Some Advice For Running A Church Biblically



Many church leaders seem to be running their church by “the seat of their pants”, instead of methodically, systematically, according to the Bible. They may get some “ideas” from bible school or seminary or from their own observations of how other churches are run or how the church they grew up in was run. But a church that wants to be faithful to God’s word, as much as possible, will want to examine everything they do, in the fashion of the Bereans of Acts 17:11 and make sure that they are running their church biblically.

We are going to outline in this document some basic, yet very important – critically important – facets of running a truly biblical Christian church. We are focusing on striving for a biblically “prosperous” church, not necessarily one that is bringing in lots of attendees, members, spectators or whatever you want to call them. But rather a church that is producing godly men and women, disciple-making Christians who know how to make disciples of themselves first and foremost and who know how to disciple others and who are adept at sharing the Gospel, the true Gospel and not some modern perversion of it.

Step 1: Train or retrain the current trainers – Acts 18:25-26:

“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”

This first step may seem preposterous to most church leaders but it probably is very apropos. The leadership of most churches should step back for a moment and **examine themselves** and those that they should be raising up as future leaders in the local church. Are these people “apt to teach”? Do they study the Bible even though no one compels them to and even though there may be many other things that demand their attention? Do they fit the description of the Bereans in Acts 17:11? And just as important, **are they in**

fact adequately trained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? If this last part sounds a bit strange, don't be too alarmed. Most pastors today who think they fully understand the Gospel are so off base regarding this essential doctrine of the faith that it's not funny. They probably never learned much of anything about the reformers or the puritans and could not ACCURATELY tell their congregations exactly what the five points of Calvinism are or the five points of Arminianism. They may not even know that they are preaching a false synergistic gospel as compared to the true Gospel which is monergistic in nature.

The study of creeds and confessions is nonexistent in the modern church. Yet, it is those creeds and confessions that were vital in the past, for keeping churches from diverging from the truth, especially regarding election, predestination, the depravity of man and the sovereignty of God in salvation. I believe that ignorance of these church documents is one of the major reasons why pastors and their congregations have no idea how far they have strayed from biblical truth regarding things of such importance as soteriology (the study of salvation).

Other issues regarding salvation that are so neglected today and yet so essential to the gospel are the issues of Hell, God's wrath, God's holiness, God's hatred of sin and God's hatred of the workers of iniquity (Psalm 5:5). We must not let the world and worldly churches cause us to forget that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Nor do we want to forget just how vital it is to preach the law of God to sinners to show them that they are LAWBREAKERS… "for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20) and "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24).

Sadly, what you often hear in place of the real Gospel is nothing more than some variation on the theme: "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life", which tells the lost sinner nothing at all about the awful eternal peril facing him or her.

If many church leaders were to find out just how off base they are on the Gospel and then try to share that with their congregations, riots might break out, or major church splits would occur at the very least. However, the repercussions of learning and sharing such truths should not cause any true Christian pastor or elder from shying away from worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Step 2: Train the future trainers – per 1Timothy 3 & Titus 3:

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;"

Any church that understands the biblical criteria for leadership as outlined in

1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 3, will know that the best leaders are grown from within, especially considering that the most important criteria for church leadership has to do with MORAL qualifications over and above ACADEMIC qualfications. The HABIT of finding new leaders from outside the local church is unbiblical, spiritually dangerous and outright foolish. Sure it is far easier than training up people from within, but it is very unwise as it only allows you to judge a person based upon a resume and an interview or at most, upon a brief trial period. "Good" shepherds will not be willing to take chances with their flock and look for some totally random, unvetted individuals from outside the camp. Instead, they will only settle for men who have proven themselves to be godly husbands, caring fathers and proficient disciple makers – through years of close, careful observation.

Some examples of good discipleship tools can be found here:

Bible Student Toolkit

Do-It-Yourself Bible Study Course

Christianity 101

Step 3: Do the job of a leader… Delegate – Acts 6:3:

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

If the leaders in a church are doing what they are supposed to do, which is: grooming future leaders and disciple makers, then those leaders will know that they MUST delegate various responsibilities to others in the local church in order for the others to LEARN and PRACTICE using the gifts and abilities God has granted to them for the building up of the local body of Christ and for the advancement of His kingdom. If for example, an elder is especially gifted at ministering to the sick in the congregation, the church better make sure that other responsibilities are not being neglected, such as grooming future leaders or spending time on evangelism efforts.

Step 4: Do the work of an evangelist – 2 Timothy 4:5:

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

This step is so neglected in churches nowadays. Christians (including church leaders) think it is the job of the pastor or elders to evangelize the lost and at the most, others in the church are to bring people to church to "get evangelized" by the leaders. In addition, many Christians think that they have

to make friends with people first before they can share the gospel with them. Such an idea is from the pit of hell. Nothing is more urgent than the Gospel. Yes we must minister to people's physical needs as much as we can and as much as is appropriate for any given individual. But what ethical caring doctor waits to become your friend before telling you that you are dying of stage 4 cancer? And aren't we, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, to redeem the time and to warn the lost to flee the wrath to come?

Did you know that one of the best ways that God has designed for ferreting out the sin and hypocrisy in your life is by you sharing the Gospel? What believer is not going to be convicted of hypocrisy more so than the Christian who is preaching about the holiness of God and His hatred of sin?

Why is it that the cults like the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses put Christians to shame by their dedication to evangelism? We Christians, who possess the truth, should be all the more fervent in our efforts to reach a lost and dying world. We should be learning, from each other and from the Bible, how to share our faith. And we should be going out REGULARLY, to the highways and byways (public places) to share the gospel, with or without gospel literature (tracts, Gospels of John, etc.). The Gospel can be shared at street fairs, college campuses, rest stops, airports, train stations, bus terminals, via prison ministries, or just in a public park or at some special event that is open to the general public. Mature Christians should team up with those who are new to the faith. We should be very anxious to make use of every opportunity possible to tell the world about our glorious Savior and to warn them to seek the Lord while He may be found, before it's too late. We should be sharing ideas with each other about how to witness to various people, adapting our approach as Paul did on Mar's Hill (he was all things to all people – 1Cor 9:22).

Take advantage of all the evangelism tools that God has provided our modern day church

We live at a time in history where we have access to all sorts of wonderful tools for sharing the Gospel and for making disciples. If we are serious about reaching this lost and dying world for the Lord, we should certainly make use of the tools God has provided, where and when appropriate. Here are some examples for your consideration:
Setup a library or tract rack where church members can get ahold of literature such as gospel tracts, discipleship pamphlets, Christian books, pocket bibles, Gospels of John, etc.

Put collections of discipleship and evangelism materials on CDs or DVDs, as long as you are not violating copyright laws. The good news in that regard is that a lot of the best materials are NOT copyrighted and easily available online from ministries such as chapellibrary.org and many other ministries that offer literature in PDF file format or downloadable MP3 audio file format.

Nowadays you can buy some inexpensive flash memory drives and fill them up with a complete “discipleship kit” to share with others in your church. Such a discipleship kit could serve as a discipleship course for new believers and new members of your church.

Don’t forget that evangelism starts at home. So many Christians think they are saved but are not. They may have recited a “sinner’s prayer” at one time as **fire insurance** to avoid hell but are still dead in their sins. Some good tracts to address this issue include “Is Christ Your Lord?” and “A Call To Self-Examination“, both of which are available in print from Chapel Library at chapellibrary.org.

Some examples of evangelism tools can be found here:

Evangelism Methods & Resources

Gospel Tracts In Article Format

Gospel Tracts Formatted For Printing

Salvation Articles

Step 5: Do the work of bearing one anothers’ burdens – Galatians 6:2:

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

God has given the members of His body various gifts and talents that can only be utilized if people know what the needs are that they are personally able to fulfill themselves. One of the best methods for enabling people to find the needs that they are gifted to fulfill is by them spending time together, communicating with one another. And one of the best ways for them to spend time together is over a meal or helping each other out with chores. And one of the best ways for that to happen is for people to meet in each other’s homes where many needs become obvious, when you are right there in the midst of someone’s home. However, must modern churches are centralized in large special purpose buildings and not home-centered. Also, modern churches seem to be clergy-centric, where certain leaders or elders feel they need to run everything and even need to do everything in some cases, which can be counterproductive when you are trying to delegate responsibilities and when you want other Christians to learn how to make disciples themselves.

Step 6: Take inventory and then clean house – per 1 Thessalonians 5:21:

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

As a matter of ensuring sound spiritual health, its a good idea to take inventory of your church and how it has been operating and what materials it has been using. It’s like taking a step back, to allow yourselves to separate the forest from the trees, and examine what you all are doing to see if there is

anything that does ***not*** line up with scripture. It can be helpful to consult with other mature Christians in your area or with missionaries who have come back from the mission field, who will be able to see things that you and your church may have become desensitized to.

Here are some areas to consider examining:
Hymnals & song books: Are there any songs we should avoid singing because they promote unbiblical theology? This very often involves songs that are man-centered rather than God-centered. Songs that say little if anything about the wonderful attributes of God and songs that have the word "I" all over the place. See our article "Modern Man-Centered Christian Music" for more information on the subject of biblical music.

Gospel tracts: Are we using gospel tracts that promote a man-centered gospel (synergistic, free-will gospel)? Are we using tracts that don't point out why sinners need salvation… no mention of God's wrath, His hatred for sin, His love of holiness, etc.? ComingInTheClouds offers many free Gospel tracts online that are formatted for printing.

Idolatry: Do we own or display anything that violates the second commandment against graven images (see Exodus chapter 20, verse 4)? Many Christians have no idea what this means and that God actually cares about this. So you will find in their homes and in their church buildings (if they are not meeting in homes) pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ or other images of Him and images of "angels", as if the 2nd commandment did not exist. Obviously people can and do make idols out of just about anything but we are addressing the 2nd commandment here specifically.

Education of children: Are we unknowingly doing the same thing as the public schools to dumb down our children? Do we even know how to biblically correct and discipline our own children? When we gather as a church, do we segregate children by age so they won't have very many mature individuals to learn from, to look up to, to pattern their behavior after or be corrected by? Are we talking down to them or are we challenging them to think critically and ask questions? Do we teach them the morals and ethics they are not learning in school? Do we teach them WHY evolution is a gigantic fraud invented by God-hating secular humanists? Do we teach them about BOTH the temporal consequences of sin (disease, broken relationships, etc.) as well as the eternal consequences of sin?

Discipleship literature: What discipleship literature are we using now – if any – and is it really biblical, solid, life-changing or is it just mediocre and perhaps even unbiblical? Where can we get really powerful discipleship materials (see here for some excellent Christian discipleship literature) and how can we start using such materials in the spiritual growth of the believers in our church? The literature should cover issues that the world is so busy attacking and areas that so many churches are negligent in teaching:

1. **Holiness:** What is moral purity in life and in thought, chastity, modesty –

and how and why we should strive to achieve it – without being unnecessarily legalistic but without shying away from this “touchy” subject.

2. **Evangelism:** How does God save a soul and what are all the reasons WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR – God’s law, God’s holiness, God’s hatred of sin, God’s eternal wrath against sinners (Hell), man’s lawlessness, his sinfulness, his depravity and his spiritual lostness, etc.

3. **Bible versions & Bible interpretation:** what Bible versions are most reliable and why, and how do we properly interpret passages in the Bible, especially where words have multiple meanings. See our articles on (i.e. biblical hermeneutics) for helpful literature on this subject.

Step 7: Don’t be unequally yoked with the state. Unincorporate! – 2 Corinthians 6:14:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

One of the craziest things that churches do and have been doing for many decades is incorporating themselves without fully understanding the ramifications of this measure. By incorporating, many churches think they are protecting themselves (the leadership) from lawsuits – and perhaps there is some legal protection afforded to corporations by “the state”. They also think they have to incorporate to be tax exempt. However, people voluntarily make themselves subservient to “the state” by incorporating, making themselves LEGALLY OBLIGATED to comply with state laws, including laws that control speech (hate speech for example). In addition, what most churches don’t realize is that there is no need to incorporate in order to be tax exempt. A church by virtue of being a church is automatically tax exempt. So check out the links below and start looking into un-incorporating your church today. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers (the state). Bear in mind that because “the state” wants you to be under their control, it may be extremely difficult if not impossible to unincorporate your church once you have subjugated yourselves to the state’s authority.

Conclusion

If we really are serious about serving our Lord and Master and if we really are looking forward to the words “well done thou good and faithful servant”, then we will take the words in this article seriously and start examining where we are at as individual Christians and as a local church and then start focusing on where we ought to be and what we need to do to get there.

Related Material On Unincorporating A

Church:

Unincorporate Your Church – With Care!
Reasons To Unincorporate Your Church
Unbiblical Incorporation Of Churches
Church Freedom and The Corporation Sole
501c3 Myths
The Truth About Church Incorporation
IRS Double-talk About Incorporating Your Church
