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A Publication of Church Supplies & Services | November 2015

Appreciating the Greatest Gift of All

Lead Article by
Averri LeMalle





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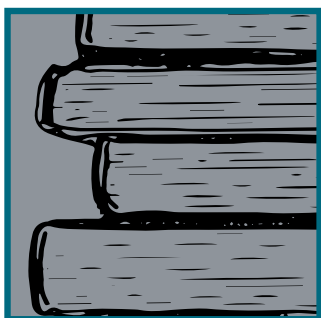
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From the Director

Gifts...they come in many shapes and forms. Some can be seen; others can only be felt from the heart. Some come with monetary value; others are priceless. Some gifts are useful while others are useless. Some are received well; others rejected. It all depends on the perspective of the recipient.

Last month my husband and I were on our annual trip to Upper Michigan for what we thought was going to be a little bow hunting and photographic capturing of the fall colors. Our trip turned out quite differently, but was one we will never forget.

We had been tossing around the idea of purchasing a house close to my brother's 80 acres. That way we could spend two or three months there each fall to capture the beauty of the changing of the seasons. Then my brother took me aside one day and said he would like to "gift" us some land to build a house on. What a gift! We love being together and deeply appreciate the beauty of his land.

The gift of land produced many other gifts—the oohs and ahs of picking out the maple cabinets and hickory hard floors, the cutting of branches and using them to outline the house and its future rooms, deciding which direction to face the cabin to capture the best view of God's creation. We ended each day with a grateful heart for the gift that has kept on giving.



That gift of land is much like the gift of God's Son. God didn't send His Son to die for us and end there. The gift was meant to go on giving and producing additional gifts. As we come to know Christ personally and accept God's gift, we need to keep the gift going and tell others about Him. God has also equipped us with spiritual gifts to serve and glorify Him in all that we do.

As I think about the upcoming seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas, I am thankful for God's sending His Son so that we can have the gift of salvation. I am grateful for the privilege of serving those in ministry and helping reduce costs to keep dollars going to ministry. I'm appreciative of our Vendors and Alliances who are willing to provide discounts to those in ministry.



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Patti Malott
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Connecting People and Resources

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cleansweep

by Joe Precup

The Gift of Worship through Clean Facilities

I am continually surprised that facility directors in corporate America have little to no idea what is involved in caring for a church, much less a mega-church. As an illustration, has anyone ever told you how nice it must be to work at a church or how nice it must be to work only on Sundays? We walk into office buildings weekly and are impressed with how clean they look. Let us take a moment to look at the differences between office buildings and churches.

Office buildings are full of adults Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Churches have adults, teenagers, children and babies utilizing the facility seven days a week from 6:00 am to midnight! Office buildings get cleaned from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm, but churches need cleaning all day long, and sometimes overnight. Yes, Class A office buildings have cafeterias, fitness centers and childcare, but churches have offices, classrooms, production rooms for children and youth, cafeterias, restaurants, nurseries, childcare, fitness centers, gyms, playgrounds, theatrical lighting and sound, broadcasting, weekly events, daily set-ups, calendar, medical, security, and on and on.

(Now for you property managers out there, I am not minimizing what you do to maintain a facility. But I want our church Business Administrators and Facility Managers to be proud and know they do everything you do and maybe more!)

I have been in the janitorial business for 27 years and have been involved with mega-church facilities for 22 years. I was baptized by fire in more ways than one. In 1993 I was approached to take over the cleaning and set-ups for a mega-church and I said yes! This became the first time in my life I ever thought about giving up or quitting. I pooled all my experience from cleaning Class A office buildings, the Ritz Carlton Hotel and the Post Oak YMCA fitness/community center. All that experience combined barely gave me enough information to serve this mega-church.

Thankfully, it all worked out and I am still involved with them today. My family and I found a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ because of this church. Church staff are talented, they have their hands full, they sacrifice, they have learned to partner with people, and there is nothing easy about their job, but it is very gratifying when eternal rewards are witnessed!

People come to your church to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ! Everyone, from the new member to the seasoned member and everyone on staff, will be affected by how well you maintain your facility. Visitors judge the church immediately: walking in the door, is the church clean and debris free? Do the restrooms smell and look nice? Are they stocked properly? Those judgments are made before the visitors go into Bible study or worship.

Bible study teachers come into the church, as does the pastor, and if the room or worship center is set up and cleaned properly they can focus on the Word they came to share. If not, their focus and attitude changes immediately to worrying about the room set-up and cleaning. The focus shifts from presenting the Word of God to moving tables and chairs and emptying trash.

To accomplish the weekly turnaround for "Report Card Day" every Sunday you, the church staff as well as your vendors must be at the top of your game. "Everyone is Needed," "Communication Is Paramount," "Partnership Equals Success," and "Inspect What You Expect" are a few ideas built into our company. Does your church follow these or similar ideals? If you are not sure of the answer, here are some questions to ask: Are responsibilities properly delegated? Is the staff properly trained? Do they have the proper tools? Are policies and procedures in place for calendar requests, set-ups and events? Are employees doing a job that they do well? Do you encourage development? Do you care about them? Is there a team approach where everyone chips in when one department is swamped? Do you have fun?

Everyone, from the new member to the seasoned member and everyone on staff, will be affected by how well you maintain your facility.

As far as teamwork is concerned, everyone needs to report building issues, air conditioning problems, lights out, suspicious people, building damage, and unsafe conditions. If that is the case, instead of just two eyes and ears, you have multiplied yours by the number of employees on staff.

I went to Disney World for facilities training in 1996. Back then they had 60,000 employees. They asked us, "How many janitors are on your staff?" We answered with numbers all over the place. They said 60,000! Walt Disney did not allow a staff member to walk by a piece of trash without picking it up! They also learned that people would hold a piece of trash for approximately 30 paces before dropping it on the ground. Disney now has trash cans every 30 paces. (No charge for that one!)

People come to Church to participate in support groups, Bible study, family activities, childcare, school, and Worship to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ! Let them immerse themselves in that experience to the fullest.

I challenge you to look at your facility weekly and ask, "Is my church Built, Set, Lit, Cool, Clean, and Safe?" +



Joe Precup

Joe has been in the Facility Services / Janitorial industry for 27 years.

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morepower^{to}you

By Michael Bernstein

The Gift of Knowledge...to Reduce Costs!

“Would your church or school like to be saving 30% off your energy rate for electricity?”

It is true that some of the largest churches that are CO-OP members have found an average of a 30% savings when they joined in our services of TES Energy Services, LP. TES is providing “under market” electricity contracts...a few of these large Houston churches taking advantage of these low rates, include Sagemont Baptist, South Main Baptist, Faithbridge United Methodist, Champion Forest Baptist, and Dallas Churches like Cornerstone Baptist Church and Covenant Church.

These rates have become achievable by grouping churches together with common contract start dates and bidding the entire combined load of the group to the Retail Electric Providers Community (REP).

With 100's of churches, schools and non profits participating in our group rates, we know our REP's community is continuously asking when the next aggregation will be available to bid on. Our REP relationship has taken years to develop in order to demand rates as low as what we are able to offer. Almost 100% of our church and school contracts are taking advantage of our group rates.

Please find out what your savings might be. Just email us a recent electricity bill to tespowerbuy@tesenergyservices.com or fax to 972-447-0400, we will begin by auditing the bill for unusual charges. With a few other forms that we will send to you for your signature, we will order a 12 month usage history, and then determine a savings analysis from a number of our key providers. You will receive a printed, detailed summary of your potential savings!

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to analyzing your potential savings in the near future. Our goal is to educate our customers of the savings that is available to their church, school or non-profit organization. ✦
Sincerely,



Michael Bernstein

TES Energy Services, LP
Phone: 832.516.8525
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Michael Bernstein is the CO+OP Account Manager for TES Energy Services, LP (TES). Michael possesses detailed knowledge of the energy industry, along with expertise in sales and marketing, training and development, customer relations operations and non-profit management. He covers the Houston and South Texas areas.

...the best gift a person can give to their organization is the gift of knowledge about how they can reduce their costs and put more money back into ministry. Patti Malott

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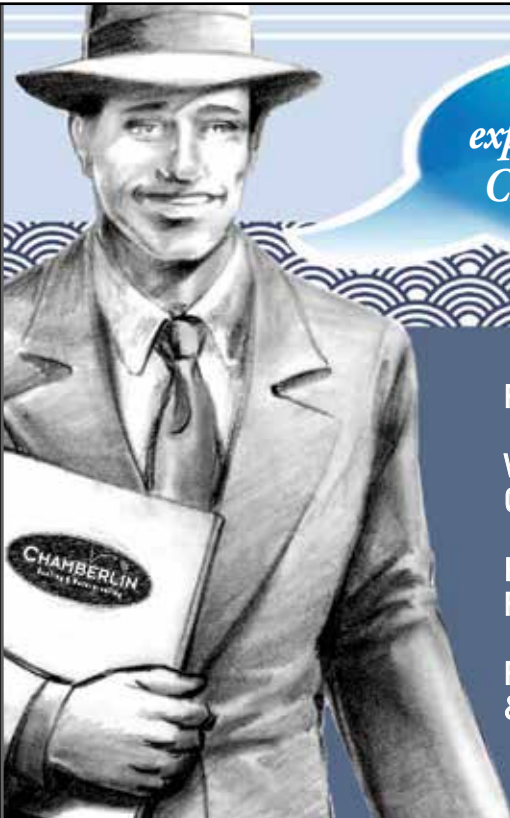
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The Gift of Service

by David Reed

What's in it for me? Even if not spoken, that is the thought of the majority of people as they go about their daily work. Unfortunately, we have grown up in an era when we are taught to do what it takes to gain the upper hand, get that promotion at work, or squeeze that extra dollar out of a client on the big business deal.

You may be saying: *"That's not me! I work at a church."* But this "look out for yourself" attitude is not limited to the business world. There are seminary students interning at a large church who are trying to prove themselves and win that rare full-time position on staff. There are soloists in the choir who are trying to get that next big solo and who may do quiet, discreet things to make them stand out above the others.



Living a life of service is so uncommon that when you come across someone who sincerely looks out for the interests of others above their own needs, you are drawn to that person and want to work for them. At the root of creating a culture of exceptional customer service in any organization is finding team members who want to serve their customers and co-workers.

Great customer service is not delivered by a “company,” but by individual team members who understand what it means to be “Difference Makers.” Yes, it is important to create a culture within a company where customer service is valued and modeled by the leadership. Having the support of those around you makes it much easier to deliver great service.

But what do you do if you work for an organization where delivering exceptional customer service is not part of the culture?

That is when you have to dig deep and remember what motivates you to deliver great customer service. Most likely it is a natural desire within your personality to serve others. Remember these key points when you find yourself struggling to serve your customers while your leaders and co-workers don't seem to care.

1. Check your Motive. When you are the only one in your group who is providing great service, remember that your objective is to care for your customer, not use the situation to make yourself look better than your co-workers.

2. Stay Focused. It is easy to get caught up in the problems and poor behaviors of leadership and your fellow team members. You can get distracted and pay more attention to what is not going right behind the scene than to your current customer you are attempting to serve.

3. Ignore Negative Comments. If you are the only one on your team attempting to take care of your customers, you will likely have to deal with negative comments from others who don't share your passion. Just as someone does not want to be shown up by a worker who is performing their duty at a faster pace, your co-workers may resent your positive attitude and make light of any compliments from a customer. Train yourself to ignore the critics!

4. Remain Positive. Picture a duck swimming on a pond. Unless something is chasing it, the duck normally looks calm and graceful. What do you think you would see if you had an underwater camera? Probably the duck paddling like crazy. We want our customers to see the top-of-the-water version of the duck, not the underwater version. The same thing applies when you have things going on behind the scene at your workplace that you may not be proud of or that are not good customer service practices. Your customers do not need to know that not everyone in your organization shares your passion for providing good service.

It is easy to provide great service when you love what you are doing.



LIFE IS SHORT!

How many years have you spent working for an organization or in a role that was unfulfilling? One thing I have realized over the past few years is how fast the years go by. (This hits home when you cross that mark of being statistically past the halfway mark of your time on earth!)

I am not suggesting that every day will be a party. Most jobs will have up and down cycles when you really enjoy what you are doing and then the next month you are looking for any way out. What I am saying is that you should look for ways to make the best out of every situation. Following are a few ideas that may help you start enjoying your work a little more.

- 1. Focus on relationships.** Most businesses have a product or service that they are selling. The temptation is to concentrate only on the financial side of the business and to overlook the people aspect of your work. Don't get me wrong: returning a profit or being a good steward of your resources is critical for long-term success, but it is not the total picture. Remember that your customers and co-workers are people with their own issues and needs.
- 2. Serve others.** Remember that the highest calling is to serve others. This could be a person who reports to you in the organization, a client, a church member, or a team member with whom you share responsibility for accomplishing a task. Life is not all about you!
- 3. Have fun!** Search for the positive aspects of your job. Don't take yourself too seriously. Do your best with the abilities you have been given, but keep in mind that work is not the ultimate reason why we are here on this earth.

- 4. Manage your time wisely.** A large portion of the stress associated with work comes when we get behind on our projects and have to work extended hours to meet a deadline. Get a jump on your assignments and allow for the unexpected.

There are estimates that almost 50% of the employed workforce is unhappy in their current job. Even if you have a job that is not exciting or challenging, do your best to enjoy each day! If you have the chance to find a job that aligns with your passion in life, go for it!

You can make a difference! Serving others is a privilege and a gift. Just as there are very few organizations that are known for their great service, there is also a small percentage of people who have the desire and skill needed to truly care for others. The good news is that one positive person in the middle of an organization full of negative individuals can make a huge difference and impact the overall reputation of the company with each customer with whom they come in contact. Be that person! Your attitude may even be contagious and lead others to catch your passion for service. Be a difference maker! Start a service revolution where you work. ✦



David Reed

David Reed is President of Customer Centered Consulting Group, an organization focused on helping others reach their potential through effective processes, world class customer service, and servant leadership.

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THE GIFT OF GIVING

by Virginia Johnson

You know it's Christmas when your great aunt's homemade fruitcake arrives at your door. But you don't like fruitcake and actually use it for your door, as a doorstep. Thus begins the awkward season of gift giving.

There are many aspects and questions to giving and receiving gifts. Do you buy something for your boss? Is it proper to take a hostess gift? Do you have to buy gifts for all your friends' children? Where is the peace and good will to men in all of this?

Here are answers to five questions we may struggle with during the holidays:

1. *If I receive a lavish gift, do I have to reciprocate in kind?* No. Gift giving is about the spirit or thought behind the giving. There is no need to match dollar for dollar. Do not stress over the amount to spend! Put time and thought into the gift and the receiver will know it's from the heart.

2. *As we get older, presents are not as important. How can we broach this subject?* Gather the clan and discuss options – give to a particular mission, or to a family in need, or draw names.

3. *We go to several parties. Should I take a hostess gift for every one?* If you are just dropping by, it's not necessary. But the rule of thumb is if there's food involved, it's a lovely gesture. A few suggestions are non-perishable sweets, a bottle of wine, an ornament, or a favorite book. You do not need to go all out. Again, it's the thought and the spirit that is noticed in our giving.

4. *My boss buys me a gift. Do I need to do the same?* No, you do not; however, if you are that gift-giving guru, you might ask a few of your peers to go in together and buy The Boss a gift.

5. *To re-gift or not?* Opt for not. Nothing would be more embarrassing than that gift's ending up in the original giver's hands.



You've opened your gift in front of your grandmother and thank her profusely. Is it a must to write her a thank-you note? No, it is not imperative. When you open a present in front of someone, your personal thanks is enough. But! A personalized note to your grandmother after Christmas will melt her heart.

When you get a gift via mail, your relationship with that person determines the method of thanks. If you're very close, a phone call will do; otherwise, write your thanks. It can be short and sweet such as this example:

Dear Mimi,

You know how much I love seashells and this beautiful book is perfect. Thank you for thinking of me and I hope to see you soon.

*Love,
Susie*

Your considerate call or note allows the giver to know that you received the gift. After all, she took time and money to think of you. Be thoughtful in return. Everyone loves "snail mail," and a handwritten note will always be treasured.

When you think of others first, put forth that extra effort and use good manners, you become the gift!

Merry Christmas! ✦



Virginia Johnson

Virginia Johnson works part-time at Faithbridge Church as the Women's Ministry Coordinator. In her spare time she loves to teach manners to people, knowing that good manners are tools for life. You can visit her website at www.mannersplus.com.

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Appreciating the Greatest Gift of All

by Averri LeMalle

What is it that causes us to suffer from a deterioration of appreciation for gifts we received long ago? I ask the question with an awareness of my own personal flaw. As recently as this summer, for example, I spent hours perusing the bookshelves in a gift shop, gathering books by the armload with the intention of adding them to my personal library. Only after my wife surveyed my selection and reminded me that I had already received one of the books as a gift a few years ago, did I begin to reflection on books I already had in collection. Admittedly, I love books, but even the book-lover in me failed to remember the possession of and experience with books I do (and should) treasure. What was it that created the mental glitch? Why did I need another person to refresh my memory and restore my sense of appreciation?

I doubt that I am the only one who has had such an experience. Perhaps it wasn't books for you. It may have been a photograph, a DVD, an item of clothing, a song, a pair of earrings or set of cuff-links, or some other treasured item that once brought great appreciation—appreciation that later became dulled. This deterioration of appreciation for gifts is an aspect of our human condition, and if we are not careful we lose appreciation for the greatest gift of all.

The greatest gift of all is our salvation in Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3: 16-17). This particular scripture has been coined by some as the thesis statement of the gospel account. As a child, I was compelled to rehearse these verses until their meaning was ingrained into my very being: Salvation is a gift to the world from God who loves all in the world, including me (and you). Perhaps you, too, memorized these verses, spoke of them around the kitchen table, prayed thanks for their truth at bedtime as a child. Maybe for you it was during adulthood that you first discovered Christ and sat earnestly with accountability and prayer partners discussing God's Word and His goodness and the reality of salvation. I wonder though if as the chasm

from our first days with Christ to our present circumstances and duties widens, our true appreciation for salvation is diluted by the distance of time. I could pray, "May it never be!" Unless I play an active role in ensuring that the joy of the gift in Christ Jesus is renewed daily, however, I remain subject to the familiar deterioration of appreciation for God's greatest gift and so do those friends and loved ones whom God has allowed to be in my inner circle. Just as my wife reminded me of treasures I already held at home, we must be vigilant in reminding each other of the gift of salvation and in "prepar[ing] our minds for action setting our hope fully on the grace that will be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ."ⁱ

The very precious gift of salvation is not some treasured keepsake or artifact housed neatly on a shelf or tucked away in a drawer at home. When we accept Christ, not only are we granted the gift of salvation and eternal life, but also the Holy Spirit takes residence in us. We become God's dwelling place. The presence of the Lord in each of us who has accepted Christ means we have access to our gift at any time of day or night. Jesus comes as a gift to be received, not as an artifact to behold. As He gifts us in salvation, His presence comes to bear in our lives. Jesus is both the giver and the gift—a gift that came with a higher price tag than any other gift we will ever receive. That price tag is the very life of Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross at Calvary to satisfy the demands of justice and meet the needs of grace, thereby allowing grace—God's unmerited favor—to be freely extended to mankind. The writings of the Apostle Paul to believers in Ephesus reminds us today that it was "by grace [we] have been saved through faith. And this is not [our] own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."ⁱⁱ Therefore the gift that Jesus paid cancelled a debt we could not have satisfied on our own. Jesus was made to be sin though He knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.ⁱⁱⁱ What a gift! The Lord became what we were without ever ceasing to be what He is to save us from our sinful state. This is a message we ought not marginalize or minimize. Instead, we must magnify the message in our own eyes and our own lives: Jesus is the greatest gift we have ever and will ever receive.

As recipients of this God-sized gift, we are granted acquisition of a greater character—a character birthed from our connection with God. Jesus died for us, so the least we can do is live for Him. We are new creations in Christ Jesus and are compelled to “offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” for his usage and for the operation of gifts He extends to all those who trust Him.^{iv} We must never undervalue the gift of God. We must never forget or fail to appreciate the greatest gift.

Jesus came to earth gifting others. The pages of scripture reveal countless accounts of Jesus giving hope to the hopeless, healing to the hurting, guidance to the lost, and salvation to the world. God is the gift of life, and the gifts just keep on coming. Remember Jesus declared, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”^v A spiritual life abundant in grace is what God offers us in Christ Jesus.

God is such a giving God that He not only gifts us with salvation in Christ Jesus, but He gifts each believer with at least one spiritual gift useful for carrying out His will during our lives on Earth. Romans 12:6 admonishes us that “having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them . . .”^{vi} Spiritual gifts include such gifts as serving, teaching, wisdom, leadership, mercy and giving. The spiritual gifts are referenced in numerous passages of scripture: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 28-31; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11. These gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with. As recipients of grace and spiritual gifts, we must strive to work effectively and efficiently to realize our full potential in Christ. Every believer must discover and employ his/her spiritual gift. Tools such as gift assessments are useful for discovering spiritual gifts and their application during our lives on Earth (see <http://www.championforest.org/volunteer/church/spiritualgifts.php> for one such assessment tool). Our usage of our spiritual gifts reflects the glory of God and our appreciation for Him. Indeed, appreciation for a gift is demonstrated in the utilization of the gift. When I failed to remember the books already housed in my library, it was because I first failed to

actually frequent the pages of text. Consequently, I failed to appreciate the gift of receiving those books in the first place. Likewise, when we fail to activate the gifts God gives us, we not only put ourselves at risk of forgetting, but we also put ourselves at risk of failing to appreciate God. What a great risk! We must challenge ourselves as beneficiaries of grace to reflect the goodness of God and our giftedness from God. “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”^{vii}

As I close this article, allow me to offer three practical measures we can take to maintain appreciation for God’s gifting through our actions. The acronym ACT provides a helpful mnemonic for remembering how to employ appreciation of God in our daily lives:

- A** - Acknowledge the Giver and the Gift.
- C** - Commit to operating in your assigned area of giftedness.
- T** - Trust God to use you as a vessel of honor for His glory.

As God redeemed our value through His giving of Christ Jesus, we must demonstrate our value by allowing Him to work through us and in us. Realize that the Holy Spirit is active within each believer and must never be treated as a stored artifact ready to be accessed at some future, undetermined time. The time is always now. ✚

Averri LeMalle

Averri LeMalle serves as Teaching Pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. He believes that we are placed together in our service to the Kingdom in order to champion God’s will being done “on earth as it is in heaven.”

ⁱ1 Pt. 1:13

ⁱⁱEphesians 2:8

ⁱⁱⁱ2 Co. 5:21

^{iv}Romans 12:1

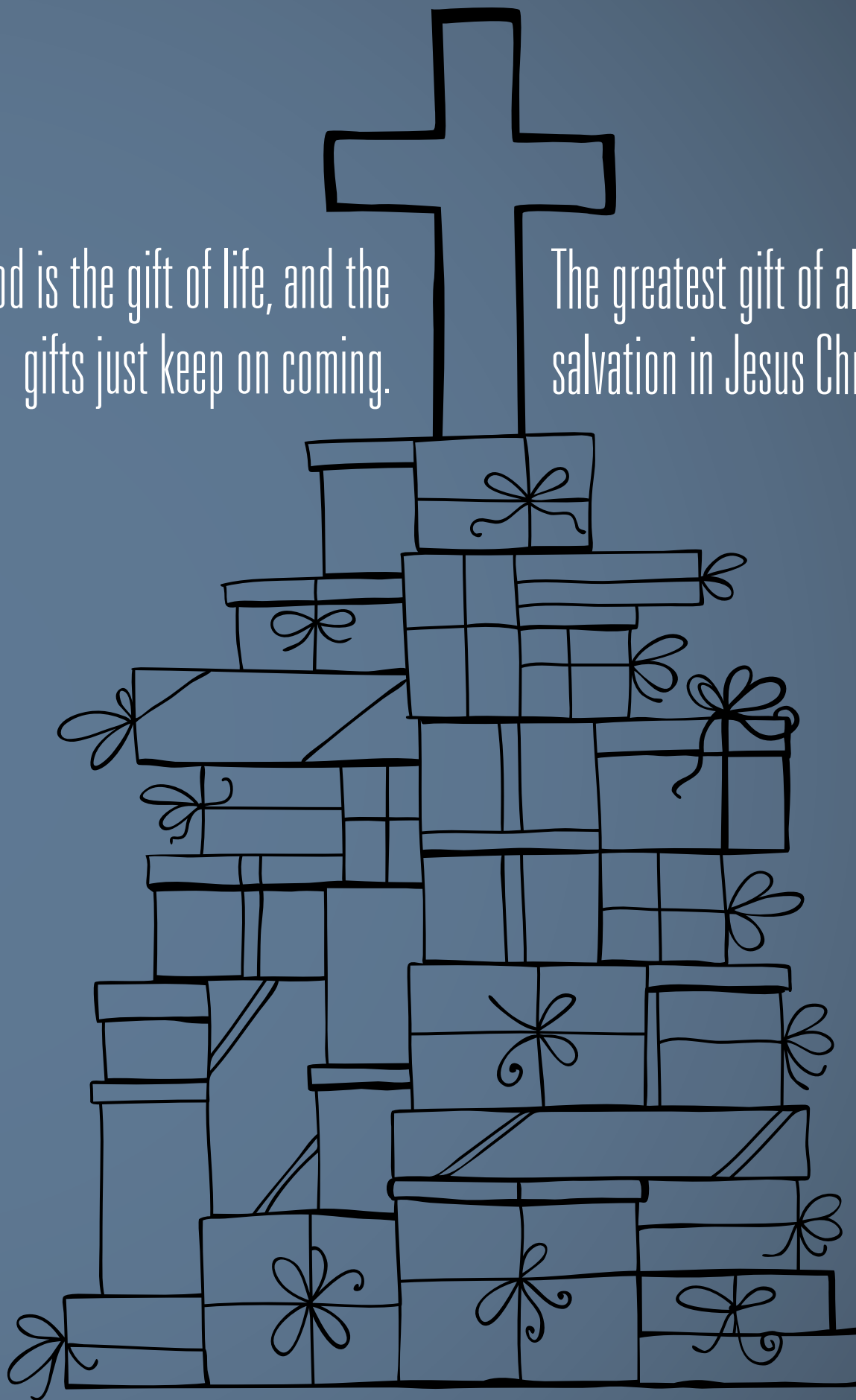
^vJn. 10:10

^{vi}Rom. 12:6

^{vii}Eph. 2:10

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BUILDING USAGE: SPREADING THE GIFT OF THE GOSPEL

By Paula Burns and Gary Benson

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

The greatest gift ever given is outlined above in John 3:16. God gave His only Son so that we might have eternal life, and not only do we now have the ability to be in fellowship with the Lord, but we can also have life and live life more abundantly! What a blessing and privilege it is to be the Body of Christ. We know that “the church” is really composed of the people who make it up, not the facilities that we meet in. However, God has given us these buildings and grounds to help aid in His ministry and also to utilize in our outreach to the community at large. And as stewards of this gift, we have responsibilities for overseeing how the facilities are used.

Our meetings with churches regarding insurance matters have identified building usage and/or the lack of established procedures thereof as one of the larger legal risks the organizations face. Building usage procedures are among the most important to implement, as they specify who can use the church facilities and for what purpose. Churches also have to be mindful of tax considerations that can be associated with outside building usage as well as additional liability exposure.

The **Building Use Agreement** is extremely important, as this is the legal contract that outlines the terms and conditions and is the first line of protection for the church against claims of discrimination, medical payments, and other tort-related liability.

Outlined below are some essential components of the Building Use Agreement:

- **Definition of Building Usage**

- Area of facilities or actual building to be utilized
- Type of activity
- Dates and times for activity/event

- **Fee Agreement**

- Disclosure of fee
- Non-Fee agreement

Be sure to consult your CPA regarding what guidelines to follow when fees are waived. Example: For 501c3 entities, if the activity is in line with the mission of the church, sometimes fees can be waived.



• **Statement of Purpose:** This is where it is stated that the facility usage has to be consistent with the mission and/or beliefs of the church.

- VERY IMPORTANT: Be sure to consult your attorney. If you wish to restrict facility usage to only activities consistent with your organization's religious beliefs, you will need to say so here and to show how it is connected to your Statement of Faith. *After the Same Sex Marriage ruling, this has become increasingly important to many churches who do not wish to rent facilities out to same-sex couples for their ceremonies and receptions.*

• **Hold Harmless/Release Language:**

- Have your attorney draw up your hold-harmless language releasing the church from liability for the event/activities, etc.

• **Defining the Entity Type Utilizing the Building**

- Is it a "For-Profit" or a "Non-Profit" organization? Yes or No

- Does the organization have a 501c3 filing? Yes or No

° NOTE: Be sure to consult your CPA regarding what constitutes non-related business income.

• **Compliance with All Laws, Rules and Regulations**

• **Insurance**

- Is the organization insured? Yes or No

- If Yes (important), then complete the following recommended insurance addendum which requires the church to be named as an additional insured:

ABC Organization will name ABC church as an additional insured on their General Liability policy. This insurance shall remain in full force and effect for the duration of the building usage and shall be evidenced by a Certificate of Insurance.

What about those non-profit organizations that are not insured?

This is the question proposed every time we visit with a church regarding building usage. Take into consideration what activities are being held and their frequency of usage. For example, If a community "Quilting Club" is utilizing the facilities every few weeks and it is only for adults who are quilting and doing no other activities, this would not rank high on the risk meter. However, if a community soccer team wants to utilize the church's fields, you have the two large triggers on the risk meter, those being:

1. Athletic Activities
2. Youth Activities



Risk increases with youth activities and athletic activities. When reviewing building usage requests like this, it is important to remember that these rank high on the risk meter and it is recommended that those organizations be required to be insured.

Breaking this down, if uninsured groups want to utilize the church's facilities, the church has several options:

1. Do not allow the activities to any uninsured groups.
2. Allow the activities if the risk is low (as explained with the "Quilting Club" example above).
3. Roll the dice. Not recommended! If an injury results, the church could wind up being named in a lawsuit.
4. Adopt the activity as a program of the church.

Note: At times churches decide to bring programs under their own covering and extend them to the community as a ministry of the church – but just be sure it truly is a ministry of the church. Be sure to do all of the due diligence in screening practices and to risk-manage it just as though it is your own ministry, because now it is!

When we step back and look at the big picture, we are reminded that the overall purpose of attending to the operational details of the facilities that our Lord has entrusted to us is to use them to achieve His work and for His glory. Faithful stewardship of church facilities must include attention to how these facilities are used, and must include following legal guidelines for the protection not only of the church, but also of all who make use of the facilities. ✦



Paula Burns and Gary Benson

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MINISTRY AND ALSO TO UTILIZE IN
OUR OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY
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By Ashley Voss

The Gift of Year-End



Year-end is a time of giving: from God's greatest gift of the Christmas child, to families giving thanks during our nation's Thursday holiday. From the wrapped gifts placed under a freshly-cut pine tree, to the shoebox gifts shipped to children overseas. From the year-end bonuses given at the workplace (hopefully!), to the tax break "gifts" received for timely year-end contributions.

Churches have a unique role to administer gifts of contributions that generally reach their largest volume during this season. Here are a few tips to steward year-end giving and maintain a spirit of thankful joy in the process.

Pastors and Administrators

Ephesians 4:16 tells the Church, "We are being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part." Whether you are your church's Business Administrator, Director of Finance, Payables Accountant or Monday-morning volunteer contribution counter, your role is critical to the overall mission of the church. And as in riding a tandem bicycle, when the Administrator is in sync with the Pastor of the church, that mission goes smoother and further. So are you in sync? If not, take some time and communicate the critical roles that you each play in both pastoring and administering year-end giving. Begin now to be fitted together by what you jointly supply.

Year-End Cut-Off

Communicate with your members and staff clearly and early in the season about the cut-off policies and procedures for year-end giving. Do your members know the cut-off day, time and place for your church to receive year-end gifts? Does your church staff know the IRS cut-off rules for what constitutes a 2015 contribution versus a 2016 contribution? Gifts must be received in-hand by the church or postmarked before midnight January 1, 2016 in order for those gifts to qualify as 2015 contributions (and online gifts also



must be date “stamped” similarly). Have you talked with your staff and your Online-Giving Administrator to ensure that your personnel and systems are robust and ready to handle the higher volume of giving and year-end cut-off? To avoid confusion and disappointment, consider how you can utilize the pulpit, bulletin, newsletter, Facebook, website, or a combination of these to communicate clearly with your members well before year’s end. Don’t keep these year-end giving policies secret – recognize them as strategic, both to the mission of the church and to the personal taxes of donors. The last thing you want to hear is members or staff say on January 2, 2016, “... I meant to give you my gift last week, but I forgot ...,” or “... but I was on vacation ...,” or “... but you never told me there was a year-end cut-off rule” Communicate your church’s and the IRS’s policies well in advance to leave them no excuse!

A gentle reminder: the date on the check or the size of the gift does not determine the year in which a contribution is received. Year-end cut-off is a policy matter, not a personnel decision. Protect your staff from unnecessary challenges from donors who may not give in a timely fashion. If a gift is received in the new year but is not postmarked before December 31, 2015, then it is a 2016 donation. Period. This is a legal matter and is not open to interpretation. Clear, upfront communication will protect your staff, church and donors.

Donor Designations: Restrictions versus Preferences

Remind your staff and members that there is a significant difference between donor “preferences” or suggestions, which are NOT restricted – and donor restrictions, which are. Whether or not a gift is restricted will depend largely on your gift acceptance policy and what is communicated between you and your donors. If your church has donor-restricted funds or plans to start a new fund, make sure to educate your members about the church’s approved donor-restricted funds. Be careful, especially at year’s end, not to receive a gift that is restricted by a donor for a purpose that is not within the mission of the church. As a general rule: do not accept a donor-restricted gift unless the church has previously approved and established a fund for that purpose.

If, on the other hand, your church does not accept any restricted gifts, then openly communicate that policy. In this case you could still remind donors that they may preference a gift by suggesting that it be used, for example, for the Christmas pageant or the food pantry. Ultimately, however, unrestricted gifts are used at the discretion of the church and could be directed instead to “where needed most.” (See the Banknotes column in the August/September 2015 issue of CO+OP Magazine for more insights into designated giving.)

Noncash Gifts

Matthew 13:44 reminds us of the value of the Kingdom of Heaven to him who found it in a field: "From joy over it he goes and sells all that he had and buys that field." The joy we receive in Christ moves us to exchange worldly possessions for heavenly treasure. Therefore be prepared and careful when receiving noncash gifts from those who are going "all in." The IRS requires special reporting for most noncash gifts. As a general rule the church should acknowledge receipt of noncash donations, but the dollar value should not be stated (it is the donor's responsibility to determine value). This includes stock donations: only send the donor acknowledgment of the number of shares and the date received, not the value. If the noncash gift is a vehicle, boat, trailer, or similar, be extra cautious. Such gifts require additional reporting to the IRS. For example, if a donor completes IRS form 8283 for a noncash car donation, the church will need to sign the form to acknowledge receipt. In addition, the church will need to file IRS form 8282 if the church subsequently sells the car. Depending on your specific circumstance, consult with your CPA to ensure that you complete the appropriate legal forms.

As an alternative to receiving a potentially complicated noncash gift, encourage your donor to sell the item first, and then to donate the proceeds to the church. Sometimes the reason donors give large noncash gifts is because they don't want the hassle of selling the item themselves! Don't receive any noncash items that are more trouble, or risk, than they're worth.

The Largest Gift

May God bless you and your church through this season! And regardless of whether your church receives the largest gift of two small copper coins – or a surplus of donations much less (see Luke 21), may you know the riches of His grace (see Ephesians 1), which He lavished on us, the Church, "the fullness of Him who fills all in all." ✦



Ashley Voss

Ashley Voss is a member and shareholder of the professional team of Ratliff & Associates. A member of the Texas Society of CPAs, he is both a presenter and committee member for several non-profit groups in Texas.



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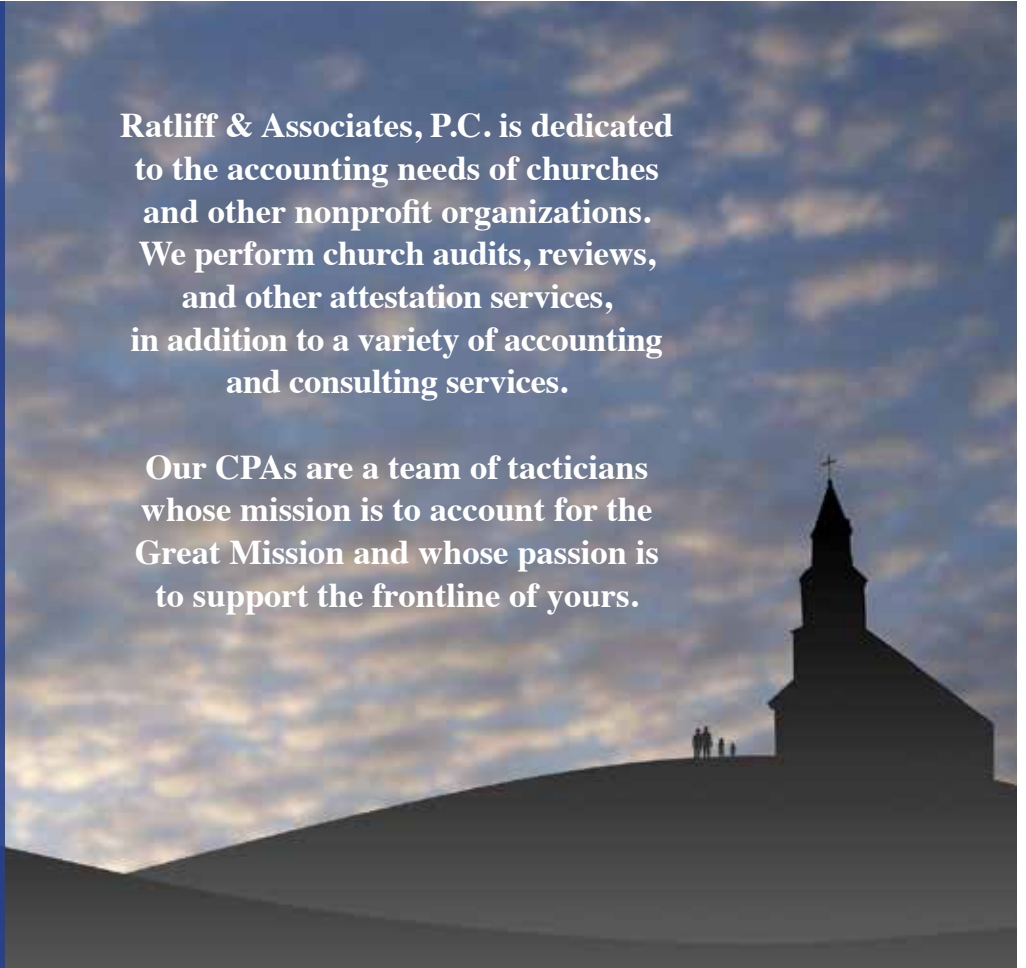
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The Gift of Hope

**KEEP CALM
AND
REMAIN
HOPEFUL**

By CJ Malott

The British were starting to get nervous. Many were predicting massive air strikes over major cities with World War II looming. Morale was low and the public seemed to be on the verge of panicking. That's when the British government created a campaign to produce and distribute posters all over the country. Three different phrases were chosen with one that became the main message, a message that simply stated **Keep Calm and Carry On**.

It is hard to determine exactly how effective that campaign was in 1939, but there is no doubt it lives on in 2015 through countless parodies. Maybe you are a sports enthusiast and you believe that your team should **Keep Calm and Win THE Game!** Maybe you are a foodie and believe everyone should **Keep Calm and Eat a Cupcake**. Perhaps you prefer the pacifist approach with **Keep Calm and Let It Go** (my apologies if you now have the song stuck in your head), or you simply find yourself in a situation where you want nothing more than to hear **Keep Calm I'm a Doctor**.

If you were really honest, it might be more realistic to skip the common phrase and instead freak out a little bit, scream as loudly as possible, kick something (not the pets), or just panic and run around like a chicken with its head cut off. Let's face it, we are living in a fallen world, one that many might say is going to a certain place in a certain hand-basket, and it only seems to be getting worse. Panicking might be a more realistic response, but reality, for those choosing to follow Christ, is that we ultimately should **Keep Calm and Remain Hopeful**, especially in what seems like a hopeless world.

Think about it. We possess the gift of hope, and it is that gift which we should be sharing with a hopeless world. The world may define hope as a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. We often hope for our favorite sports team to win the championship game, we hope that we won't lose our jobs, or we hope we picked the lucky numbers for the Mega Million drawing. Right now how many of us are hoping Iran does not do anything crazy with their newfound freedom of power? These uses of the word *hope* are made in a manner in which we cannot control what we want the outcome to be.

But if we have given our lives over to Christ, here is real hope: Romans 15:13 says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." We abound in hope because the God of hope gives it to us. 149 times we read the word *hope* throughout scripture, with the vast majority pointing to the hope we have in knowing Christ. This is not some superficial hope that comes and goes in fleeting moments: instead this is an eternal *hope* that interjects itself into our daily lives.

Now it is not uncommon for us to forget that our eternal hope in Christ does not exempt us from trials and suffering. We do not get to subscribe to the idea that if we are in Christ, then we are free from all of the fallen world's problems. Just the opposite, God promises us trials (1 Peter 1:6, Matthew 10:34-36, John 15:18-21) and times when we will be persecuted. Let there be no doubt that life will always be tough, even as we submit our lives to Him.

But the gift of hope reminds us that everything that happens here on earth is pointing to Christ and our ultimate glorification that comes from knowing Him. Look at what Peter writes in one of his letters:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through the faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5

When we read the Word of God we can know for certain that we have a secure and certain future in Christ, who will never allow us to suffer beyond His control. He will never leave us, nor will He ever forsake us. He is our anchor in the present and for the future. He sees all, knows all, controls all, and in Him we have our eternal hope that provides temporary peace in a very negative world.

It is easy for us to remember the gift of grace, and what an amazing gift that is to be allowed into a relationship with Christ, not based on our own merit, but on faith in Him. More and more we talk about the gift of the Holy Spirit that leads us in discernment and conviction among other things. But we forget the gift of hope, and it is one very significant gift that we cannot afford to forget. It is that gift that allows us to keep calm and truly carry on. It is a gift given to us from God once we enter a relationship with His Son, and it is a gift that He gives freely to all who surrender to Him.

We live in a broken world, one that is low on morale and seemingly on the verge of panic. It is a world that is longing for someone to give it hope. May we provide it not through a bunch of posters and campaigns, but simply by having intentional relationships with the very purpose of carrying the Gospel, and the gift of hope along with it, to those hopelessly walking among us. ✚



CJ Malott

CJ Malott is the Family Pastor at Fielder Church in Arlington, Texas, where he oversees the Preschool, Children's and Student Ministries. He has spent 21 years serving local churches across Texas, and is always looking for new and innovative ways to be effective in juggling

several ministry areas, his family and life. Feel free to contact CJ at cjmalott@fielder.org, or follow him on Twitter @cjmalott.

Panicking might be a more realistic response but reality, for those choosing to follow Christ, is that we ultimately should *Keep Calm and Remain Hopeful* especially in what seems like a hopeless world.



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soundbytes

By Nick Nicholaou

Telecommuting Can Work!

Some members of our (MBS') team have been telecommuting since the 1990s. I'm often asked how I know whether it's working for us. The unspoken question is, "How do you know you're getting a full day of work in exchange for a full day of pay?" That is an excellent question, and one every employer wrestles with— whether their staff works in the office, on the road, or from home! And the answer is the same regardless of where employees work:

Does the amount of employee output meet or exceed the expectations of the employer?

The Challenge

Let's face it: even employees who work in offices can under-produce. They can waste time doing things their employer hasn't asked them to do, and their output suffers accordingly. That can also be true for employees who work on the road or from home.

Studies show that employees spend a high percentage of time on websites that are not related to their job, emailing friends and family, and texting friends and family while at work. Doing so on a break— which is personal time— is acceptable; but is doing so while on "company" time okay? Probably not.

So I recommend two things to help in this area:

- *Employers*, give your team members clear guidance on what you believe they should be able to accomplish in the time they are at work. If they exceed your expectations, reward them for their diligence and capability! If they under-produce, let them find employment elsewhere that is better suited for their skill-set and motivation.

- *Employees*— especially those who are Christians— the Bible encourages you to do your work as though working for the Lord Himself! Writing to those who were enslaved to their employers (a far worse condition of employment than most of us experience today), Paul said in Colossians 3:22-25: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism." (NIV)

And telecommuting has some significant advantages! Studies show that it increases employee morale and job enjoyment. And it reduces employer cost because of the reduction in office space that must be maintained. Some employers also find that employees who work from home are willing to do so for less salary too.

The Technology

Mobile devices are the obvious answer to many who think of working from off-site. Notebook computers, tablets, and smartphones are good for this; but they are only part of the answer. And technically, even desktops can be easily set up for remote access. But what about connecting to the data on your network vs locally stored files?

It is surprising how often I talk with church managers who don't know they already have the tools necessary to enable telecommuting. I don't think our firm has engineered a network that *didn't* have this free tool configured in a very long time!

It is surprising how often I talk with church managers who don't know they already have the tools necessary to enable telecommuting.

Since before the turn of the century the technology has been freely available in Windows networks to connect remotely, and to do so securely. Originally called *Terminal Services*, remote desktop access is fairly easy to set up. All that is required is a modern version of Windows Server, and Client Access Licenses (CALs) for those who will connect remotely. And the CALs, which can be installed for concurrent access, only cost about \$19 each (charity license pricing).

Cross Platform Capable!

I work on a Mac. I access our Windows-only database and accounting system via Remote Desktop. The applications to do so are free (*Microsoft Remote Desktop*), and they consume very few resources on the Mac. For those on Macs who run a lot of Windows applications, we recommend doing so via a virtual Windows computer in VMware Fusion.

My favorite app for running a remote desktop on an iPad is also Microsoft Remote Desktop. It's free, and it works well.

Yes, telecommuting can work! It takes diligence and trust on the part of the employer, and needs to be matched by diligence and integrity on the part of the employee. But that's really true of any employer/employee relationship, regardless of whether the location is an office, on the road, or at home. ✦



Nick B. Nicholaou

Nick Nicholaou is President of MBS, an IT consulting firm specializing in church and ministry computer networks, VoIP, and private Cloud hosted services. You can reach Nick at nick@mbsinc.com, and may want to check out his firm's website (www.mbsinc.com) and his blog at <http://ministry-it.blogspot.com>.



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managementmatters

by Lee J. Colan

Quit Managing Your Time ... and Manage Your Attention

Don't spend your day constantly battling the clock – it's a battle you won't win. Instead, decide what your priorities are and focus your attention on them.

No matter what you do, time marches on at its own pace – tick, tick, tick. There's nothing you can do to change that (unless you can travel close to the speed of light). Time is a great equalizer: it runs at the same speed for everybody, rich or poor, jet pilot or snail farmer. You can't manufacture time, you can't reproduce time, you can't slow time down, or turn it around and make it run in the other direction. You can't trade bad hours for good ones either.

What you can manage, however, is your attention. Attention is a resource we all possess. Your attention reflects your conscious decisions about which activities will occupy your time. You are where your attention is, not necessarily where your body is.

The first step is to precisely understand your priorities. There's a big difference between managing your attention to accomplish priorities and checking off items on your to-do list. Your natural tendency is to do what is fun, convenient, or absolutely necessary at any given time – but your true priorities may not fit into any of those categories. So ask yourself, "If I could accomplish only one thing right now, what would that one thing be?" Your answer will quickly identify your top priority, which is where you should be directing your attention.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the World War II general who went on to become a popular President of the United States, used what is now called the Eisenhower Method for managing attention. After identifying the tasks confronting him, he drew a square and divided it into four quadrants. Each task was then designated to one of the four quadrants, according to which of the 4 D's was the most appropriate: Do it, dump it, delegate it, or defer it.

	Important	Unimportant
Urgent	Do It	Delegate It
Non Urgent	Defer It	Dump it

Be sure to distinguish between "urgent" and "important" activities. Important activities are beneficial and should be accomplished, if not right away, then eventually. Urgent activities are time sensitive, but not necessarily crucial to your bigger goals.

As you identify priorities, be realistic about what you can accomplish. Be honest with yourself about what you truly want to achieve in your life and work. Where do you want to invest your attention? Although important tasks are your top priorities, most of the time these are not the things that appear to be urgent. Don't be fooled into thinking that whatever seems urgent is worth taking your attention from your most important goal. Eisenhower's mantra was "What's important is seldom urgent, and what's urgent is seldom important." Less important priorities should not receive more attention than more important priorities.

Manage your attention today and win tomorrow. ✚



Lee J. Colan

Lee J. Colan, Ph.D. is founder of The L Group (www.theLgroup.com), a consulting firm that equips and inspires leaders at every level. Colan has also authored 13 leadership books that have been translated into 10 languages, including the

bestselling *Engaging the Heart and Minds of All Your Employees*. His latest book is *Stick with It: Mastering the Art of Adherence*.



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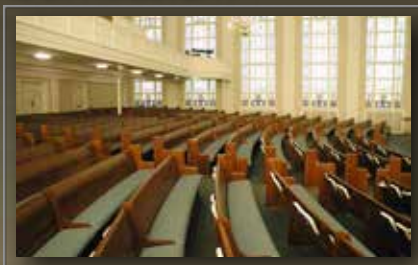
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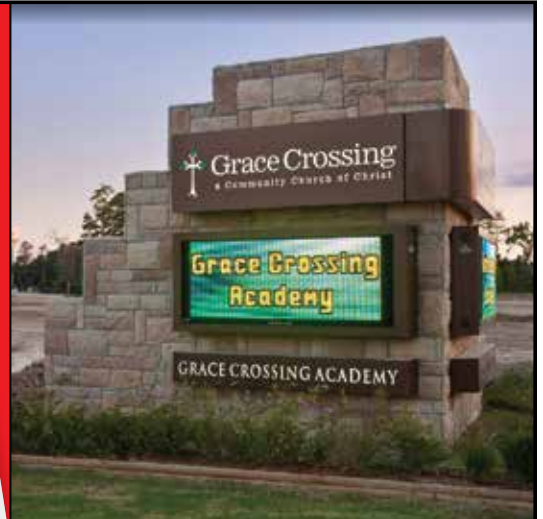
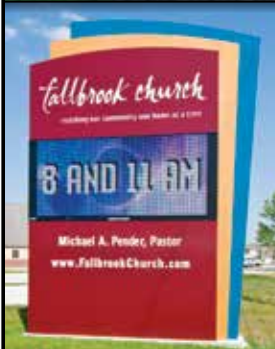
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