

News and Current Events :: Blasphemous: A worship service put on by clowns?**Blasphemous: A worship service put on by clowns? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/9/4 20:45**

EDMONTON - When a long-time member of his congregation asked if she and some amateur clowns could put on a worship service, Rev. Jim Lochhead had just one tiny request.

Could he be one of those who'd be painting up their faces and wearing funny clothes?

Last Sunday morning, Lochhead was among nine clowns who strode into the sanctuary at McClure United Church to the taped sounds of Send In The Clowns.

The pantomime worship service brought glorious laughter and applause. Best of all, the service apparently connected with the congregation at a deeper level. ...

read more: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/religion/story.html?id=ee99d69a-dcdd-49f1-8fa4-5d8dce943270&k=38899>

Re: Blasphemous: A worship service put on by clowns? - posted by DHuff (), on: 2010/9/4 21:04

Sometimes there just aren't words

Re: Blasphemous: A worship service put on by clowns? - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/9/4 21:36

To the nation of Israel, for judgment, God has given the cup of drunkenness. It is always the fate of those who once had the true foundation of the faith and trampled it under foot. There should be a call to mourning and grief.

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2010/9/4 22:06

I wonder if the pastor then proceeded to mime the sermon?

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2010/9/4 22:38

I have seen some clowns in the pulpit before, so this does not surprise me.

Mike

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2010/9/4 23:13

Is being a fool for Christ the same as being a Church Jester? This question touches on a larger question I've been having recently with all of the experimental ways American Christians "do Church."

In my line of work, which involves designing, we struggle constantly with the problem of encoding messages that can be successfully decoded by an audience in a "language" they understand, while keeping the intended message intact. This is harder than it sounds! That is why I think pastors should resist the temptation to become new media tinkerers and experimenters.

When it comes to creating a message that transcends cultures and contexts, I honestly can say that I've never seen any message connect more successfully in more contexts than the bible. It baffles me that pastors, who should be trained in scriptural exegesis, decide to become amateur cultural exegetes and reconstruct the gospel message in forms that depart from time-proven straight-forward biblical presentations.

They share methods with one another on how to design a presentation in a language the people understand, but never seem to care or notice that meaning of the message suffers or is downgraded in their experiment.

Why even introduce the symbolism of clowns that is so open to misunderstanding? At best, these experiments seem harmless but completely frivolous...at worst they undermine the gravity of their message. The best thing I could say about this story is that hopefully these people wore their big noses and floppy shoes with good intentions. In the end, these hij

nks seem like an example of ambiguous communication in which the clowning around adds annotation to the gospel that in turns undermines the denotation...at least to this viewer. I enjoy humor, but when there is so much juggling with the word of God these days, this scene give me the tears of a clown.

These people can't take all the blame, because apparently "liturgical clowning" is an accepted type of "ministry" with an established history. As Dhuff suggested, the symbolism of this phrase and story needs no comment. It communicates on it's own.

MC

Re: Blasphemous: A worship service put on by clowns? - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/9/5 1:30

Wow!

When I was a teenager, I once visited a congregation that advertised "revival meetings." My youth pastor and I decided to attend.

After a few songs, the door to a prayer room opened and out popped a family of clowns! Seriously. Makeup...color suits...wigs...rubber noses...and big plastic shoes. The clowns told jokes, juggled and performed illusions. At the end of their performance, they wrapped up their message with "a merry heart is good medicine" and "it is okay for Christians to have fun."

For a while, I thought that we had mixed up the congregations from the advertisement. However, at the end of the meeting, the pastor urged the congregation to return the next evening for another night of "revival."

Needless to say, we didn't return.

What a sad state! The world is "going to Hell in a hand basket"...people are literally dying in their sin by the HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS every single day...the "Church" (as an named association) is in a spiritual coma...and we literally have clowns performing on stages and calling it "revival."

*EDIT - This might be a good time to listen to A BURNING HEART by Leonard Ravenhill.

<http://media.sermonindex.net/4/SID4025.mp3>

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/9/5 2:17

Think it was Keith Daniel who said, "Entertainment in the pulpit is sin." Colin Peckham said, "When you see Jesus consecration is easy."

Re: You're not clowning around, are you? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/9/5 4:30

Please tell me you guys aren't going to take up your stones and start throwing them at clowns now? I'm not advocating that clowns be in every service every Sunday at every church but come on! Some clowns and their ministry are not purely "entertainment" in the pulpit but actually a m.i.n.i.s.t.r.y.

Are you guys going to throw stones at the clowns who walk (ministering) up and down the halls of the Children's Hospital comforting the kids?? Do you even pick days to go pray for the sick children? Oh so, they can minister, but just not in church? Is that it? What about Christmas parades?! I wonder if half of you even attend your local Christmas parades. That's where your neighbors are!!

I am by no means gifted as a clown but each of us do have gifts, you know! And it truly amazes me that some of you are so quick to jump on a bandwagon and stone a ministry just because it doesn't meet your standards never taking the time to see if it meets God's?

God help us all,
Lisa

PS: Have any of you ever heard the term, "so holy you're no earthly good?"

Re: - posted by knitefall, on: 2010/9/5 9:30

Hey you hard nosed non-clowns!

I loved reading this article. A good leader knows when he needs a little humor, consider the times.

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/9/5 10:39

Oh Lysa, since you decided to pick my Keith Daniel quote & use it for your arsenal I'll respond briefly. Really, all's I can do is laugh. I'll just leave it at that. To compare what I said to clowns comforting children in hospitals is just plain laughable. There's a place for clowning around, but not in the pulpit. I'm a big fan of Vance Havner & he was an amusing preacher, but was balanced. Reading what isn't there is dangerous.

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2010/9/5 11:15

Quote:

When it comes to creating a message that transcends cultures and contexts, I honestly can say that I've never seen any message connect more successfully in more contexts than the bible

Praise God for His faithful ones!

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2010/9/5 11:57

I appreciate the call for not taking ourselves too seriously.:

Still, the split reaction in this thread to using clowns touches on why we should be most conservative in the pulpit of the church. The point isn't that clowns are evil, but that they are more open to misinterpretation, in the sanctuary than in a children's hospital or carnival.

In any case, the use of clowns aren't a serious offense...just a decision that invites confusion or misunderstanding. As the saying goes, "the medium is the message."

For instance, I have some simple flutes from third world and folk cultures. Outside of the church I feel the flutes are a casual way to build bridges, but within the sanctuary of the church I am sensitive that a Native American flute has spiritual symbolism that are not part of my intentions, and that if I were to use such an instrument in front of all members of the congregation, I should at least be aware of that symbolism.

Clowns are symbols too. The sincere critique I have with clowns comes from my perspective of having spent formative years in non denominational baby boomer churches where the entire environment was constantly narcissistic and frivolous, rarely acting mature or appropriate in the presence of God. To me, these clowns represent yet another self indulgence of adult children who refuse to grow up, not an act of compassion to dying children.

Yet my point is not to decide if clowns are good or bad, but that, when it comes to the pulpit, it is not necessary or wise to deviate from the simple tried and true method of proclaiming the scriptures. Clowns are wonderful...but they are problematic messengers for the pulpit.

Oh well, we've all seen worse uses of pulpits than clown shows.

MC

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/9/5 12:46

I just wanted to add that my reply to you Lysa is no rebuke @ all. I have to be very "quick" with my words on my cell or it powers down in the middle of posts. We are all entitled to our opinions. I love coming here to SI for this main reason: I love to hear straight-forward preaching of God's truth. I'd rather have Truth that corrects & rebukes me than verbal hugs & kisses that pampers my flesh.

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/9/5 15:23

Hence, "The church started out as a sheep-fold, & it's become a zoo; got all kinda animals in it now." - Vance Havner

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/9/5 16:10

"PS: Have any of you ever heard the term, "so holy you're no earthly good?"

Personally I am so tired of all of the clowns that I could just cry. It seems as if everyone is just laughing their way to hell and it is really hard to get anyone's attention when they are having such a wonderful time of it all - mocking and scorning my Saviour - spitting in the face of God.

Oh that God would rend the heavens and Holiness would flow over this land. Oh that the blessedness of our great and awesome God would fill the hearts of man. Oh that everything around me would be exude the holiness of God. Please come Lord Jesus - Oh Lord how we need Thee!

Re: - posted by SolaVeritas, on: 2010/9/5 19:18

Have any of you read the entire article? There's more than clowns going on that church, for example Hawaiian theme nights:

Quote:
-----The fun was led by Pastor Dwain Saunders and Rev. Marlene Brown, who awarded prizes for the best costume for males and females. The evening also included a limbo contest and a luau, a Hawaiian feast. Wearing a Polynesian wrap that was hand-beaten out of bark, Saunders said he came up with the theme night as a way of trying to revitalize the church's Wednesday Night Bible Study.

I was going to comment on that but in the end, there's nothing to say but, "O Lord, have mercy"

Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/9/5 20:57

I just don't get how professing Christians can get ideas that one needs to lure folk to their congregations by entertainment instead of Christ Jesus flowing through them.