

THE CONTACT

aflc youth worker's newsletter

Fall 2010

L O N G E V I T Y . . .



T h e L o n g & t h e
S h o r t o f i t !

tc

Coffee Shop

Are you ready to Quit?

By Jane Emerson

COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

"AND WHATSOEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY, AS UNTO THE LORD, AND NOT UNTO MEN; KNOWING THAT OF THE LORD YOU SHALL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE: FOR YOU SERVE THE LORD CHRIST."

ARE YOU READY TO QUIT? SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS!!! COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH THANKSGIVING!

Hopefully you are not making the biggest mistake that Christian leaders often make by putting too much emphasis on RESULTS!! God has asked us to be faithful to Him. Not to measure our fruit! Is your focus on serving people or the congregation rather than serving the Lord? If you have lost your joy in serving and are ready to give up...maybe you need to take stock in whether you are seeking to please people rather than the Lord Jesus who gives the INCREASE.

Look at three areas of focus: Prayer, Planning, and Parishioners...Are you spending time in prayer for your youth and the messages or studies that you are sharing? If not, why not??? Nothing will be accomplished in the kingdom's work if God is not doing the work. How do you get God involved???? Praying....it is that simple! Do less but pray more. Only when you have tapped into the power

of prayer are you going to get the results that you want for your youth group.



Planning is vital to an ongoing ministry. As an AFLC youth ministry, we have a need to teach Lutheran Doctrine as well as Biblical examples for Christian growth. Are you willing to spend time teaching the Word of God or are you trying to hold on to your youth by simply providing activities? You lose if you are only interested in keeping your youth entertained! Stop! Provide a graded program of spiritual growth and teach the elements that they need to base their convictions on the Word and pure doctrine. How do you think your youth will assimilate into their congregations if they do not have biblical, Lutheran doctrine? Stop with all the excessive entertainment and get back to basics!

We need the parishioners involved in praying and involving themselves in our youth's lives. Plan to have your parishioners involved in praying, attending, and helping out with retreats, studies, and monthly meetings. You need to inform interested parishioners in youth ministry. Have them involved in praying and showing up once in awhile for your weekly meetings. Show the youth that they are an important part of your church by knowing what they are studying and what is going on in their lives. Don't blame the congregation if you as a youth leader are not communicating your schedules and activities. Keep the parish praying and involved with the ongoing youth ministry. Youth ministry is rewarding but only if you have prayed, planned and involved with the people! ▣

Emerson is a member at Peace Lutheran Church in Canal Winchester, OH and wife to Pastor Curt Emerson

Youth Workers Retreat

January 21-23, 2011

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Keep on keeping on!

By Pastor Michael Brandt

This will date me for sure. I had a leather-tooled belt that read "Keep Trucking for Jesus!" It was my youth worker trademark. In the day, it was the sign of a truly hip Jesus guy.

I can hear the youth workers of America groan as they read this. But let me tell you, those little catchy phrase you use... you guessed it, one day, when younger youth workers hear your catchy phrases, they will groan.

Oh don't loose any sleep over it, just keeping trucking for Jesus!

That's the point. It is when we keep 'keeping on' that God's work, in us and through us, keeps 'keeping on'. The catchy phrases may change, but when phrases are based in God's unchanging Word and proclaimed by His transformed followers (i.e. "Jesus Freaks"— another catchy phase), the work is effective for all eternity.

We are talking about longevity in ministry. We, 60s Truckers for Jesus, called it 'keeping on'. The Scriptures refer to it as endurance. In Hebrews 10:36 God says, **"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."** It is endurance, the endurance of God's Word and God's faithful servants, that have made it possible for us be transformed and for us to build transforming relationships with today's youth.

There isn't any question about the longevity of God's Word. The Scriptures tell us that they are established forever and they accomplish the purposes of God (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:23). The enduring longevity of God's Word gives us the assurance that what we do under its authority, no matter how small or great, is worth the effort. It's the roar of God's rally cheer, "Keep on keeping on!"

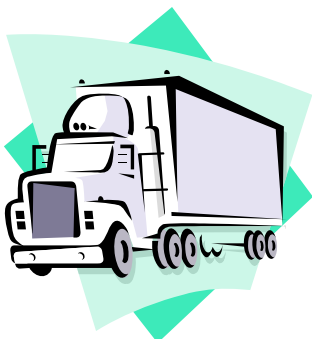
The longevity of God's servants is also vital. More than likely, most of you can name someone who stuck with you in the ups and downs of your younger days. An enduing person (parent, grandparent, pastor, youth advisor, youth worker, teacher, etc.) who hung-in there, when you were probably just trying to hang on. Whether you realized it or not, through the longevity of their involvement in your life, a bond of love and trust was build. One where you felt you mattered, not merely for a ministry moment, but Effective ministry requires many things, but right at the top is TIME. It may seem obvious, but longevity and time are for a lifetime.

Effective ministry requires many things, but right at the top is TIME. It may seem obvious, but longevity and time are inseparable:

1. It takes time to build relationships with youth, their families, and advisors.
2. It takes time to establish credibility, a bond of love and trust.
3. It takes time to create rapport (connecting).
4. It takes time to have a history (i.e. helping a young person remember how God helped them overcome a past issue – connecting their 'God dots' of time.)
5. It takes time for the progressive work of God in an individual and an overall ministry to be accomplished (tilling, planting, cultivating, harvesting).
6. It takes time to equip youth and youth advisors (i.e. laying a foundation and building upon it).
7. It takes time for God to make you the Youth Leader He wants you to be.

The quest for overnight successes and overnight wonders in any ministry are at best, pipe dreams. More times than not, they are unreal expectations that lead to nightmare disasters in ministry and the lives of its workers. Much of it comes from the common model of operation that many churches employ (i.e. expect the paid youth worker to a 'Spiritual Superman/Superwoman' or expect all the parents to be youth advisors). First, assuming that the youth worker will be a miracle worker is a recipe for disappointment and failure. Second, the ill-advised assumption that every parent has the ability (spiritual or otherwise) to be an effective advisor denies the designed gifting of God. Parents are certainly meant to be Godly influences in the lives of their children, but that does not mean they are meant to be or can be effective youth advisors. Though these approaches may seem reasonable to some, they breed turnover not longevity. And with the turnover is the turn-off that comes to the heart of the youth being negatively impacted.

Ministry leadership has always had dropouts, burnouts, and fallouts amongst both volunteers and full-time workers. Sadly, in the case of youth work, the turnover rate for volunteers and youth workers is alarming. When it comes to paid, fulltime youth workers, the high rate of turnover can often be traced to the lack of investment made in their lives and ministry. Low salaries, overwhelming work, demanding hours, and few continuing education opportunities make a challenging work an all too often short-term venture of ministry. The benefits of longevity are sacrificed and so is the youth worker. It doesn't need to be that way. God has an answer to all of these challenges, but it takes a willing, long-range commitment on part of everyone involved to foster longevity. ▣



Brandt is Director of Shepherding the Shepherds, a ministry provided for pastors and lay pastors based in Sioux Falls, SD

LEADING WHEN YOU WANT TO QUIT

To be in it for the long-haul means that you need to know what to do when throwing in the towel is attractive.

http://www.cadreministries.com/downloads/ing_When_You_Want_to_Quit.pdf

OWL CITY TESTIMONY

What happens when a big pop music star is a follower of Jesus? Read here.

<http://owlcityblog.com/2010/10/25/my-hope-is-found/>

FREEBIE FRIDAY

Tim Schmoyer's Life in Student Ministry has some good free stuff each Friday.

<http://www.studentministry.org/>

DARE 2 SHARE

Greg Stier's "un.tour" will come to seven cities and volunteers get in free.

<http://www.dare2share.org/volunteer/>

CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH UNDERSTANDING (CPYU)

Here's a free newsletter from earlier in the year covering teen culture and a Biblical response.

<http://www.cpyuresourcecenter.org/simply-youth-culture-janfeb2010.html>

U r g e n t C a r e

t h e L o n g a n d t h e s h o r t o f l o n g e v i t y !



By Pastor Jason Holt

"I felt alone."

These words were uttered by a youth leader in an email to me this fall. I wish I could tell you that they are rare words, but they are not.

The pressures that youth leaders face do not have discrimination. They come to veterans and rookies, to paid people and caring volunteers, and to those with a title as well as those without one.

How can someone hang in there when the conditions are such? From the pain over poor choices made by teenagers to the discomfort of standing up for teens with church leaders or even parents, this role can seem like a wilderness.

Maybe the Lord allows us to experience it because teenagers feel alone. Studies consistently echo to us how isolated American adolescents are. They are craving real people who know the Real God. Teens are looking for ones who will listen and ones to whom they can learn from.

Or maybe the Christ allows it because He was alone. On the cross, God the Son asked God the Father why the isolation. Did we forget Jesus died in your place and mine, by paying for the sin which was not His?

II Timothy 1:8 reminds us that we need not be shrinking back, even though we will suffer for the Gospel. In verses 9 and 10, Paul explains to Timothy the truths that young Tim already knows – Jesus saved us, called us, defeated death for us, and brought us life – which renews the believer, but then he goes on to terms that are true for every Christian. In Verse 11, our Lord appointed each one as a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher.

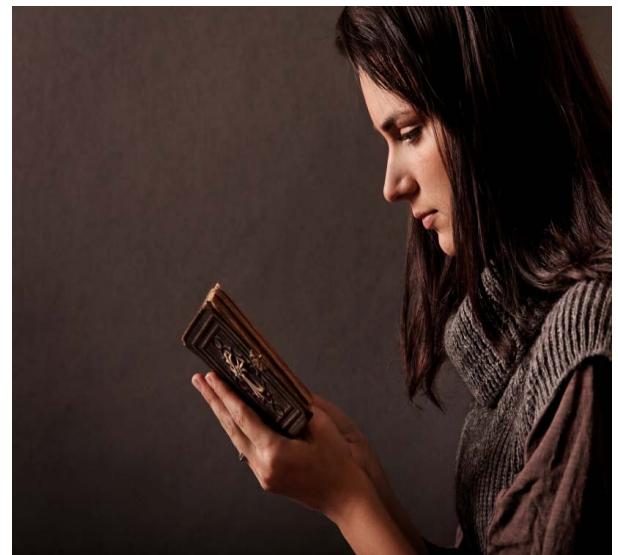
The Lord has appointed you to represent Him to teenagers. You are modeling this relationship with God (teacher). You are sent from Him (apostle). You share Jesus (preacher).

"But it says 'preacher'?!?" you protest. "I'm not a preacher."

This term pictures a messenger from the king. It is not talking about the office of a pastor. In fact, the NIV uses "herald". You have been sent to proclaim about the Savior King and announce him to others. With confidence of Him in you, Jesus points a tender finger from the end of His nail-pierced hands by saying, "I choose you!"

When we remember WHO we are following and serving, we can express: *"I am NOT alone!"* ■

Holt, the National Director of Youth Ministries for the AFLC, serves as volunteer Youth Director for Living Hope Lutheran Church, St. Michael – Albertville, MN



THE CONTACT

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 21-23, 2011	Youth Worker's Retreat ARC, Osceola, WI youth@aflc.org
March 4-7, 2011	Simply Youth Ministry Chicago, IL
April 1-3, 2011	Passion 2011 Fort Worth, TX
July 4-9, 2011	FLY Convention Estes Park, CO
July 24-Aug. 17, 2011	Student Missions Trip- Ecuador

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The Contact is published twice a year to encourage and engage youth workers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The AFLC is a growing fellowship of 275 churches whose members believe that the Bible is true and that everyone needs Jesus. AFLC Youth Ministries exist for three goals: to win; to build; and to equip youth for Jesus Christ. We are here to assist in making disciples!

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