

**News and Current Events :: Plagiarism forces resignation of preacher**

**Plagiarism forces resignation of preacher - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/6 14:49**

[Image: [https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/may/featured\\_news.gif](https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/may/featured_news.gif)]

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- The senior pastor at one of Charlotte's best-known churches admitted that parts of some of his sermons broadcast on Christian radio programs were stolen from others.

The Rev. E. Glenn Wagner of Calvary Church resigned, admitted that depression led him to plagiarize sermons the past two years, and asked for forgiveness in a letter read Sunday in his absence at four worship services.

"On a number of occasions, when I felt literally empty and devoid of any creative ability, I used material from the sermons of some of my brother preachers," Wagner's letter said.

Gary Hubler, clerk of the lay leaders who oversee the church, said Wagner's plagiarism was first detected two weeks ago. That's when a church elder heard a radio sermon that sounded like something he had heard Wagner preach.

In his letter, Wagner, 51, cited "a downward spiral, emotionally and mentally, which left me very tired and discouraged and fighting a losing battle with depression."

Billy Graham's father, Frank, was one of the church's founders, which began in 1939 as Bible Presbyterian.

**Re: Plagiarism forces resignation of preacher - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/9/6 19:08**

How sad. I just recently read a book by him called "Escape from Church, Inc." Even though the book was a little disappointing, it was a step in the right direction. It is sad to see though he got caught up in the professionalism of the ministry that he abhorred. It's especially sad because Calvary Chapel is quite a large Church here in Charlotte.

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2004/9/6 19:49**

Just to clarify, it seems that it's a Calvary Church and not a Calvary Chapel. There is a difference. I grew up in a Calvary Church and later went to a Calvary Chapel.

This is a pretty sad story but I appreciate the pastor's honesty and humility. It would probably be very helpful to the Body of Christ at large if a lot more pastors who are dealing with similar struggles got real and just admitted it.

But I haven't walked in their shoes and it's easy to say that from this end. They probably realize that doing so could really destroy some families and people's faith. So they probably just keep quiet, hoping that God will bring them through the drought and they can kind of hide it from the people in the meantime. They probably have the people's best interest in mind and have good intentions of keeping quiet. A very sad situation.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/6 19:59**

Quote:  
-----This is a pretty sad story but I appreciate the pastor's honesty and humility. It would probably be very helpful to the Body of Christ at large if a lot more pastors who are dealing with similar struggles got real and just admitted it.  
-----

I think we would ALL be shocked if pastors were honest all together. Many in ministry have replaced the work with the walk. Replaced human means for the working of the Holy Spirit. We all need to realize to abide in Christ will allow us to be fruitful for him, spend hours pastor. How futile and ridiculous it is to do ministry without God.. doing it for God without God, I have seen a sad thing under the sun...

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/7 4:06**

I know this is a serious topic and I don't mean to be frivolous but there is a saying that plagiarism is when you steal ideas from another person; but if you steal from two it is research!

There's a story (somewhat scrambled in my mind) of an occasion during one of Spurgeon's periodic bouts of depression. He once described himself as one of those whom 'melancholy had marked for her own'. On his occasion he was holidaying in Scotland and visited a small baptist church. He sat at the rear and the preacher did not recognise him until the farewells at the door. Spurgeon shook his hand warmly and thanked him for his preaching. The young pastor blushed and said "Mr Spurgeon you must know where that sermon came from. It is one of your own." Spurgeon said "I know, but it was a peculiar blessing of God to bring back to me bread that I had cast upon the water at such a time as this".

**Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/9/7 5:45**

I agree this sounds quite sad, not knowing the full story it's hard to pass comment. I will say though, many things or illustrations or allegories that I've heard, I have used, not to copy, but to enhance my sermon. Iron sharpens iron, and things said by another can be exactly what you're thinking. I have often said "Yes that's right, that's what I need to say" after reading a thread on this site or hearing someone speak, which has unlocked a thing. Maybe this brother was quoting word for word, that's different.

Ecc 1 v 10 Is there anything whereof it may be said, see, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. :-)

**Re: - posted by PastorEdP (), on: 2004/9/7 8:45**

I agree with Delboy. After all, if the message from a brother minister comes from the Spirit, then it is for all the people. The line is drawn, however, when a large portion of the sermon is delivered word for word. The best way to avoid plagiarism, even for a small part of the sermon, is to acknowledge the source. When you use someone else's words and claim them as your own that is being dishonest. Trust the Spirit to give you the words.

Ed

**Re: - posted by BPreese, on: 2004/9/7 10:31**

Plagiarism...not to make light, but,

1. Vance Havner said-"A young preacher determined in his first church to be original or nothing and found out he was both!!"

2. I wish the preacher at the church I attend would engage in plagiarism and preach some of the great sermons found here rather than have to listen to the drivel I get week to week.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/7 10:49**

Quote:

-----1. Vance Havner said-"A young preacher determined in his first church to be original or nothing and found out he was both!!"  
-----

haha I love it!

Quote:

-----2. I wish the preacher at the church I attend would engage in plagiarism and preach some of the great sermons found here rather than have to listen to the drivel I get week to week.  
-----

AMEN I think for a preacher to preach an existing sermon is ok, but it's of necessity that they tell people first off it was a

sermon by so and so. Not trying to say its their own. But all things come from God in the end I suppose. I have been tempted to ask my preacher to just preach a wesley or whitefield sermon word for word.

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/9/7 11:22**

Quote:  
-----Plagiarism...not to make light, but,  
-----

Quote:  
-----1. Vance Havner said-"A young preacher determined in his first church to be original or nothing and found out he was both!!"  
-----

Quote:  
-----2. I wish the preacher at the church I attend would engage in plagiarism and preach some of the great sermons found here than have to listen to the drivel I get week to week.  
-----

:P That's good Brian.  
Don't understand what is so difficult about giving credit where credit is due as Greg alluded to.

Actually found it a bit sad that this preacher felt compelled to resign over this. If I recall correctly he did say '*at times*' he lapsed into this. Am almost reluctant to bring this up and slowly peel off the lid of a can of worms here but there is a site I am thinking of from a very popular ministry that will give you whole guidelines, outlines for sermons that correspond to a particular train of current popular thought...am purposefully trying to be vague here, but might have given myself away... What I am driving at is that though it could been seen as something to 'help' it seems to have had the opposite effect of promoting laziness. Someone had pointed it out to me and I was a bit shocked to see it used almost verbatim. Headings, outlines, printed out into nice little hand outs for the congregation...fill in the blanks kind of thing. Worse, you can have the whole year planned out in this fashion. In other words, pre-packaged sermons. So I don't see where this pastor has failed when this kind of thing is so rampant.

I hope he is restored not only spiritually and emotionally but also returns to the pulpit, we need more honest preachers like him. Hope we all pray for him.

**Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/9/7 14:48**

Another sad side of the story is that the pastor appeared to have little support from others during his bouts of depression and was apparently still expected to "produce". Otherwise, this might not have happened. This highlights the pressure and loneliness experienced by some pastors.

**Re: Scorched Pastor - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2004/9/7 16:38**

Quote:  
-----agent 001 wrote  
This highlights the pressure and loneliness experienced by some pastors.  
-----

I think sometimes the responsibility of caring for Gods sheep is overwhelming. Every week knowing that you have to (should) be leading them to green pastures and still waters.

Quote:  
-----I wish the preacher at the church I attend would engage in plagiarism and preach some of the great sermons found here than have to listen to the drivel I get week to week.  
-----

Bro, no offense but if that is the way you feel about your pastor, get out of there. I don't know him the way you know him,

but in front of us all you have just assassinated him, someone who may be trying his best to be what a pastor should be.

Quote:

What I am driving at is...other words, pre-packaged sermons.

That is very low estimation of the quality of man you fellows seem to have that side. I would presume that every minister in a church would want to be his very best for God. Maybe I'm just a little to sheltered down South, but you got to believe somehow, somewhere that they seriously want to serve God and the people. If the guy has got no clue as to what to preach, and has spent no time in prayer and has no light from the Lord, what is he to do? Probably should leave the ministry, would be some responses.

Quote:

I hope he is restored not only spiritually and emotionally but also returns to the pulpit, we need more honest preachers like him. Hope we all pray for him.

Amen! Imagine what some of our pastors would have to say about us. Knowing me, that scares me.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/7 16:49**

Quote:

Maybe I'm just a little to sheltered down South, but you got to believe somehow, somewhere that they seriously want to serve God and the people.

Hirelings abound in our day and age.

**Re: Hirelings - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2004/9/7 17:00**

Quote:

Hirelings abound in our day and age.

Is it really that bad that it has been turned into a business i.e. Go to varsity/seminary for x number of years and then take over a church, with no spiritual commendation at all. No amen from heaven as to the ability of man to fulfill one of the greatest callings on the planet? God help *ons/us*!

I am reminded of a sermon I listened to my Michael Brown about godly models. Made reference to CT Studd and him laying his life down, sobbing indeed!

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/7 17:06**

Quote:

Is it really that bad that it has been turned into a business i.e. Go to varsity/seminary for x number of years and then take over a church, with no spiritual commendation at all.

The little I have witnessed and seen in Christian circles not naming any names is deplorable. From youth that are going into 'ministry' so called but its really a vocation for them as any other job. And to 'ministers' who get promotions into other

placements building their way up the ladder in the church organizations just as a business person would in an secular workforce. It's no wonder many people are revoking the entire thing sick of the worldliness of it all and the lack of apostolic reality. God uses everything for His glory, but the judgement seat of Christ will be a very sobering moment for many in 'ministry'. Also with that said I believe there are many that are involved in this type of atmosphere that are just in some ways playing along with it.. but their main focus is serving God and **doing** that to which they are called to do.

**Re: - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2004/9/7 17:27**

How did this all start, where was the turning point in organised church where it became popular to run a church? Where was the shift from your typical steeple type church to the executive model...with five doors, twin cam etc.:smart:

It seems that because of what people saw in their leaders it was made to look like a lovely career instead of a calling which it should be. I think that its the suits. ;-) Very simaler to the penguin suit.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/9/7 17:43**

Quote:  
-----How did this all start, where was the turning point in organised church where it became popular to run a church? Where was the shift from your typical steeple type church to the executive model...with five doors, twin cam etc  
-----

I would say that the steeple house church in some ways was already the fall of true apostolic christianity. Shortly after the death of the apostles there seem to be a loss of truth and connection with the Living One. There have always been ones who possessed and testified of the Life-giving spirit who leads into all truth. But sadly the adherents that saw by faith and not sight gained control of many facets of the organization of the believers. And instituted a physical church body confusing what is physical to what is really spiritual in its entirety.

Here are a few quotes from George Fox, I have been reading alot of his works and materials so I thought it would be nice to share some of them appropriately:

I was to bring people off from Jewish ceremonies, and from heathenish fables, and from men's inventions and worldly doctrines, by which they blew the people about this way and the other, from sect to sect; and from all their beggarly rudiments, with their schools and colleges for making ministers of Christ, -- who are indeed ministers of their own making, but not of Christ's; and from all their images, and crosses, and sprinkling of infants, with all their holy-days (so called), and all their vain traditions, which they had instituted since the Apostles' days, against all of which the Lord's power was set: in the dread and authority of which power I was moved to declare against them all, and against all that preached and not freely, as being such as had not received freely from Christ.

-George Fox

I declared unto them that the Lord God had sent me to preach the everlasting gospel and Word of life amongst them, and to bring them off from all these temples, tithes, priests, and rudiments of the world, which had been instituted since the apostles' days, and had been set up by such as had erred from the Spirit and power the apostles were in. Very largely was I opened at this meeting, and the Lord's convincing power accompanied my ministry, and reached the hearts of the people, whereby many were convinced; and all the teachers of that congregation (who were many) were convinced of God's everlasting truth.

-George Fox

The earthly spirit of the priests wounded my life; and when I heard the bell toll to call people together to the steeple-house, it struck at my life; for it was just like a market-bell, to gather people together, that the priest might set forth his ware for sale. Oh, the vast sums of money that are gotten by the trade they make of selling the Scriptures, and by their preaching, from the highest bishop to the lowest priest! What one trade else in the world is comparable to it? notwithstanding the Scriptures were given forth freely, and Christ commanded His ministers to preach freely, and the prophets and apostles denounced judgment against all covetous hirelings and diviners for money.

-George Fox

**Re: Plagiarism ENCouraged? - posted by JCGarc55, on: 2004/9/8 2:30**

I don't know how some of you feel about this, but take a look at this website and what they advertise as a bonus for being a member:

<http://www.willowcreek.com/willowmessages/Series.asp>

Quote:  
-----Message Series and Specials  
Enhance your preaching creativity and save precious hours every week with the most requested message series and sermons from Willow Creek! Click on the icons below.

Get your Seeker Series and your Believer Series TODAY!!

WillowMessages.com's message series and sermons allow you to:

- \* Save precious time writing weekly sermons.
  - \* Search for message series or individual transcripts by topic, title, or service type (Believer, Seeker or Gen-X services).
  - \* Read through message summaries before downloading any transcript or series.
  - \* Select from Willow Creek's library of the most requested field-tested messages that have impacted thousands of people!
  - \* Access message audio tapes.
- 

I got into a huge debate about this with a friend who actually agreed with this approach. One of the remarks made was "why reinvent the wheel".

I'm sorry but if you as a Pastor don't have time to seek the face of God to see what he wants spoken to the sheep, then something ain't right.

**Re: Plagiarism forces resignation of preacher - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/8 4:43**

A reminder:

PRAYER, in the preacher's life, in the preacher's study, in the preacher's pulpit, must be a conspicuous and an all-impregnating force and an all-coloring ingredient. It must play no secondary part, be no mere coating. To him it is given to be with his Lord "all night in prayer." The preacher, to train himself in self-denying prayer, is charged to look to his Master, who, "rising up a great while before day, went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The preacher's study ought to be a closet, a Bethel, an altar, a vision, and a ladder, that every thought might ascend heavenward ere it went manward; that every part of the sermon might be scented by the air of heaven and made serious, because God was in the study.

As the engine never moves until the fire is kindled, so preaching, with all its machinery, perfection, and polish, is at a dead standstill, as far as spiritual results are concerned, till prayer has kindled and created the steam. The texture, fineness, and strength of the sermon is as so much rubbish unless the mighty impulse of prayer is in it, through it, and behind it. The preacher must, by prayer, put God in the sermon. The preacher must, by prayer, move God toward the people before he can move the people to God by his words. The preacher must have had audience and ready access to God before he can have access to the people. An open way to God for the preacher is the surest pledge of an open way to the people.

It is necessary to iterate and reiterate that prayer, as a mere habit, as a performance gone through by routine or in a professional way, is a dead and rotten thing. Such praying has no connection with the praying for which we plead. We are stressing true praying, which engages and sets on fire every high element of the preacher's being -- prayer which is born of vital oneness with Christ and the fullness of the Holy Ghost, which springs from the deep, overflowing fountains of tender compassion, deathless solicitude for man's eternal good; a consuming zeal for the glory of God; a thorough conviction of the preacher's difficult and delicate work and of the imperative need of God's mightiest help. Praying grounded on these solemn and profound convictions is the only true praying. Preaching backed by such praying is the only preaching which sows the seeds of eternal life in human hearts and builds men up for heaven.

It is true that there may be popular preaching, pleasant preaching, taking preaching, preaching of much intellectual, literary, and brainy force, with its measure and form of good, with little or no praying; but the preaching which secures God's end in preaching must be born of prayer from text to exordium, delivered with the energy and spirit of prayer, followed and made to germinate, and kept in vital force in the hearts of the hearers by the preacher's prayers, long after the occasion has past.

From Chapter five.

SOMEHOW the practice of praying in particular for the preacher has fallen into disuse or become discounted. Occasionally have we heard the practice arraigned as a disparagement of the ministry, being a public declaration by those who do it of the inefficiency of the ministry. It offends the pride of learning and self-sufficiency, perhaps, and these ought to be offended and rebuked in a ministry that is so derelict as to allow them to exist.

Prayer, to the preacher, is not simply the duty of his profession, a privilege, but it is a necessity. Air is not more necessary to the lungs than prayer is to the preacher. It is absolutely necessary for the preacher to pray. It is an absolute necessity that the preacher be prayed for. These two propositions are wedded into a union which ought never to know any divorce: the preacher must pray; the preacher must be prayed for. It will take all the praying he can do, and all the praying he can get done, to meet the fearful responsibilities and gain the largest, truest success in his great work. The true preacher, next to the cultivation of the spirit and fact of prayer in himself, in their intensest form, covets with a great covetousness the prayers of God's people.

The holier a man is, the more does he estimate prayer; the clearer does he see that God gives himself to the praying ones, and that the measure of God's revelation to the soul is the measure of the soul's longing, importunate prayer for God. Salvation never finds its way to a prayerless heart. The Holy Spirit never abides in a prayerless spirit. Preaching never edifies a prayerless soul. Christ knows nothing of prayerless Christians. The gospel cannot be projected by a prayerless preacher. Gifts, talents, education, eloquence, God's call, cannot abate the demand of prayer, but only intensify the necessity for the preacher to pray and to be prayed for. The more the preacher's eyes are opened to the nature, responsibility, and difficulties in his work, the more will he see, and if he be a true preacher the more will he feel, the necessity of prayer; not only the increasing demand to pray himself, but to call on others to help him by their prayers.

From Chapter eighteen.

Power through Prayer  
E.M. Bounds

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/8 4:57**

Quote:  
-----Message Series and Specials  
Enhance your preaching creativity and save precious hours every week with the most requested message series and sermons from Willow Creek! Click on the icons below.  
-----

It was the next inevitable step. Christianity has been reduced to method and technology. Tozer was protesting about this trend 50 years ago. God help us.



**Re: - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/8 5:34**

A necessary reminder within this forum:

The preachers who gain mighty results for God are the men who have prevailed in their pleadings with God ere venturing to plead with men. The preachers who are the mightiest in their closets with God are the mightiest in their pulpits with men.

Preachers are human folks, and are exposed to and often caught by the strong driftings of human currents. Praying is spiritual work; and human nature does not like taxing, spiritual work. Human nature wants to sail to heaven under a favoring breeze, a full, smooth sea. Prayer is humbling work. It abases intellect and pride, crucifies vainglory, and signs our spiritual bankruptcy, and all these are hard for flesh and blood to bear. It is easier not to pray than to bear them. So we come to one of the crying evils of these times, maybe of all times -- little or no praying. Of these two evils, perhaps little praying is worse than no praying. Little praying is a kind of make-believe, a salvo for the conscience, a farce and a delusion.

The little estimate we put on prayer is evident from the little time we give to it. The time given to prayer by the average preacher scarcely counts in the sum of the daily aggregate. Not infrequently the preacher's only praying is by his bedside in his nightdress, ready for bed and soon in it, with, perchance the addition of a few hasty snatches of prayer ere he is dressed in the morning. How feeble, vain, and little is such praying compared with the time and energy devoted to praying by holy men in and out of the Bible! How poor and mean our petty, childish praying is beside the habits of the true men of God in all ages! To men who think praying their main business and devote time to it according to this high estimate of its importance does God commit the keys of his kingdom, and by them does he work his spiritual wonders in this world. Great praying is the sign and seal of God's great leaders and the earnest of the conquering forces with which God will crown their labors.

The preacher is commissioned to pray as well as to preach. His mission is incomplete if he does not do both well. The preacher may speak with all the eloquence of men and of angels; but unless he can pray with a faith which draws all heaven to his aid, his preaching will be "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" for permanent God-honoring, soul-saving use.

Chapter five  
Power through Prayer  
E.M. Bounds

**Re: - posted by BPreese, on: 2004/9/8 10:01**

IN MY HEART I WAS NOT ASSASSINATING ANYONE-It was 'tongue in cheek' as it were.  
Besides-where do I go?? I don't know how many who read this are "paid full time ministers" and how many are "laymen". From a layman's standpoint-and maybe it is as I feared and I am the only one who experiences this-but I would like someone to tell me where I go. Where is the WORD preached without apology? Where is the church where the "paid minister" stands up on Sunday morning and says, "Thus sayeth the Lord?..."  
It is easy to say, "get out of there" but there is a crying need for Pastors who are Preachers. As far as I know, there is no where to go in this town-and it is a big town. I am pleased for you that you have such a fine place to worship. Maybe you have a 'Man of God' like the quotes just posted from E.M.Bounds. It just so happens it doesn't happen here, much. So, I just abandon the other believers? The other's I worship with because I am not 'served' on Sunday morning? It isn't that easy, sorry. :-(

**Re: 'where do I go' - posted by JCGarc55, on: 2004/9/8 11:50**

Quote:  
-----Where is the WORD preached without apology? Where is the church where the "paid minister" stands up on Sunday morning and says, "Thus sayeth the Lord?..."  
-----



I grieve with you over this. My wife and I found ourselves in the same predicament a couple years ago. And I believe there are others here on this forum who are going through the same thing. One major blessing for me has been having this sermonindex website to download messages and allow God through these Men of God to convict my heart and draw me close to Christ. But my prayer for you would be that God would send you other brothers there to where you are that are likeminded and love the Word of God and want to be drawn to Him. One verse that I took to heart is found in Psalm 107.

starting at the 4th verse:

4 Some wandered in desert wastelands,  
finding no way to a city where they could settle.  
5 They were hungry and thirsty,  
and their lives ebbed away.  
6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.  
7 He led them by a straight way  
to a city where they could settle.  
8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for men,  
9 for he satisfies the thirsty  
and fills the hungry with good things."

you mentioned at your local church, there are 'others' that you care for. Maybe you could start a little bible study group or prayer group and just start praying and seeking God together.

Listen to one of the sermons here from this site together and just worship the Lord. The wife and I did something like that and it got us through the wilderness we were experiencing.

Today we are now serving in a church that our former young adults pastor started. He totally has a Pastor's heart and seeks the Lord for what to speak to His people. God bless you and I hope you find some encouragement in what I have shared here. Stay in the fellowship here online because Greg, Mike and many of the brothers here are a great example and it's awesome seeing what God is doing in their lives.

feel free to email whenever you want. I live in San Jose, CA. who knows? maybe you are next door?  
like brother Mike! :-)

**Re: - posted by BPreese, on: 2004/9/8 12:25**

Thank you for your encouragement. :-D

**Re: - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/9/8 19:32**

Having experienced this famine of the word of the Lord (Amos 8:15 I believe) in part, we will pray for you. I'm believing God that the "unvarnished" Word will make a comeback in America. It will likely still be a minority of churches but brother it's making a comeback.

I just pray the Lord will intensify and then satisfy this longing in your heart for more of Jesus.

I also believe we need to have a heart for those who have struggled in their ministry in some form or another. May we learn to lift up one other and truly function as the body of Christ.