

## Miracles that follow the plow :: A Youth Ministry Stunner in Gatlinburg!

### A Youth Ministry Stunner in Gatlinburg! - posted by hulsej (), on: 2007/1/17 17:31

The following column is taken from:

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Just after Christmas, 2006, a youth conference was held that broke all the rules for ministry to young people. There were no BMX demonstrations, no rock bands, no dancing girls, no smoke machines, and no gross-out games. In a move that would horrify most modern day youth experts, the sponsor of this youth event lined up pastors and teachers to do something that is increasingly rare--preach the Word of God to teenagers. At this conference there were also some people present who have been marginalized right out of most youth ministry today—parents.

Pastor Jeff Noblit of First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama was behind the conference. His teaching ministry, Anchored in Truth, sponsored the event at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg, Tennessee and hundreds of students and their parents from around the country attended. Pastor Noblit built his conference with several key goals:

- Confronting... man-centered, entertainment-based views of youth ministry.
- Exposing...youth to the deep pleasures of the One true God.
- Challenging... youth and church youth groups with real biblical truth concerning knowing and loving God and walking in true discipleship.

The conference was called, "Reality Check". This is how Pastor Noblit described the event in promotional materials:

**GLORY OF GOD FOCUSED** — We strive in everything to be God-centered, which is to focus on God and His glory. The conference is not designed around presumed unique needs or desires of students; it is created around God's clear will for young people as revealed in His Word and all His glory.

**PARENT DRIVEN** — We believe parents are God's best for the discipling of their youth. We strongly encourage parents to attend the conference. As the Spirit moves on the hearts of dads, moms, sons, and daughters, together they can experience revival and renewal. We are convinced that the so-called "generation gap" and the "adolescent years" are a result of sin and should not be encouraged by the church or Christian youth ministries. Our commitment is to strengthen parents in their God called responsibility to "bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4).

**DOCTRINALLY SOUND** — We are committed to sound Bible doctrine as expressed by the historic confessions of Protestant church history. We glory in the doctrines of grace including the mandate to confront every man with the Gospel, urging them toward repentance and faith. We adamantly reject "easy believism" on the one hand and hyper-Calvinism on the other. Great care is given to use preachers who are sound in doctrine.

**BIBLE PREACHING** — We hold that God's primary means of evangelism and sanctification is the preaching of the Word of God. We choose to center the conference not on music, drama, comedy, or other entertainments but on the faithful preaching of His Word. While other activities may be allowable, they must never take the place of or de-emphasize the preaching of the Word.

**MUSICAL EXCELLENCE** — We hold a strong conviction concerning sound doctrine in music. Truth is more important than tune. We have great music both from the historic anthems of faith and contemporary choruses. Young people who k

now God will sing both types with conviction if given the chance. We are committed to sound doctrine, spiritual passion, and musical excellence in our singing.

**TRUE CHRISTIAN CONVERSION** — It seems that a spirit of "easy believism" has become the norm in many Christian circles. True biblical conversion requires new birth (regeneration), evidenced by biblical repentance and faith. No effort will be made to manipulate to get quick decisions. These types of decisions typically bear no lasting fruit and prove to be false. Everything we do will have an evangelistic spirit. Students attending the conference will be encouraged to seek counseling from their parents or their church leaders concerning salvation or rededication decisions.

Pastor Noblit's vibrant church in Alabama has a burgeoning and growing youth ministry that operates with the same set of goals as the youth conference. The church has become a light in that state and across the country because of its return to biblical teaching for young people in the church.

A recent article in the Christian Post detailed current dissatisfaction among youth workers who are confused and concerned that whatever they do doesn't seem to be having an impact. Many of these same youth ministry workers were trained in church growth methodology that geared youth work toward the desires and tastes of the unsaved young person. As a result, many leaders are suffering from exhaustion, just trying to keep up with the latest trends and fads. With the advent of emerging church philosophy, youth workers now don't know whether to stage BMX shows or set up altars with candles and icons. They don't know whether they need to meditate or levitate to keep the attention of the kids.

What Pastor Noblit has done is to re-introduce biblical sanity into the reaching and discipling of young people. He, unlike so many others today, has confidence in the Holy Spirit's ability to work through the teaching and preaching of the Word. He has rejected the entertainment model that has left burned-out youth pastors and jaded teens who have long ago tired of Disney Church methods and who have walked away from the circus spiritually empty. The patronizing view of teens, that they won't tolerate doctrinal teaching and must have everything served up by a rap star or rock band, is exploded when you hear of the young men being raised up with an eye to Christian ministry in Pastor Noblit's church.

When biblical teaching is conducted in a serious manner within churches, spiritual maturity follows. This is the kind of youth ministry we need to see today—where young men and women are encouraged to walk in holiness and are introduced to the riches of God's Word. What happens when youth pastors behave like true shepherds? The sheep prosper and the church grows in biblically healthy ways. In view of the evangelical ruins around us, this is truly the need of the hour.

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**Re: A Youth Ministry Stunner in Gatlinburg! - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/1/17 17:45**

Quote:

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Pastor Jeff Noblit of First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Alabama

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I believe this is Paul Washers church. If so, it explains alot.

Peace be with you

TJ

**Re: A Youth Ministry Stunner in Gatlinburg! - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/1/17 17:53**

Quote:  
-----Many of these same youth ministry workers were trained in church growth methodology that geared youth work toward the desires and tastes of the unsaved young person. As a result, many leaders are suffering from exhaustion, just trying to keep up with the latest trends and fads.  
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Even though it's become standard practice today, really the whole idea of quarentining young men and women away from the 'adults' is worldly and cynical to begin with. (Bear with me...I'm not being practical here I know.) Our public education institutions create these false socialization environments where children only interact with children exactly their own age---something that doesn't happen in the adult world---and churches just followed suit. This is a modern development.

The so-called 'generation gap' is a deconstruction of society largely created by our social engineered education systems. Teen groups help normalize this fragmentation, including it's related maladies such as worldly styled dating. (How many youth pastors have caught some of their teenage flock necking, having successfully slipped away from the group during a 'youth event?')

In reality teens shouldn't really be kept in their own world where specially trained pastors learn to speak their own 'cultural language' in order to be 'reached.' In fact, such artificiality stunts their development. This catering mentality would be totally foreign to churches of Whitefield and Edwards day. I think it reinforces the self-absorbed ethos of the church culture...as these teens grow up they continue to want customized and tailored service.

We should show the young men one paradigm in the church---responsible Christian manhood; and expect that they measure up. We should show the young ladies a similar entrusted role for them in the church. There should be no school grades or tiers in church...just one body where younger saints interact with more mature saints on a regular basis.

Quote:  
-----He, unlike so many others today, has confidence in the Holy Spirit's ability to work through the teaching and preaching of the Word.  
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Next thing you'll be telling us is that this church doesn't need to include clips from popular movies in the sermons to 'reach' the adults. Amazing!

MC

(Edit: I should say that I certainly don't think we can or even should do away with youth groups.:-) Given our cultural age divide, they are needed and do much good. And I also think it's worth noting that we shouldn't blame the generation gap on youth, as I think it's as much an adult convenience. For instance I asked my wife what she thought of my post and she was hesitant to agree that teens should be integrated with the adults, yet when I asked my 13 year old son he enthusiastically agreed.)

**Re: A Youth Ministry Stunner in Gatlinburg! - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/1/17 17:55**

double post deleted

**Re: A Youth Ministry Stunner in Gatlinburg! - posted by JennRich (), on: 2007/1/17 21:15**

My heart swelled with gratitude when I read this, because this is my church! . . . it's so refreshing to be affirmed in our ministry, because locally we are slaughtered by untrue gossip and ill-will.

Our pastor insists on *God-centered* preaching rather than man-centered. It's extremely rare in today's America. But we're by no means perfect, we have such a long way to go still.