

About Hang Together

Who We Are

HANG TOGETHER

*"We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all
hang separately." – Benjamin Franklin*

RE: THE POWER OF CHURCH PROGRAMS?

Posted on December 21, 2012 by Daniel Kelly



Even though I basically talk for a living, I have a strong kinetic bias. That's because the only value to my talk is what it produces. If the court does not rule in my favor after I've had my say, then there was little point in consuming the oxygen required to say it. If my talk doesn't produce something for my client, he's not likely to lean over and compliment me on how well I explained the law, or the mellifluousness of my voice, or how well I alliterated the salient points, or how the PowerPoint presentation so perfectly complemented the presentation of our case. He'll more likely arch an eyebrow, level a quizzical stare at me, and wait for me to explain why he now has less money and no results. He doesn't care about the talk *qua* talk. Nor should he.

I doubt I'm the only one with an arched eyebrow, quizzically staring at the church. I'm waiting for an explanation for why I have less money and so little in the way of results. For those of us in the pews, it's all about the apps. Better organized and more effective please.

This may be impious to say so, but I'm really not interested at all in preaching and teaching *qua* preaching and teaching. Like my clients, I'm only interested in results. Preaching and teaching have value only to the extent they result in functional apps. Otherwise, it's just talk – of which we most assuredly do not need more.

We have more preaching and teaching now than we know what to do with. Literally. I don't mean "literally" as an intensifier (as a particularly . . . colorful . . . vice-president is apt to use it) – I actually mean that we have such a surfeit of preaching and teaching that it has overflowed our capacity to do anything with it. We have preaching and teaching from the pulpit. We have it on television. On the radio. On YouTube. On podcasts. In books, websites,

tracts, pamphlets, broadsides, circulars, and highways and byways. The *last* thing we need is more talk.

What we desperately *do* need is action (apps, if you prefer). This action won't happen without pastoral leadership. And leadership is not co-terminous with talk. One of the church's (American division) great organizational failings is the pastoral impulse to talk and then call it a day, expecting the congregation to organize itself and then do the work implied by the talk.

Well, I can promise you nothing significant is going to get done like that. After putting in a 70-75 hour work week, scratching out some time to spend with my family, and doing the bare minimum to keep the house from falling down around our ears and the property from getting swallowed by nature, there is no time left to envision, organize, and create the programs and structures necessary to bring a physical manifestation of the love of God to those in need. In this, I am not alone.

We, the people of the church, hire pastors specifically so they will envision, organize, and create. We hire them so that they can do this unhampered by the need to be out here in the workaday world with the rest of us. Now, I'm not saying we don't want to be engaged – we do! We are the foot soldiers, carrying into effect what leadership has envisioned and created. Because there are lots of us, we can each spend a little time rotating through the front-lines (as it were), and through this we'll get the job done. Leadership, however, requires a continual and significant infusion of time from a specific person. Leadership needs to be strategizing, organizing and directing. Leadership is why we hire pastors. It is not something from which they need to be freed.

However, if this is *not* the pastor's job, then let's say so explicitly. We need to hire *someone* to bring practical leadership to those of us who want to serve but don't have the capacity to envision, organize, and create. We'll think of a suitable title for such a person later, but let's get on with the hiring process.

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← God of Action, God of Institutions.
But Capacity of Individuals.

A Faith that Works →

1 Thought.



Kyle Ferguson

December 21, 2012 at 10:08 pm

I fully agree with everything you said. However, I call that vision-casting, leadership, encourage the heck out of the pew setter to attempt great things for God...the heart of preaching. What I'm saying is that pastors spend so much time creating flashy programs in areas where they aren't experts when what they should be doing is standing in the pulpit telling the business expert that

true religion is caring for widows and orphans and then challenging him to do it!

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