



News and Current Events :: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies

What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/1/8 16:03

I found this article very instructive on the folly of modern seeker sensitive culturally relevant church growth strategies. Here is a microcosm of what's been happening for the past half century in America...

'Anatomy' of a push to fill up the pews

By BILL OSINSKI

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 01/05/07

Are there spiritual lessons to be learned from "Dr. McSteamy"?

That and other burning questions linked to the characters on one of television's hottest shows, "Grey's Anatomy," will be explored during a series of five weekly sermons beginning Sunday at Snellville United Methodist Church.

Dr. Richard Hunter, seated, pastor of Snellville UMC, and Bryan Fowler, associate pastor, discuss 'Grey Anatomy' sermon series.

The show was not selected because its overworked, sometimes oversexed, young hospital interns are great role models, said Dr. Richard Hunter, the pastor.

In fact, Hunter is not necessarily a fan. However, the show has captivated the young-adult demographic, and Hunter would like to see more representation of that age bracket in his pews.

"Even though I don't like the show and don't agree with the morals of some of the characters, it is the No. 1 show in that age group," Hunter said. "And if that many young people are watching it, I should be talking about the issues raised on the show."

Fowler said there have been special mailings to young people around the county, inviting them especially to the services. Also, the added emphasis on visual accompaniments and faster pace are meant to appeal to young adults, he said.

It isn't unusual for a church to borrow from popular culture for inspiration for sermons. In this case, though, the church is attempting to repeat the mass media's success with a specific demographic group.

Showtime will be at the church's 9:30 a.m. contemporary service. Clips and stills from the series will be part of the presentation, along with dialogue and some role-playing based on the show's themes, church officials said. At the regular service at the same time in the church's main sanctuary, the sermon will deal with the same general issues, with less emphasis on the television show, church officials said.

Associate pastor Bryan Fowler said the sermons will take conflicts from the show and pose the question, "How can we deal with that in a Christian way?"

The presentation of the sermons will also be nontraditional, Fowler said. For example, he and another assistant pastor will take on the roles of hospital chaplains, talking about how they might approach Cristina and help her deal with some of her issues.

The sermon series has been retitled "Gray's Anatomy," a color reference to the moral ambiguities found in the television show, as contrasted to the "timeless truths" to be found in the church, Hunter said.

On the first Sunday, the featured character will be Cristina, the show's ultra-competitive intern who sleeps with her boss. The theme will be her perfectionism and how that can be relevant to people in real life. Dr. Cristina Yang in the television show is played by actress Sandra Oh.

On subsequent Sundays, the featured characters and themes will be Izzy's loneliness (Isobel Stevens, played by Katerin

e Heigl); Meredith's and Dr. McDreamy's relationship and sexual issues (Meredith Grey, played by Ellen Pompeo, and Dr. Derek Shepherd, played by Patrick Dempsey); George's insecurity (George O'Malley, played by T.R. Knight); and Drs. Burke and Bailey's efforts to balance work and outside life (Dr. Miranda Bailey, played by Chandra Wilson, and Dr. Preston Burke, played by Isaiah Washington).

"Dr. McSteamy" earned his nickname from a scene where he emerged towel-clad from a bathroom, and "Dr. McDreamy" is a nickname for Shepherd, the hospital's resident heartthrob.

The concept for the sermon series grew from efforts among church officials to find a more effective way to reach out to young adults.

Hunter said young adults frequently turn away from orthodox religious expression, yet they are also seeking for spiritual truth in a highly secularized world. They also seem to identify with the struggling young characters of the television show, he added.

Hunter said the purpose of the sermons is not to make judgments on the show or its characters. Part of the reason the drama has become so popular is that it deals with issues that are important, both to young adults and to other age groups.

As Hunter prepared for the sermon series, he said, the television series started to grow on him, he said.

"The more I watched it, the more interesting I found it," he said.

MC :-(

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/1/8 16:18

I heard Ravenhill recently say that he always hears about Christian magazines pushing the idea of how to make your "church grow" but he said I don't see any talking on "how to make your **church deeper!**" Surely many churches are miles wide but only an inch deep. A deepening in the things of God is what is needed.

My response to the article you posted brother is in the words of T. Austin Sparks: "**At what cost?**"

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/1/8 16:32

Boy, I sure am tired. I think I'll kick back and watch a TV show that consistently breaks every one of the Ten Commandments. Yeah that'll be nice and relaxing, just kick back and enjoy an hour of what God absolutely abhors. What a way to spend the evening.

There are so many things I don't understand.

God Bless

TJ

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by JennRich (), on: 2007/1/8 18:04

As Hunter prepared for the sermon series, he said, the television series started to grow on him, he said.

"The more I watched it, the more interesting I found it," he said.

Well, I'm sure!!

One of our local churches did a study on The Dick Van Dyke Show not long ago. . . and I thought that was bad! At least it's clean. (One of my fave shows by the way, but I certainly don't go to church to watch it.) From what I just read about Grey's Anatomy, I'm glad I've never even seen an episode of it.

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by Smokey (), on: 2007/1/8 19:58

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

2Pe 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Pro 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

When will "leaders" stop trying to do something that only the Lord can do??

2Ti 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Blessings Greg

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/1/12 20:06

lol where did you pull this from Mike? This nigh passes as comical, but I suppose when The Holy Spirit's power is not present, we pull out the superbowl football games, golf outings, and television shows. I haven't heard such ridiculous attempts to reach the lost since the "Christian Hip-Hop" movement.

Great find Mike, though very disturbing.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2007/1/12 22:24

I was just wondering where God ever commanded us to grow the church? Isn't it God who gives the increase?

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by Parautika (), on: 2007/1/13 3:06

A recent article sent to me which was taken off WorldNetDaily said the following:

Dr. Caner, a converted Muslim, added, "Some pollster tells us that people do not like public invitations, so some churches have stopped giving them. Polls tell us that sermons on hell make people uncomfortable, so pastors preach on positive thinking instead. The polls show that using words such as sin and salvation are unpopular, so we find prominent television preachers conveniently avoiding those terms."

Jesus once said of the Pharisees,

"Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch." (Matt. 15: 14)

This type of leader looks to the world for his inspiration, let us continue to look to the Lord. We should have a word in due season for this generation, and I don't think we'll get it from the latest popular tv show, but rather from the prayer closet and an open bible. And speaking of open bibles, those who remain under that type of preaching with the privilege of having an open bible on their laps might have a bit of explaining to do in the end.

God Bless..
Cliff

Re: - posted by allhavsinned (), on: 2007/1/13 11:30

Quote:

KingJimmy wrote:

I was just wondering where God ever commanded us to grow the church? Isn't it God who gives the increase?

I would even suggest Jesus warned against it, in this passage it's as if He's trying to put people off!

Luke 14:25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

He certainly wanted people to know the Truth and not come into the kingdom on the premise that it's a good idea or just logical.

Re: What's wrong with Church Growth Strategies - posted by Xtian (), on: 2007/1/17 17:34

ouchie... but that is to be expected from the seeker sensitive churches I guess. I heard that those who are "seeking" are the lost, and that the church should be sensitive to their needs, which results in a dumbed & watered down message so the "seekers" wont be offended.

Whats up with that?

I am so tired of churches that have sermon series based on loose biblical principles, rather than what the Word actually says repent, confess, obey, etc (mine included - its a wee bit sensitive; it rarely mentions sin, repentance, judgment, Hell, obedience, etc - but its the best we have found so far... gee that is sad isnt it?).

Now I know pastors want church growth, but wasnt the church supposed to be a place where BELIEVERS could go to worship God and get equipped for His work? As for church growth, why not teach the believers to witness as Christ and the disciples did? They focused on quality and not quantity. I guess quality doesnt pay the bills as well as quantity. Oh well ... Keep the church in prayer.

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2007/1/20 15:31

Quote:

KingJimmy wrote:

I was just wondering where God ever commanded us to grow the church? Isn't it God who gives the increase?

But I think we are supposed to plant and water.

The 'watering' has been lacking in much of the church (as far as I've seen).

How can a plant grow without water?

Or a baby without milk?

The church needs to do this IF it wants to see growth.

Re:, on: 2007/1/27 17:39

Quote:

KingJimmy wrote:

I was just wondering where God ever commanded us to grow the church? Isn't it God who gives the increase?

EXACTLY!!! And that summarises what's wrong with the Church Growth Movement.

Though we are apparently allowed to do some planting and watering - as you said!