the Anabaptists and he joined them for evening Bible Study. **"Their witness of faith, their serious study of the Word of God, their joy in life, and their concern for love and moral integrity, all excited him."**

Soon, Cornelis was converted to Christ. His family was alarmed; but soon they could only admire his **gracious disposition, the love and purity of his life, His diligence in studying the Scriptures and the joy with which he shared his new relationship with Christ.** By age 17, Cornelis's faith was so strong that the religious authorities of the Roman Catholic institution felt they had to stop him. So, he was arrested. And they sought diligently to get him to recant and return to Catholicism. On a particular day, the Roman Catholic leaders lined the courtroom and promised Cornelis **future position and honor** if he would renounce the simple Bible-based faith of the Anabaptists. Calmly, Cornelis replied: **"There is no higher position than to be a child of God and no greater honor than to be a voice for Him."**

Ultimately, they tortured young Cornelis to the extreme and finally at age 21, he was burned. (Story from *FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH*, by Myron S. Augsburger)

**It is documented reality, that the blood of the martyrs is the SEED of the Church.** The GOSPEL, the reality of JESUS CHRIST experienced and manifested through the true saints of God is the POWER OF GOD! **No matter the culture, the human traditions, or the loves and likes of the lost—** when there are real Christians who are GOD SATURATED then the power of God to transform is RELEASED.

**Cornelis, along with so many others who were living in spiritual DARK AGES, lit the CANDLES of what would become the REFORMATION!** They had reality. They were not bored. They possessed the power to Attract, the power to Repel, and

the power to Overcome, even as in the Acts of the Apostles. **THIS MODEL OF MINISTRY BROUGHT FORTH SIGNIFICANT FRUIT THAT REMAINED!** This model of ministry is what is modeled for us in the New Testament. It is the model that is called for in every Epistle and in the LAST WORDS OF JESUS to His church, as recorded in Revelation 2-3.

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**Which Model for ministry shall I, shall WE embrace?**

**Grace to all in Christ! James Bell**