

SECTION 37

Odds and Ends

Some Odds and Ends for the Preacher's Profit

A Final Charge

When you mount the steps to the pulpit and are about to speak God's Word on His behalf, let these exhortations come to mind.

- Preach to honor God's Word.
- Preach to reach the unconverted.
- Preach to please God.
- Preach to equip Christians for the work of the ministry.
- Preach to life up the downhearted.
- Preach to be more effective this time than last.
- Preach to bring conviction of sin and repentance.
- Preach to compete with no one but yourself.
- Preach to refresh the spiritually weary.
- Preach to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Rediscovering Expository Preaching, pp. 331-32)

Let every man, called of God to preach the Word, be as his Maker has fashioned himThe good and evil in men of eminence are both of them mischievous when they become objects of servile imitation; the good when slavishly copied is exaggerated into formality, and the evil becomes wholly intolerable. If each teacher of others went himself to the school of our one only Master, a thousand errors might be avoided.

(Charles Spurgeon, C.H. Spurgeon Autobiography Vol. 1: The Early Years, 1834-1859, p. 234.)

Let your prayers be earnest, full of fire, vehemence, prevalence. I pray the holy Ghost to instruct every student of this College so to offer public prayer, that God shall always be served of his best. Let your petitions be plain and heart-felt; and while your people may sometimes feel that the sermon was below the mark, may they also feel that the prayer compensated for all.

(Charles Spurgeon)

The gospel is preached in the ears of all; it only comes with power to some. The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher; otherwise men would be the converters of souls. Nor does it lie in the preacher's learning; otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless there were a mysterious power going with it - the Holy Ghost changing the will of man. Oh Sirs! We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Ghost be with the word to give it power to convert the soul.

(Charles Spurgeon)

Question: How is the word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto?

Answer: They that are called to labour in the ministry of the word are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season and out of season; plainly, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, applying themselves to the necessity and capacities of the hearers; zealously, with fervent love to God and the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.

Question: What is required of those who hear the word preached?

Answer: It is required of those that hear the word preached that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation and prayer; examine what they hear by the scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the word of God; meditate, and confer on it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

(The Westminster Larger Catechism)

Thoughts on Preaching and Pastoring A to Z
by Dr. Steve Gaines, Pastor
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1. Make prayer the priority of your life, and make preaching the priority of your ministry.
2. Preach your own sermons. Preaching someone else's sermon is stealing (cf. Jeremiah 23:30).
3. Use personal illustrations, especially those that show that you don't have it all together spiritually.
4. Talk normally when you preach.
5. If you earn a doctorate, forget about the title. Your authority doesn't come from a title – it comes from the Holy Spirit's anointing!
6. Let God open doors from you. Don't be a politician or a "networker." Don't try to climb the denominational ladder.
7. Magnify the name of JESUS!!! Sing about it and use it when you preach (instead of "Christ," "God," etc.)
8. Don't touch the money or the women.
9. Take a day off each week besides Sunday.
10. Go to your kid's ballgames and ballet recitals.
11. Keep dating your wife.
12. Laugh a lot.
13. Never resign on a Monday. Go eat the Pizza Hut buffet instead.
14. Be the first one in the worship service and the last one to leave. Remember that you are in the people business.

15. Walk slowly through the crowds and look people in the eye when you talk with them. If they ask you to pray for them, do it on the spot.
 16. Don't make your secretary mad!
 17. Understand that musicians can be moody. You might not want them on the Finance Committee, but then again, you probably wouldn't want the Finance Committee to sing before you preach. Everyone, even musicians, has their place.
 18. Don't worry about money and don't fuss at your wife about it either! You probably won't have much here. Your treasure is in heaven.
 19. Keep your mornings for God. Read your Bible, study and pray. 20. Don't read anonymous letters and don't write them either.
 21. Don't take praise or criticism too seriously ("Hosanna!" can quickly become, "Crucify!").
 22. Say "hello" to the janitors.
 23. Share the gospel at funerals and weddings. Lost people are always present.
 24. Minimize meetings at your church. Try to move all of them to Wednesdays and Sundays.
 25. Heat the water before you baptize.
 26. Check your zipper before you preach.
- P.S. Be a man. Don't be a "pretty boy" who looks like a model from GQ magazine. Avoid pocket puffs and monograms if possible. Don't have a jelly belly and/or soft hands and flabby arms. Drive a pickup truck if all possible. Don't act like a sissy.

Don't ask for your own parking place next to the building. Save those for the visitors and senior adults.

Essentials of a Good Atmosphere for Worship

1. Careful ushering
 2. Proper temperature
 3. Adequate lightning
 4. Proper acoustics
 5. Favorable atmosphere
 6. Suitable music
 7. Attention to incidentals
 - a. Selection of hymns to be sung
 - b. Hymns properly announced
 - c. Order of service
 - d. A working sound system
 - e. A properly placed clock
 - f. Punctuality
- (Charles Koller)

The Seven Laws of the Learner

(Bruce Wilkinson, Multnomah Press, Walk Through the Bible Ministries, Sisters, Oregon, 1992)

Chapter 1: The Law of the Learner

1. Teachers (preachers) are responsible to cause students (their people) to learn (pg. 24).
2. Teachers will stand accountable to God for their influence (pg. 32).
3. Teachers are responsible because they control subject, style and speaker (pg. 33).
4. Teachers should judge their success by the success of their students (pg.35).
5. Teachers impact more by their character and commitment than by their communication (pg. 38). .
6. Teachers exist to serve the students (pg 39).

Chapter 2: The Law of the Learner

1. Love your people consistently and unconditionally (pg 58).
2. Communicate the message with your people's needs and interests in mind (pg. 60).
3. Alter your style regularly according to each situation (pg 60).
4. Rest in your talents and gifts; be yourself (pg. 63).
5. Note constantly your people's attitudes, attention and actions (pg 64).
6. Excel by using your strengths to compensate for your weaknesses (pg. 64).
7. Rely on the Holy Spirit for teaching/preaching that is supernatural (pg 66).

How Do You Make a Preacher?

Fling him into his office. Tear the "Office" sign from the door and nail on the sign, "Study." Take him off the mailing list. Lock him up with his books and his typewriter and his Bible. Slam him down on his knees before texts and broken hearts and the flock of lives of a superficial flock and a holy God.

Force him to be the one man in our surfeited communities who knows about God. Throw him into the ring to box with God until he learns how short his arms are. Engage him to wrestle with God all the night through. And let him come out only when he's bruised and beaten into being a blessing.

Shut his mouth forever spouting remarks, and stop his tongue forever tripping lightly over every nonessential. Require him to have something to say before he dares break the silence. Bend his knees in the lonesome valley.

Bum his eyes with weary study. Wreck his emotional poise with worry for God. And make him exchange his pious stance for a humble walk with God and man. Make him spend and be spent for the glory of God. Rip out his telephone. Burn up his ecclesiastical success sheets.

Put water in his gas tank. Give him a Bible and tie him to the pulpit. And make him preach the Word of the living God!

Test him. Quiz him. Examine him. Humiliate him for his ignorance of things divine. Shame him for his good comprehension of finances, batting averages, and political in-fighting. Laugh at his frustrated effort to play psychiatrist. Form a choir and raise a chant and haunt him with it night and day—"Sir, we would see Jesus."

When at long last he dares assay the pulpit, ask him if he has a word from God. If he does not, then dismiss him. Tell him you can read the morning paper and digest the television commentaries, and think through the day's superficial problems, and manage the community's weary drives, and bless the sordid baked potatoes and green beans, *ad infinitum*, better than he can.

Command him not to come back until he's read and reread, written and rewritten, until he can stand up, worn and forlorn, and say, "Thus saith the Lord."

Break him across the board of his ill-gotten popularity. Smack him hard with his own prestige. Corner him with questions about God. Cover him with demands for celestial wisdom. And give him no escape until he's back against the wall of the Word.

And sit down before him and listen to the only word he has left—God’s Word. Let him be totally ignorant of the down-street gossip, but give him a chapter and order him to walk around it, camp on it, sup with it, and come at last to speak it backward and forward, until all he says about it rings with the truth of eternity.

And when he's burned out by the flaming Word, when he's consumed at last by the fiery grace blazing through him, and when he's privileged to translate the truth of God to man, finally transferred from earth to heaven, then bear him away gently and blow a muted trumpet and lay him down softly. Place a two-edged sword in his coffin, and raise the tomb triumphant. For he was a brave soldier of the Word. And ere he died, he had become a man of God.

(author unknown, quoted in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, pgs. 348-349)

Some Final Thoughts from Dr. Steven Olford gleaned from 2 Timothy 4:1-5

- I. Preach the Word Conscientiously
- II. Preach the Word Continuously
 - A. We must take opportunities to preach the Word.
 - B. We must make opportunities to preach the Word.
- III. Preach the Word Comprehensively
 - A. The convictive Word
 - B. The corrective Word
 - C. The constructive Word
- IV. Preach the Word Courageously
 - A. Be realistic
 - B. Be altruistic
 - C. Be evangelistic
 - D. Be optimistic

*Finish the course, O man of God,
Follow the path the Master trod. Fight the good fight, in Jesus’ name, Preach the
pure Word, with heart aflame. Then, in good faith and patient love, Wait for your
“crown” reserved above.*

(Steven F. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*,
pg. 311)

Strong churches are not gathered around weak pulpits.

(Charles Koller, pg. 85)

WHAT TO IGNORE IN THE MINISTRY

When I read this quotation from Alfred North Whitehead in J. A. Davidson's "Perspectives" in the January/February issue, it set me to thinking: "A man has to ignore much to get on with something." I offer the following thoughts about what pastors must ignore in order to get on with their task:

1. A pastor must ignore the temptation to compare. The comparison game has killed more than one pastor's career. This game is never fair, for it never compares apples with apples. God has gifted us all differently. So if you compare yourself to another, you never have all the facts. It is best to ignore this temptation.
2. A pastor must ignore the temptation to compromise. I mean here the compromise of values, beliefs, or truths. There is a positive kind of compromise that often is needed, but one should ignore the temptation to compromise that which is basic, real, and fundamental.
3. A pastor must ignore the temptation to become critical. Life, for some strange reason, slides to the negative and the critical, if one fails to guard against it. When circumstances seem to go against us and failure writes a chapter in our life, our response is too often criticism. An added thought concerning criticism, we need to ignore most of the criticism that comes our way. Learn from it, if possible, but don't let it defeat you.
4. A pastor must ignore the temptation to center everything on self. A pastor gets lots of praise and encouragement. This is good, and it is not to be discounted. What one needs to guard against is letting one's ego become too robust. Ignore this temptation to focus on self.
5. A pastor must ignore the temptation of carelessness. When lay people are not carrying their share of the load, the temptation is to pull back and do less. Such a decision invites mediocrity and indifference, cancers on a career. Do not let other people's actions decide what is best for you.
6. A pastor must ignore the temptation to commit to more than can be done. Know your limits and just how much your time and calendar will tolerate. Learn to say no tactfully. Ignoring the temptation to overcommit will benefit family, self, and work.
7. A pastor must ignore the temptation to conformity. This dulls the growing edges, blunts ideas, invites apathy. Granted, some conformity may be good for each of us, if there is reason and purpose behind it. But the conformity of which I write here invites one to comply with the power structure of the organization without processing the reasons or questioning the history. One must learn the difference between honest conformity and timely challenge.
8. A pastor must ignore the temptation to cynicism. This temptation is always present. In the daily experience of pastoral ministry, there are enough disappointments, failure, criticisms, and hard moments to tempt cynicism. Avoid it like the plague, for what the pastor needs to do is respond to life's experiences with positive thought and resolve. Cynicism builds barriers, destroys relationships, and blurs the vision. Cynicism robs the mind of its positive moments, hence destroying the scaffolding for answers, for hope, for finding a way through.

A pastor has to ignore much to get on with something. And these are but a few of the things to ignore. That pastor is better able to serve, and be served, who learns what to ignore in the mission for God.

INTERVIEWING FOR A CHURCH POSITION -- QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Do you have a church constitution/bylaws that I can see?
2. Do you have a church budget I can preview?
3. Are you committed to reaching all people within your geographical area (regardless of race, social or cultural status)?
4. Do you believe the pastor is the leader of the church? Does your church believe this also?
5. Who decides who fills the pulpit?
6. Who calls and hires staff? What is the relationship of the pastor and staff? Do you utilize/have a personnel committee? What is their function?
7. What is the role of the deacons and their relationship to the pastor? Do your deacons rotate?
8. To whom is the pastor accountable? The staff?
9. For what reasons would you consider firing the pastor? A staff person? Has your church ever fired a pastor or staff person? If so, when and why?
10. What was the tenures of your last pastors? Why did they leave?
11. What is the committee structure of your church and how are they elected?
12. What expectations do you have for the pastor's wife and family? Staff and their spouse?
13. Would you provide for me the names and telephone numbers of your last three pastors so that I can visit with them about their ministry here?
14. What are the doctrinal essentials your church has for: a) the pastor; b) worship leaders; c) teachers; d) membership?
15. May I share with you certain doctrinal standards and emphases of my theology/ministry?
16. What is the present membership of the church? Is it in a pattern of growth? Where do the members live in relation to the location of the church? What is the age balance of the membership? What is the educational level of the membership?
17. Is there a clear and complete job description of all staff positions?
18. What, if any, secretarial and other assistance will be at my disposal?
19. Has the church been successful in meeting its yearly budget?
20. What are the music/worship concepts of the church?

21. Could the community be characterized as static, transient, growing or declining?
22. Would the church be responsive to innovations in worship? ministry? programs?
23. Does the church support the Cooperative Program? Other programs of mission outreach, both local and foreign?
24. What is the position of the church on race relations, homosexuality, women as pastors/elders?
25. What is the position of the church on inerrancy, baptism and communion?
26. How effectively does the church minister to its youth? senior adults? families? singles?
27. What is the salary structure of your church, the pattern and policies on future salary increases and the tangible benefits such as hospitalization, disability, retirement, housing allowance and travel expenses? Is a house or housing allowance provided?
28. What opportunities will there be for outside engagements? continuing education?
29. What commitment does the church have to long-range planning?
30. May I see a video tape of a recent service?
31. Is there a church policy about staff members' involvement in weddings, funerals, etc.?
32. Is there an annual review or any standardized evaluation process of my work?
33. What are spiritual "barometer readings" of the church?
34. What is the theological basis for this church's existence?

SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER WITH PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEES

I. WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES, DREAMS, GOALS OF THE CHURCH?

1. What is your vision for this church? Where would you like to see this church in five years?
2. What steps has this church taken to state its vision and purpose? Is there a long-range plan?
3. How old is this church? Why did it come into being? How has the stated purpose of this church (i.e. “to minister to the university community”) been fulfilled or not achieved in the past 5-10 years?
4. How serious has this church been about turning its dreams into reality? Do its budget/finances reflect its stated priorities?
5. How do the programs of the church reflect its vision?
6. If you could change any one thing about this church, what would that be? How would you like to see it done?
7. What are the specific strengths of this congregation? What are the church's specific weaknesses or limitations?

II. WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBILITIES AND LIABILITIES?

1. Is the church looking backward at its history (“the good old days”) or forward to the future? How do you know?
2. What is happening in this city? Is it growing? Are businesses being closed? Is the real estate market dead? Are people moving in or out? Why?
3. What are the trends in membership during the last ten years? Why do people join this church? Why do they choose to join other churches? Are other area churches growing? Are other similar local churches experiencing some of the same problems/opportunities/ growth/decline you are?
4. What major problems has this church had in the last 10-15 years? What major victories has it celebrated? What was the cost of these victories or defeats?
5. What has been the financial trend of the church in the last ten years? Do you consider this a “giving church”?
6. What trends can be noted in your attendance figures over the past 10-15 years? What percentage of your growth has been conversion growth? transfer growth? biological growth?
7. What kind of missions emphases do you have?
8. Describe your typical Sunday morning worship service. What would you personally change about your worship services if it was left to you?
9. Do you have any outstanding debts? Are the buildings paid for? How old are they? Are they in need of immediate repair? Have funds been set aside for repairs and improvements?
10. Who oversees the financial status of the church? How are financial decisions made?

III. SOME OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION BY THE MINISTER IN TALKING WITH THE COMMITTEE

1. Does this committee represent this church? Who are they? What is their involvement in the church? Community?
2. What non-verbal messages are being sent? Who is talking, not talking, dominating, etc. (What does this mean?)
3. How are you feeling with the committee? Who is in control? Do you feel good about the “process”?
4. Are you covering issues you think are important? What do they seem to be focusing on?
5. If this committee were representative of this church, how would you feel about working and living with them?
6. Don't raise the issue of pay package with them until perhaps the third visit. Are you satisfied? Is the pastor search committee coordinating what they plan to offer in the way of a pay package with the finance and personnel committees of the church? Will they be willing to work “up front” with you to plan your pay package where it is most advantageous to you and your family (assuming it will not cost the church more money)?
7. Has the committee sent you enough material about the church and community to answer your questions and give you significant impressions? (i.e. brochures, church constitution, directory, demographics, etc.)
8. Where is the committee in the selection process? Are they just beginning? Hearing or talking with other candidates? What are their plans? What do they expect from you next? How and when will they expect to communicate with you again?
9. What are your emotions, initial impressions, telling you? How do you feel about your experience with them?
10. Are there other persons you might contact to get a better picture of the church? (Don't expect most former pastors or staff members to “go out on a limb” to give you negative information which might come back to haunt or embarrass them. Generally they don't know you, thus trust will be a factor.) If you have questions, be specific.

IV. LOOKING AT THEIR HISTORY TO PREDICT YOUR FUTURE

1. Who were the last three pastors? How long did they stay? What did the people like most about them? What did they dislike about them? Why did they leave? Where are they now?
2. Have you ever had a pastor or staff member who was forced to leave, or left under pressure? Have you had more than one who was, or felt, pressured to leave? How was this handled? What impact has it had upon the church?
3. Do people often leave this church to join other churches in the area? Why? Why not?
4. Does your church have a history of conflict? What are the issues which tend to recur? How do you handle diversity within the congregation? Does the church easily tolerate differences?
5. What major changes have been made within the church during the past ten years? How do the people tend to respond to change?
6. How do you assimilate new members into the life of the church? Do you tend to keep new members long or lose them? Why?
7. What do people in the community tend to say about this church? Do you have a positive reputation in the city?

V. PASTORAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Has your church expressed any clear expectations about the next pastor? What ranks high on the list (i.e. great preacher, evangelist, caring pastor, etc.)? Did the previous pastor have certain traits or preferences which affect what you want from the next?
2. Where does the pastor of this church fit in the decision-making process? Who really makes the decisions? How are they ultimately made (i.e. Church Council, Elder Board, etc.)?
3. What kind of leadership style did the previous two pastors have? What would you wish from your next pastor?
4. What kind of staff do you have? How long has each been here? Are there problems with any staff member? Who is ultimately responsible for the supervision of the staff? What role does the pastor play in “calling” staff? Is a search committee usually involved?
5. Should the pastor have the authority to “fire” or “hire” a staff member?
6. How are the people at meeting the need for “volunteer” or lay leadership?
7. What has been the pastor’s relationship with the Deacons/Elders?
8. What do you expect of the pastor’s wife and family? How do you feel about the minister’s spouse working outside the home?
9. Are there “fine print” expectations the church or certain individuals might have for your new pastor or his family?
10. If you had the final choice in the kind of pastor your next minister would be, what are the two primary descriptive “expectations” you would have for him?