

T.E.A.C.H.

Leading with Passion

Christian
Education
Department

Volume 7, Issue 3

May, June and July

Leaders that are effective possess definiteness of purpose, a clear focus of how to accomplish that purpose, and a sense of passion or burning desire that keeps them committed until the purpose is realized. It is impossible to remove any of these elements without irreparable damage to the realization of the purpose.

Without a definite purpose there are no clear outcomes to work toward. Without a well defined, step by step plan for mobilizing available resources for the realization of the purpose it will never be anything more than wishful thinking. Without a sense of disciplined passion there will be too many obstacles to overcome and the experience will be too demanding and draining to bring to completion.

Easter is a powerful season of celebration for believers all over the world. I believe it is the essence of leading with passion. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, came in flesh to live out His mission before us. Easter would never have been possible if Jesus had not arrived with a clear understanding of His purpose in coming to our world. If He had not also known how to accomplish the mission entrusted to Him by His Father there would be no victory for us today. If His heart had not also been ablaze with a passion for doing the will of His Fa-

ther He never would have gotten to Gethsemane much less lasted through it and the Cross.

Jesus lived out a clear understanding of the will of His Father before He ever asked anyone else to do so. Step by step He gathered the necessary resources to bring about the realization of His Father's will. Day by day and experience by experience He displayed a passionate commitment to finishing the work He had been given to do. As the time of His crucifixion neared He worked diligently to duplicate His awareness of mission in others. He taught carefully the next steps for carrying out the mission in His absence. He emphasized the infilling of the Holy Spirit as the only true source of God honoring passion.

Good leaders never ask others to do the things they are unwilling to do themselves. Jesus understood clearly the things that are important enough to fight for and if necessary to die for. He learned those things by spending time in the presence of His father. Jesus modeled a leadership style that evidenced a nurturing and cultivation of both His heart and His head. He always knew what to do and had the passion to get it done. He molded everything He expected His disciples to be and He also lived before them a clear example of all He asked them to do.

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The Power of Passion Paul Burgett

Have you ever thought about the power of Passion? Not the Eau De Toilette spray for women called "Passion" by Elizabeth Taylor, but something more spiritual. I'm not talking about just an emotion or a feeling. I'm not talking about something sensual or romantic.

The passion I'm referring to is defined by Webster's as: A STRONG, EXTRAVAGANT FONDNESS, ENTHUSIASM, OR DESIRE FOR SOMETHING. I'm talking about the need for us to have a strong, extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, and desire for God. What effect can this passion have on Christian Education?

The teachers and preachers that have touched me the most all had a passion for what they said which seemed to spring from a genuine spiritual burden for people, which is different from just loving to teach or preach. I think lessons and messages are easier to love than people.

Someone once said that *Passion can't be taught-it must be caught*. I have been blessed to be exposed early in my Christian days to teachers of great passion. My first pastors and teachers in the little church I grew up in may not have been to the local seminary but OH how they loved God, and people.

Some of my fondest memories of Circleville Bible College are not the sermons I heard in Chapel but the passion I felt from my teachers. I remember being a wiseguy and asking Ms. Molin after one Historical Books class if she knew Moses personally. With a serious look on her face she said she talked to him once when she was very, very young. (I almost believed her!) Like passionate teachers today she let the word live in her and it showed.

This passion is not just a passion for the Bible. After more than three decades as a pastor-teacher, I've become convinced that loving to teach is not the passion that changes the lives of students. There are many wrong motivations for teaching and preaching. Some do it because they are "power hungry" or have selfish ambition.

Paul speaks of these motivations in Philippians 1:15, *"It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense*

of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains."

Though Paul was happy that Christ was being preached, passionate teachers desire to teach so that the lives of their students can be touched for Christ.

The devil tries to keep Christians preoccupied with themselves instead of a needy world. If you find yourself seldom concerned about your motivations, and you are a hard-driving, success-oriented person, the Lord may have some words specifically for you about holy passion. Holy passion is a pure, mandate from God. It is a call to complete a task or a mission that He started. Holy passion drives you to succeed because of a spiritual burden for people. You believe that God intends to accomplish this special work through you. It is His will, not yours.

Do you hunger to teach with holy passion for lost people? Have you heard stories of D.L. Moody and Charles Finney who merely strolled through factories and people fell under a powerful spell of conviction...just being in their presence? Do you yearn for this kind of anointing? If so, God may answer your prayers when your motivations are right.

Without a passion for the lost we become teachers who only focus on the "art of teaching." When this happens we become castaways. We forget why we do what we do and it is not long until we are doing it alone. Like the Tom Hanks' character in the movie "Castaway" his focus on work over the people around him caused him to miss some of the best parts of life. Just as life gave him another chance, God is eager to see us filled with His passion for people.

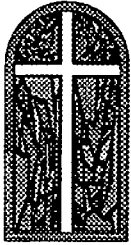


It's possible to be near holy things without being holy. It is possible to preach about forgiveness and not forgive. Even a teacher, a pastor or staff member can give so much effort to ministry that they neglect this passion for people. We can become so professional in our teaching that we forget we're God's representatives of peace and grace.

H.B. London in his book, *They Call Me Pas-*

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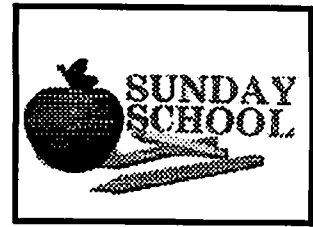
tor-How to Love the Ones You Lead writes: Church leaders can be so focused on getting a crowd or building a strong institution that they forget a church must be centered on Christ and not on their own agendas. It is easy to run on empty and become cynical, bitter, stubborn and self-centered-only to destroy one's self by making a huge mistake. **If you want to avoid becoming a castaway try some of these adventuresome suggestions:**



1. **Live what you preach.** Never preach until you are prepared to apply every line of your sermon to yourself. When you stand before your people, you must be able to sing, "It is well with my soul."
2. **Commit to spiritual self-care.** A physician may be a good doctor without being healthy, but a pastor cannot meet the spiritual needs of others without being spiritually healthy.
3. **Take your mentoring task seriously.** Just as you take responsibility for making yourself spiritually accountable to a trusted colleague, offer to provide the same accountability for someone else.
4. **Lead the way.** Speak often about what God is doing in your life. Share what burdens you are experiencing in your prayer life. Seek to be the kind of spiritual leader that leaves people fully convinced they have a pastor they can count on in every situation.
5. **Humble yourself.** Humility is a spiritual quality that becomes more effective with use. Whenever you are tempted to pull rank on those whom you lead, ask the Lord to take you back to the Upper Room where He took the form of a servant—that's what He wants from every pastor.
6. **Teach staff to value their influence.** The influence of the young ministers I discussed earlier was enormous. In God's grace, some of their influence was positive, so that some teens they served are now lay leaders in that same church. But a stain of sin and carelessness remains. That sin not only cost them their ministry, but it turned some teens and parents away from the Lord forever.

We each experience the power of passion as we become passionate about what Jesus was passionate about—PEOPLE. So let's become contagious of the passion of Christ and watch others "catch it."

Another Way to Develop Vital Sunday School



Imagine a church growth movement that didn't have to waste precious resources winning back people we shouldn't have lost in the first place. Imagine not having to attract adults back to the faith community because they never left as kids. Imagine a youth leader who didn't have to spend 80 percent of her time convincing teens that church is cool. Imagine parents coming to church because their kids woke up wanting to get there.

In the early 1990's several congregations in the Chicago Presbytery began an experiment to reinvent Sunday school. It became known as the Workshop Rotation Model and began spreading to churches around the country and across denominational lines. More than just a new name and burst of energy, with this model we sought to address our chronic program frustrations and the fundamental evangelism equations. We knew that an older child who looks forward to Sunday school usually inspires parents and other siblings to greater participation. We suspected that bible literacy was important to a contemporary faith. We believed in the lifelong power of transformational childhood experiences

Here are just some of the problems we were trying to solve:

- *Bored kids and boring teachers*
- *Declining or stagnant attendance*
- *Uninviting, sterile classrooms*
- *Lack of Bible literacy, even among our regular attenders*
- *Poor teacher preparation and recruiting hassles*
- *Expensive curriculum that few teachers or kids liked*
- *Restless preteens who were starting to turn off to church*

It seems obvious to us now. All the necessary ingredients for successful Sunday school have been floating around for years. Those of us in Chicago just brought them together, made them work, and then started telling others.

Another Way to Develop Vital Sunday School, continued from page 3)

Today nearly 2,000 churches use the Workshop Rotation Model. And in most of them, attendance, volunteering, and Bible literacy is up. Way up.

Classrooms are reinvented into creative, kid-friendly, multimedia-inspired workshops: art, drama, music, A/V games, computers, storytelling, cooking, and any other medium through which kids love to learn. Graded groups rotate into a new workshop each week. Teachers work in only one workshop and have one Bible story lesson plan to teach to all the grade groups. Every workshop teaches the same Bible story for the four-to-six week rotation period.



RESULTS

The kids are excited by each room's unique design and learning activity. No more beige classrooms with steel folding chairs. As they move to different workshops, their multiple learning pathways are engaged on the same story. They love Sunday School.

Teachers only have to prepare one lesson every four to six weeks, and they instinctively improve their lessons from week to week. They can sign up for more manageable four-to six-week commitments in a teaching medium suited to their gifts. No more unwrapped audio tapes and worksheets hidden in the drawer. No more "craft-stick Jesus" projects.

The children learn major Bible stories in a multifaceted way. Regular attenders really learn them because they stay on the same story each week, soaking it in through a variety of learning experiences and teachers. Those who attend less frequently get the benefit of an exciting lesson on a major Bible story.

Blank stares no longer meet parents when they ask, "What did you learn today?" Because they see results, these same parents are more inclined to say yes when asked to help. Instead of "doing time" in the same kind of program they didn't like when they were kids, they have a fresh experience, happy students, and dramatically reduced preparation time.

Philosophical Foundation

Though creative in design, the Workshop Rotation model essentially takes a pragmatic approach to teaching Sunday School.



It answers the question, "What is the best way to teach kids in our Sunday school?"...not "What is the ideal Sunday School?" Some of the practices and philosophies are:

We cannot possibly teach all the stories of the Bible to children. If our children can't understand the major stories of the Bible, the minors don't matter. In the Rotation Model, congregations choose which stories they believe are the most important to teach their children.

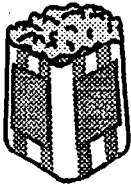
The cornerstone of Bible literacy is repetition. We know this truth applies to every other learning pursuit, whether playing the piano, dribbling a basketball, or preparing a sermon. Repetition over a four-to-six-week period is crucial for Bible literacy. In many cases, certain key stories, such as the events of Holy Week and the Exodus, are repeated each year.



Teach with Stories. Stories have the well-known effect of grabbing hold of the brain's capacity to remember and not letting go. This is why Jesus told anecdotes and parables. It is why we remember the story of the Good Samaritan by heart, but not so well some of Jesus' sayings. Teach a story to children and after you're finished, your lesson walks out the door with them, unfolding and revealing itself in new ways, the rest of their lives. The Workshop Rotation Model focuses on teaching the major stories of our faith.

You can't teach a kid who isn't there or doesn't want to be there. It seems ridiculous to state the obvious but our evangelistic goals require it. You also can't teach a kid whose parents didn't, don't, and won't want to be there either! While our workshop environments are important to our teaching methods, they also hold a calculated appeal to children, their parents, and visitors. Rotation workshops offer more than just a new layer of construction paper on the bulletin board. We can use their creative atmosphere and décor to reflect the love we have—and God has—for these children. No frenetic eight-part lesson plans as in the tradition model.

Dramas unfold in a workshop outfitted with curtains, lights, and a closet full of costumes and props. A/V rooms have comfortable seating (free used theater seats are popular) and the wonderful smell of freshly popped popcorn. Traditional wooden chairs give way to art stools in art workshops to allow more collaborative work and flexible room use. No more scurrying for art supplies either-they're all there in the art workshop. Each week children happily anticipate a new workshop, a new medium, and a new teacher.



The growing success of the model underscores several important issues in the education debate.

1. The model demonstrates a successful alternative to "one size fits all" denominational curriculum design.
2. The fact that many small churches use the model challenges a commonly held belief that small congregations are curriculum dependent.
3. The model seriously addresses the underlying challenges of Sunday school as they relate to long-term evangelistic goals.
4. The model's ecumenical, cooperative impulse has combined with a truly connectional medium-the Internet-as educators from many denominations share their lesson-writing gifts with each other. This emerging resource paradigm offers a whole new way to do Sunday school.

The most important goal of the Workshop Rotation Model: involved, happy, and spiritually growing children-a reality many congregations continue to see each week. One caution: If you adopt the Workshop Rotation, your Sunday School will never gain be quiet, docile, and boring!

If you would like more information on the Workshop Rotation visit their website at www.rotation.org.

Neil MacQueen

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Keeping the Passion Burning

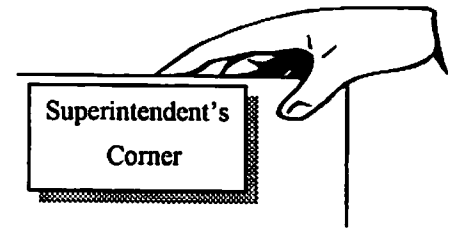
Mike Holbrook

There are many needs in the life of a the Sunday School Superintendent. Yes, we need money to run the Sunday school. They need people to teach and help with the many ministries that represent Christian Education and they need to reach people with the loving knowledge of Jesus Christ. These are important and even necessary needs, but what is the one thing that will help us to reach out and meet all our apparent needs? PASSION!!! Yes passion, that friendly fire that burns within us to help us do warfare against the enemy. Passion will help us to go every day into battle and come out victorious. The enemy works very diligently to destroy our passion. Many times Satan has won this battle and we end up looking around wondering "What Just Happened" and stopping far short of where God wants us to be.



Passion is also a fire that will be caught by others if we have it in our lives. It is ironic however, that people will catch passion and yet it is 'people' that rob us of our spiritual passion. As Sunday School Superintendents you deal with as many "passion robbers" as anybody in the church. It has been said that ministry would be a wonderful thing if it weren't for people. People we understand are the greatest struggle for someone in leadership and of course, the greatest point of joy. In his book, *"Restoring Your Spiritual Passion,"* Gordon McDonald shares with us four spirits that will destroy spiritual passion. If we can identify these destroying spirits and honestly allow the Lord to bring healing, our passion will be evident and others will catch the fire for doing God's work in God's way.

The Competitive Spirit - When we get absorbed in a sense of competition, we are in danger. Let us not get side-tracked in looking at the road others are taking but let us continue to look ahead at the path God has paved for us.



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The Critical Spirit—The tendency to emphasize the negative in every situation, to find the perfect solution according to you, to look at character flaws rather than God working in others will destroy spiritual passion. This critical spirit lurks inside all of us if we are not careful.

The Vain Spirit—This spirit comes from a real desire to impress people in order for them to prefer us or like us. This is an inner need we are told that usually arises from private insecurities. The passion to impress others overcomes the passion to advance the interest of Christ.

The Adversarial Spirit—This spirit within us creates an energy of bitterness that will destroy every ounce of spiritual passion we have.

Passion is the need of the hour for the leaders of the Sunday School. May we strive to keep passion alive.

May our prayer be that we honestly identify and with God's help destroy the "passion robbers" or spirits within our personal lives and the lives of our teachers.



(Leading with Passion, continued from page 1)

I wonder if the last week of Jesus' life is called "Passion Week" because it best displays the incredible burning sense of purpose and passion that motivated Him to achieve His Father's will, whatever the cost? Is your leadership giving evidence to an on-purpose life? Is there a burning in your soul that demands that purpose be realized?

God's goal has always been and always will be to bring us into close relationship with Himself. Are you experiencing that close relationship? Are you leading others to do likewise? Will you lead with passion those who are following you?