



THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

by Jim Hill

Several years ago I was walking through a market in downtown Sofia, Bulgaria. As I eyed the various trinkets that the vendors were selling, I was approached by a young man carrying some handmade carvings. I knew he was hoping to convince me to buy one, but he made his sales pitch in a language I didn't understand so all I could do to answer him was simply smile and politely shake my head no.

I turned and walked away from the young man, but instead of moving on to another potential customer, he followed me—everywhere I went. Each time I stopped, he would resume what sounded like the same sales pitch and each time I smiled and shook my head no. After what seemed like an hour, I realized that this very persistent salesman was not going to quit until I either bought one of his carvings or somehow made him understand that I was not interested.

I finally relented and bought one of the carvings, but instead of appearing to be thankful, the young man went away in a huff. *What had just happened?*

Later that evening I shared the story with some college students who, with a bit of humor, informed me that the Balkan area of Europe is one of the only places in the world where shaking your head no actually means yes. This breakdown in communication had caused both the salesman and me to become very frustrated.

As a pastor, I've found I have my own communication problems, even without a language barrier. I was recently asked the probing question, **"If you could go back and change one thing about the early years of your ministry, what would it be?"** Without hesitation, I responded, "I would work harder at being a better communicator!"

Now, please understand me here. When I talk about being a communicator, I'm not referring to being a better preacher. I'm talking about being better at all facets of communication. If there is one hard lesson I've learned over the years, it's the fact that communication is key to success in any endeavor that includes more than one person.

Because of this, it's important to understand that the essence of communication is sharing information, bringing things to light, and helping others see what we see. Though this is a major facet of the preaching ministry, we as pastors need to learn that we cannot build the church from the pulpit alone. People have to be recruited and congregants have to be brought into the loop of information. How does this happen? By communicating!

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J. J. James,
Claremore, Oklahoma

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THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION [continued]

Communication has to be integrated into every fiber of the church's being. Let me share with you a few simple thoughts about being a better communicator:

1. Connect with those around you. As Stan Toler says, "Connecting with your constituency is key to quality leadership."¹
2. Be honest and open at all times.
3. Don't be afraid to let people know what is going on.
4. Overachieve with communication if that is what is necessary to help people get on board.
5. Follow the examples of the greatest communicator—Jesus himself!

Fellow pastors, let's make every effort to avoid unnecessary frustrations by improving how we communicate with those around us.

¹Stan Toler's Leadership Newsletter, April 2008¹



— Jim Hill, Senior Pastor
Calvary Church of the Nazarene
Bethany, Oklahoma

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J. J. JAMES, SENIOR PASTOR
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
CLAREMORE, OKLAHOMA

About six months before I began my preaching ministry, I asked about twenty different pastors this question: If you were to provide one piece of wisdom to a new pastor, what would that be? Out of the twenty pastors, I received—yes, you guessed it—twenty different answers. *Don't take yourself too seriously. Choose your battles carefully. Devote yourself to your devotions. God never expects you to go it alone. Spend time with your family.* And so on.

Though seven years have since passed, I still carry their words of wisdom with me. As I look back over these seven years, I can't help but thank God for those who took time to impart their wisdom—and thus invest in me. Even now, others are investing in my life as I am in theirs.

But isn't that what God calls us to do? Doesn't He call us to invest in others as He has done in us?

One way this has played out in my life is as an encourager. I have been very intentional about smiling more, showing more appreciation, helping others more, and sharing words of encouragement. God has opened so many doors for me to make this investment. For instance, the other day I found \$20 while at a restaurant. You should have seen our waitress when I handed it to her—it touched her so much she started crying.

On a broader scale, the Church of the Nazarene celebrated one hundred years of global investment last month. As I think about those years of investment, I realize how fortunate I am to be a part of a church that invests in proclaiming holiness to the nations. I believe God truly does bless those who give gracious blessings to others.

Pastors, let's continue to be thankful for those who have invested in us. Let us not forget our daily privilege to invest in the lives of those around us with the good deposit that God has given us.



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WHAT: Nampa First Church University (NFCU)—a comprehensive Christian education program for youth designed to provide a framework for learning and growing in the faith.

WHY: When I came to Nampa First Church in 2005, our Sunday School hour had become a catchall for our youth. It was our largest gathering of students. We sought to meet their relational, educational, and spiritual needs all in one fell swoop. However, we found that the structure of this hour was keeping us from truly teaching our students who they are—God's children—and how to live the life God wants for them. By restructuring the ministry, we are able to teach our students the core of living as a Wesleyan-Holiness people.

HOW: The first—and best—step we made was forming a Board of Directors. From there, we established five core values that are crucial to adolescent faith development and to defining who we are. The basic structure of the program is five sessions comprised of five classes that last six weeks. In each session, the five classes are rooted in one of the core values. From Church History to Understanding Biblical Context to Nazarene Theology to Finances, these classes engage students where they are in their journeys and walk them into an ownership of faith they might not otherwise experience.

RESULTS: Through this intentional (and successful) university-style learning format, we are fostering an environment where young people are not simply taught, they are joined in the journey. Our next step is to embrace a philosophy of intergenerational ministry that allows students to learn from and alongside adults.

(For more information on Church University, call Nate at (208)466-3549 or e-mail him at nroskam@nfcnaz.org.)

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SALT - Financial Wisdom for My Money
COZZ978-1-9347-0204-8
\$9.00, Victorious Christian International, 2007
This workbook is part of Life Training (SALT) materials as a stand alone for a four week group study or as part of a SALT leader's guide is also available.



A Way with Words. . .

"We become what we think about all day long."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Corny Pastor Joke

One balmy day in the South Pacific, a navy ship discovered smoke coming from one of three huts on an uncharted island. When they arrived at the shore, they were met by a shipwreck survivor.

"I'm so glad you're here!" he exclaimed. "I've been alone on this island for more than five years!"

"If you're all alone on the island," asked the captain, "why do I see three huts?"

"Oh," the survivor answered, "well, I live in one and go to church in another."

"What about the third hut?" asked the captain.

"That's where I *used* to go to church."

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This inSIGHT media resource features the book *Wisdom and Wealth* and includes six video lessons from author Greg Womack, a certified financial planner. This is a great six-week study for small groups interested in stewardship or money management. It's also a great resource for a sermon series on using the wisdom of Solomon to "put your money where your faith is."

Wisdom and Wealth, DVD + Book

Lessons for Faith Communities

Greg Womack

COZZ978-0-8341-2381-6

\$24.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2008



The Principle-Centered Financial Series

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Matt Schoenfeld
COZZU-513

\$16.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2008

These books provide a basic understanding of how to overcome and avoid financial difficulties and successfully manage your money. Using simple terms and explanations, Matt Schoenfeld explores money management, debt reduction, and investment options and explains how to develop a healthy, achievable financial plan. These are great gift books for college students and young couples.



The Cycle of Victorious Giving

Your Time, Your Talent, Your Treasure
Stan and Linda Toler
COZZ978-0-8341-2099-0

\$7.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2004

This insightful book outlines a positive plan for stewardship in all areas of life. It explores the relationship between giving, faith, spiritual growth, and, ultimately, an eternal reward. It's excellent material for a sermon or a small-group study.

Teen Pregnancy

To the great concern of parents and educators, the number of unwed moms 18 or younger has jumped significantly in recent months. Peer pressure, recent hit movies such as *Juno* and *Knocked Up!*, the entertainment industry in general, and perhaps a poor local economy have been identified as key factors in the "fashionableness" of having a baby as a teenager. Last summer, *Time Magazine* reported on a high school in Gloucester, MA, that had 17 girls who were expecting. Rumors surfaced that several of the girls had made a pregnancy pact. When asked why they would do this, a classmate of one of the girls replied, "No one has offered them a better option."¹ Perhaps your church and youth ministry can.

¹Kathleen Kingsbury, "Pregnancy Boom at Gloucester High," *Time Magazine*, June 18, 2008, www.time.com.

Back to the Future Lawn Care

In an effort to be "green," conserve gas, or perhaps shed a few extra pounds, many people are turning back the pages of time to mow the lawn "the old-fashioned" way. That's right, the Reel mower is making a come back! (That's a 100% manual lawn mower for all you youngins' who've never heard its brand name.) American Lawn Mower Company, in Shelbyville, IN, notes that sales of Reel mowers are up 70% over last year.¹ Apparently, the cutting edge in clipping grass requires a little blast from the past.

¹Associated Press, "Sales of Push-Reel Mowers Rising," *Hartford Courant News*, June 29, 2008, www.courant.com.

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A Lesson on Thanksgiving

The first Thanksgiving was held sometime between **Sept. 21st** and **Nov. 11th** in **1621**, by 50 Pilgrims from Plymouth, Massachusetts, and their 90 Wampanoag Indian neighbors.

After that, Thanksgiving was held pretty randomly. A national **Thanksgiving Day** celebration was proclaimed annually by the US Congress from **1777 to 1783** which, except for 1782, were all celebrated in December. Thanksgiving celebrations were also declared by George Washington in **1789 and 1795**, by John Adams in **1798 and 1799**, and **twice** by James Madison **in 1815**; but none of these were celebrated in the autumn. Over the years Thanksgiving became a yearly custom, but it wasn't until President Roosevelt signed a bill on **November 26, 1941**, that Thanksgiving became an official national holiday to be celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November.

—excerpted from www.didyouknow.cd/thanksgiving.htm.

Downloadable Thanksgiving Skit

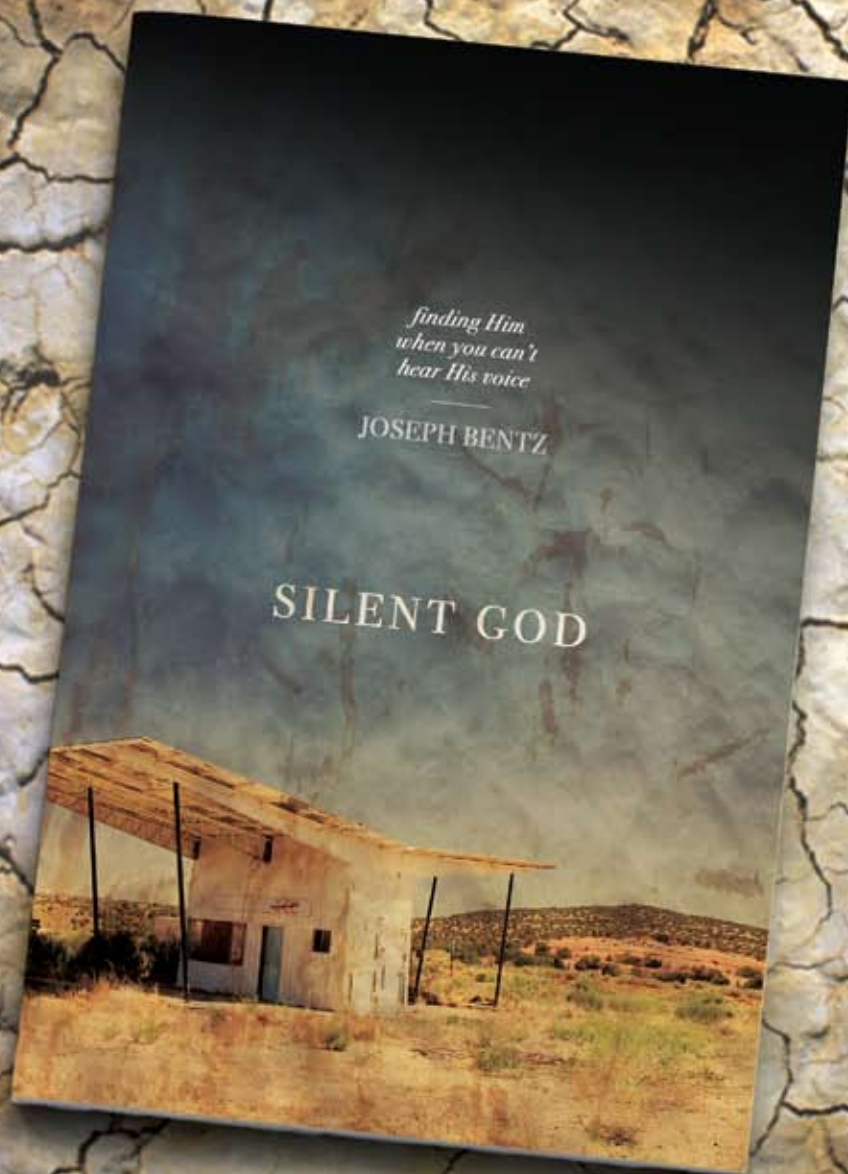
Blessing Dressing (item 10351) is a humorous Thanksgiving monologue that's available for \$10 from Lillenas Drama. It's a great drama option to consider using for your Thanksgiving services. To download, visit www.lillenasdrama.com.

VBS 2009—Let the Mystery Begin!

In May 2009, kids across the country will flock to the theater to see the Smithsonian come to life in the new *Night at the Museum 2* movie. Your church can continue the adventure and help kids experience the wonder of God's great love by offering the VBS mystery adventure *Museum@12627*. *Kids of all ages will be wonderfully engaged and impacted as they work to solve the mysterious, cryptic messages left by the museum's founder Dr. O'Malley before he died.

*It's not too early to order WordAction's *Museum@12627 Starter Kit*. Visit www.vbs2009.com for more details.

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www.vbs2009.com – Museum@12627

This is the official website for WordAction's 2009 Vacation Bible School program called Museum@12627. It offers online ordering, customer service support, decorating ideas, and more.

www.texarkanafirst.org – First Church of the Nazarene, Texarkana, TX

This site helps browsers view the church as warm, inviting, and fun. It conveys a "family feel" with a professional style.

www.nazarenehospitalfoundation.org – Nazarene Hospital Foundation, Medford, OR

This site is a great place to learn more about the Kudjip Nazarene Hospital in Papua New Guinea and how your church can help them this Thanksgiving.

Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

[Psalm 40:5 NIV]

communicator@nph.com

A Word from *Matt*



"Money." The very mention of the word evokes a flurry of emotions in us that we cannot help. Like a hive of busy bees, our minds activate on the subject of money—we search for how to get more, how to do more with what we have, how to apply it better to God's will, and how it preoccupies us as a society.

Consider that nearly every child born in America today is inheriting several thousands of dollars in national debt and that most American families average about \$20,000 in non-mortgage debt.¹ Consider how the ministries at your church could be freed up if your church could rid itself of some debt.

Money, or the lack of it, can control people's lives. So much so that even the thankfulness of Thanksgiving can be bittersweet for some because the burden of debt is so great. As January approaches, consider having financial resources and money management tools available to help people fulfill their New Year's resolution to finally get a handle on their finances and eliminate their debt. Just imagine how happy it will make next year's Thanksgiving.

All of us at NPH wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving.

¹Money-zine.com, "Eliminate Credit Card Debt," <http://www.money-zine.com/Financial-Planning/Debt-Consolidation/Eliminate-Credit-Card-Debt>.

— **Matthew S. Zimmer, Editor, Church Resources Manager**
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