

The Body Builder

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Ed's Editorial:

Purposes and Principles of Highland Park Church, Part 3

Introduced by Pastor Ed Vasicek

Here is the last part of our "Purpose and Principles" document, developed and unanimously approved by our 1996 Elders' Board. It grapples with what we consider to be reasonable and the proper balance in matters of how we conduct services, when we separate, and political activity. It continues to explain what makes our church distinct from both mainline churches and other evangelical churches. This line particular grips me: "Our concern is that we are headed toward involving our people in edification and ministry, not matching anyone's model." Away we go!

VIEWS ON MINISTRIES

Flexibility Toward Ministries

We believe ministry forms and patterns are not Biblical absolutes. We recognize the need for patterns of ministry and for variety in ministry. We must constantly evaluate whether an existing ministry adds to the edification of our body or whether it is merely a shrine to the past.

We must also be cautious about establishing new, on-going ministries or practices; many events may be

worthwhile on a one-time or occasional basis or for a limited time. We must flex based upon fruit, workers, and current needs. Therefore, we feel free to eliminate practices no longer productive, no matter how long-standing. We recognize that edification is a varied process which is not necessarily limited to existing methodology.

Ministry Style

The style of our ministries is open to change. We freely draw on various styles based on who the Lord has placed in the local body and what we sense is most edifying. Although we value both our heritage and creative newer approaches, we consider them our servants, not our masters. Our concern is that we are headed toward involving our people in edification and ministry, not matching anyone's model.

View Regarding Varied Ministries

We want to discourage "tunnel vision" when it comes to ministry. We value every ministry, while recognizing some as more crucial than others.

Evangelism

The other of the two great purposes of the local church [the first being edification] is evangelism, the proclamation of the Gospel in our world.

We believe that the command given to the eleven disciples in the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" necessarily means both evangelism and edification (Matthew 28:19). Just as we cannot successfully evangelize the world without a mature, built-up body, neither can we become a mature

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The Body Builder is published monthly by Highland Park Church, P.O. Box 11, Kokomo, IN 46903-0011. Submit articles, **photos**, or information to Janie Martin at janiemartinhpc@gmail.com or place in church mailbox "M".

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body without sharing the gospel. In the area of corporate evangelism—which simply means those times when we work together as a church to reach the lost—we hold the following principles:

Every body of believers must be responsible to its own community first. To the church in Jerusalem, this meant witnessing to Jerusalem before reaching out to all Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). For our church, this means that we will not substitute world missions for local outreach. We will do both.

Corporate evangelism is basic to personal evangelism. This is seen in two ways. First, our effectiveness in individual witness is related directly to the strength of our body life. Jesus said, "Love one another that all men will know that you are my disciples." Second, the witness of two or more establishes truth more effectively than the witness of one. Sometimes men will only be convinced if they see several people witnessing together for Jesus (e.g., Paul and Barnabas); (John 13:35; Deuteronomy 19:15).

Presenting the gospel to the unsaved is to take place primarily in the world not in the church. While we certainly do not exclude non-believers from church gatherings, most of our contacts with them are outside the church. Rather than preaching salvation messages to the saved, we prefer to send the saved out to seek the lost.

The primary target for evangelism should be adults and consequently whole households. The biblical models we see for evangelism usually involve the salvation of adults who then reach their spouses and children (Acts 16:15, 31-34). This does not mean we should not try to reach children, but it does mean that our efforts are more likely multiplied when we focus on adults rather than children.

The church is responsible to identify those who are especially endowed by God as people who can carry the good news into the community and beyond—"even to the remotest part of the earth." While not implying that other members of the body are released from the responsibility to witness, we do recognize that God has gifted and chosen some as evangelists and missionaries (Ephesians 4:11). We bear the responsibility as a church to identify, train, encourage, and in some cases, support the work of evangelists and missionaries from among our people.

New believers should be integrated into the life of the church as soon as possible. This is clear given our emphasis on edification.

Today's church must develop its own contemporary structures and approaches to evangelism utilizing the principles and purposes just stated as biblical guidelines. We believe that some evangelism techniques which may have been effective at one time are not as effective today. This means that we seek new ways to transmit the gospel more effectively. "Sermons from Science" is an example of an approach that combines the gospel with a format that can reach people in our community today.

Interaction With Other Churches and Ministries

We do believe that the broader evangelical church has much to offer us. We, therefore, interact with solid churches, quality magazines, and solid inter-church movements, campaigns, and outreaches. In seeking to "salt the earth," we can join with people of various faiths to promote common cause items so long as we do not convey the image of endorsing the beliefs of those involved or that our differences are unimportant. In such cases, what unites us is a common cause not a common faith.

Our level of cooperation with other churches shall be dependent upon the nature of the project or ministry and the beliefs of other churches involved. In matters that address detailed doctrinal issues (such as Bible conferences, prophecy conferences, etc.), we expect a higher level of agreement than in matters addressing evangelism. In matters of moral issues, the level of agreement is based on the issue itself.

In both doctrinal and evangelistic cooperative efforts, we would like to see leaders and counselors who hold to the basic fundamentals of the faith, such as:

- Inerrancy, inspiration, and sole, absolute authority of the 66-book Bible;
- Trinity, deity of Christ, personality of the Holy Spirit;
- The virgin birth;
- The sacrificial, atoning work of Christ on the cross and His physical resurrection;
- The return of Christ (second coming);
- Salvation by grace through faith apart from rituals or good works;
- A literal heaven and hell.

In matters involving more doctrinal instruction, we would be concerned with many issues, such as the nature of the church, principles of interpretation, the security of the believer, the work of the Spirit, or the literal interpretation of Genesis. Again, the determining factor will be the issues discussed.

We go on record as opposing the World Council of Churches because it is composed predominantly of non-Bible-believing churches. We can work with conservative churches in denominations affiliated with the WCC if we are satisfied with the individual church's footing.

Political Activity

We recognize our calling as salt and light to the earth (Matthew 5:13). This means that we seek to persuade men by telling the world the truth about God's hatred of sin, His inevitable judgment, and the good news that Jesus died for the salvation of those who believe (2 Corinthians 5:11). At times, this means that we speak out concerning the sinfulness in our society, such as when we publicly condemn abortion.

We also recognize our residence in a free and democratic land. The issues debated in the public square today cry out for moral direction, which can only be found in the unchanging truth of God's Word and the love of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is right and proper that our people, as dictated by their conscience, should participate fully in the democratic process of our governance. If they speak out, let them speak with grace and truth. If they seek office, let them serve selflessly and righteously, while always remembering that a believer's citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

We, as a body, choose to refrain from endorsements or denouncements of particular candidates or political parties. We do so because we do not wish to be unequally yoked to ideologies and movements, which while appealing for evangelical support, are not truly Bible-based or accountable to the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:14).

 **Missionary** 
Letters

Dawsons **November, 2016**

Dear Pastor Ed and Friends at HPC,

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all...those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Doesn't that sound nice: "peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness?" With the help of the Holy Spirit, may we come close to it, remembering that we have a good Father who is a great King.

These past few weeks have been full of meeting with people! While I was in France, what a joy it was to see all of our friends and to see that 2/3 of the church was filled with people that I don't know because they are all new since 2012!

While in Germany, with Pastor Graham and his wife Chris, our good British friends from our church in Luxembourg drove over to see us at Wycliffe Germany's lovely new conference center! While in Germany, we also met with the Board of Directors and Leadership Team of the Wycliffe Global Alliance. All six inhabited continents were represented at the meetings. One of the activities at the meetings was for each attendee to place pins on a world showing where we were born, where we had lived for more than two months, and where we are now based. On average, the attendees each have lived in six different places so far, and most of us on more than one continent!

Praise God for:

- all our brothers and sisters around the world.
- protection for my parents and caregiver, Kristen, during our absence. All went well
- godly and competent leaders of the Wycliffe Global Alliance.
- unity and positive input during the Board meetings. The Board got everything done that they needed to!
- the dedication of the Elo New Testament.
- continued grace for Jessica and Valerie. They are doing well.

Please ask God for:

- His revelation to two young French sisters I saw while in France. They were raised Catholic and are searching for spiritual truth in their own way. May they find Him soon!
- His grace and forgiveness in our relationships. We have an enemy who likes to use the weaknesses of our flesh to cause conflicts within the family of God. I heard of it in our church in France, I see it in the Alliance, and I hear of it elsewhere, too.
- Protection and encouragement for the local team members of the Elo NT. They are courageous evangelists who face persecution from their family and community.
- Good discussion and clear guidance for those attending the Consultation on Translation Consultant training and certification next week. I helped a bit with the website and will help a bit with logistics next week.

Please continue to ask God for:

- my parents to experience the joy and comfort of the Lord's presence, not anxiety nor loneliness. I'm trying a different visitation schedule with my dad, which affects my work schedule.
- a full and speedy recovery for Tony, Director of Papau New Guinea's Alliance organization.

- Jessica to have the desire to nurture her relationship with Jesus and use her talents for His glory and for Christians to reach out to her.

May you be encouraged, knowing our good Father and great King is strong than any forces in this world!

Love and Blessings,
Janet & Matt

Serving with the Wycliffe Global Alliance

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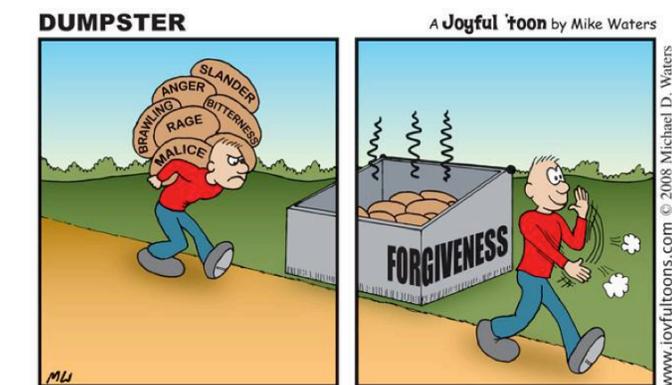
Matt: Corporation Secretary

Janet: Assistant to the Corporation Secretary; Administrative Technician with SIL Global Language Program Services; Finance Receptionist at the SIL International Health Clinic; and East Asia Connector

Jessica: working for Indeed.com in Seattle, WA, as a Software Engineer; contact info: 469-212-2560 (cell); jess.n.dawson@gmail.com; FB: jessica.dawson.5602

Valerie: sophomore in Linguistics, with a minor in Aviation Sciences, at Baylor University, Waco, TX; working at Baylor's Piper Center for Family Studies and Child Development

For financial partnership, please click [here](#) or include with your check a separate note indicating "Preference for the Wycliffe ministry of Matt and Janet Dawson"



Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
— EPHESIANS 4:31-32 NIV

Child Prayers

Dear God, Thanks for Fixing the Food. Bethany

Dear God,
I do not think anybody could be a better God. Well I just want you to know that I am not just saying this because you are God already. Charles

Dear God,
I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday. That was cool! Eugene

Dear God,
I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that okay? Neil

Rachel Still Weeps

December, 2014

by Hannah Anderson

“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” (Matthew 2:18)

It’s happened again—only this time it wasn’t in Connecticut but almost 7,000 miles away in Peshawar, Pakistan. This morning, gunmen broke into classrooms and slaughtered boys and girls as they sat learning. It’s a story we know too well: December. School. Children. Death.

Tonight, parents will return to empty beds; food will be left uneaten; and a soccer ball will stand in the courtyard, still and unmoving. And just as they did two years ago, despite the divide of language and culture, our own mother-and father-hearts will crack, life and hope leaking out of us, as we wonder *how is there any meaning in this?*

Why do grown men kill children?

Why do they target girls going to school?

Why does education and childhood threaten them so?

In an official statement, the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard Olson, condemned today’s massacre as “senseless and inhumane.” And suddenly we understand. Suddenly we understand why school children die. School children do not die simply because they are easy targets or because education is somehow a western corruption. School children die precisely because their deaths are “senseless and inhumane.”

This is the point.

On the edge of The Great Battle, The Enemy stands in his tent, leaning over a map of the field. He eyes it with cold calculating resolve while his marshals wait silent around him, ready for his command. And then he lifts a finger and places it down: “Here. We strike here.”

“A school? Children?”

“Yes.”

In order to attack a God who is Wisdom, you must do the senseless. In order to attack a God who became human, you must do the inhumane.

As word relays down the chain of command, forces muster. They begin arranging, plotting, planning an assault that would defy the very nature of their opponent. At the same time, mothers wake their sons and fathers walk their daughters to school in pursuit of the good and true because this is what their Creator God has given them. Made in His own likeness, they pursue what He is, whether they realize it or not. And all the while, The Enemy pursues the annihilation of all that good and true and sensible and humane, for the exact same reason.

The Body Builder

This conflict is especially marked during the Christmas season because it is during this season that we celebrate the reality that God dwells with His people. It is during Christmas that we remember that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” It is during Christmas that we acknowledge that **Jesus Christ embodies all that is sensible and humane.**

And it is a Wisdom and Humanity that was first revealed in a Child.

I'm beginning to wonder if The Great Battle doesn't intensify during Christmas. And I'm beginning to wonder whether children—those who most clearly reflect the Childhood so central to our hope—don't somehow become more of a target during this season as well. *Is it inevitable that Mary's joy will forever be accompanied by Rachel's mourning?*

But even as we weep, even as we look on the senseless and inhumane, we do not lose hope. If anything, this season of Incarnation reminds us that the good and wise and beautiful will prevail. Because this is what Christ's birth means to us: A Redeemer. A Savior. A Hope for the Nations. In that manger, we are reminded that life has purpose and meaning and that our God has come to restore it.

There will be no Christmas Truce this season. In The Great Battle, The Enemy does not respect such displays of humanity. And because he doesn't, we must be ready fight against all that is senseless and inhumane. But we do not fight as he does, with meaningless violence; instead, we fight by honoring the One who is Wisdom Incarnate. We fight by engaging in the hard work of joy and faith. And for the next few weeks, we will fight by celebrating the Child who came to make sense of it all.

Hannah Anderson lives in Warsaw, Indiana, and is the author of Made For More. You can find her at sometimesalight.com.



Quotes



The Son of God became a man to enable men to become the sons of God.

C. S. Lewis

Give the following gifts:

To your enemy ... forgiveness

To your opponent ... tolerance

To a friend ... your heart

To a customer ... service

To all men ... charity

To every child ... a good example

You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father's face and tell Him you have received His Christmas Gift.

“When Christmas is over,” said the merchant to the minister, “it's over, and it's our job to rid the store of Christmas in one day.” “Well,” the minister replied, “I've got a bigger job ... to keep Christmas in the hearts of my people for the whole year.”

Recipe of the Month

Three-Cheese Potato Gratin

Anonymous

Ingredients

Butter for coating dish

Salt

2 pounds red potatoes, sliced 1/8-inch thick

3 ounces Gruyere cheese, shredded

3 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded

3 T freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Freshly ground black pepper

2 large eggs

2 cups half-and-half

Directions

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Butter a 1.5 quart baking dish; set aside.
- Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
- Add the potatoes; cook for 4 minutes (they will not be tender); drain.
- In a small bowl, stir together the cheeses.
- Arrange 1/3 of the potatoes in the bottom of the prepared dish. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and one-third of the cheese mixture.
- Repeat with a second layer of potatoes, salt, pepper, and half the remaining cheese mixture.
- Arrange the remaining potatoes on top.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs.
- In a small saucepan, heat half-and-half until steaming. Whisking constantly, slowly pour the half-and-half into the eggs. (If the eggs curdle slightly, just strain the mixture).
- Season the egg mixture with salt and pepper; pour evenly over the potatoes.
- Sprinkle potatoes with the remaining cheese mixture.
- Bake for 30 to 40 mins. or until potatoes are tender and the top is golden. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

***The ABC's of Wisdom:
Building Character
with Solomon -
Moderation - A Happy
Middle-Class Life***

Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God. Proverbs 30: 7-9

This is a prayer by a man who has seen too much. With his own eyes he has seen men lie and cheat to get to the top, only to be toppled by their own dishonesty. So he asks to be kept from the slightest hint of falsehood. He has also watched poor men steal in their desperation and he has seen the rich say, "God? If there is a God, I don't need Him." So he asks instead for what we might call a happy, middle-class life: "Give me only my daily bread."

This recalls the famous fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." Bread in Scripture is more than just literal bread; it's also a symbol for all the physical and material needs of life. The Small Catechism by Martin Luther contains a section on the Lord's Prayer. This is what he says about "Give us today our daily bread":

What does this mean? God gives daily bread indeed without our prayer, and also to all the wicked. But we pray in this petition that he would lead us to know it and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

"And the like" means anything he leaves out of the list. Which means that everything physical or material is contained in the expression bread. You are not just praying for physical bread; you are praying for all the physical and material needs of life.

By praying this way we learn the importance of moment-by-moment, 100 percent dependence upon God for the things that we need. By praying for something as humble as a loaf of bread we are learning that God cares about the tiniest details of life. As Matthew Henry says, this really means that the followers of Jesus Christ are to have "a hand to mouth existence."

We should pray for godly character and to be preserved from any circumstance that would keep us from achieving that character - whether poverty or riches. Since we don't know which would be to our ultimate advantage, a happy, middle-class life will be about right for most of us.

Heavenly Father, I'm trusting You to know what I really need. Please help me to be delighted with the decisions You make. Amen.

What two things would you like to ask from the Lord before you die? Could you sincerely pray this man's prayer from

your heart?

What specific aspect of Christian character would you most like to develop in your own life over the next three months?

by Dr. Ray Pritchard

My Utmost for His Highest - His Birth and Our New Birth

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." —Matthew 1:23

His Birth in History. "...that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Jesus Christ was born *into* this world, not *from* it. He did not emerge out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being the human race can boast of— He is a Being for whom the human race can take no credit at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate— God coming into human flesh from outside it. His life is the highest and the holiest entering through the most humble of doors. Our Lord's birth was an advent— the appearance of God in human form.

His Birth in Me. "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you..." (Galatians 4:19). Just as our Lord came into human history from outside it, He must also come into me from outside. Have I allowed my personal human life to become a "Bethlehem" for the Son of God? I cannot enter the realm of the kingdom of God unless I am born again from above by a birth totally unlike physical birth. "You must be born again" (John 3:7). This is not a command, but a fact based on the authority of God. The evidence of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that "Christ is formed" in me. And once "Christ is formed" in me, His nature immediately begins to work through me.

God Evident in the Flesh. This is what is made so profoundly possible for you and for me through the redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS

We should always choose our books as God chooses our friends, just a bit beyond us, so that we have to do our level best to keep up with them.

December 2016

27	28	29	30 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	1 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	2	3
4 Communion Quarterly Mtg./Lodge, 6:00	5	6 Deaconess Mtg, 6:30	7 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	8 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	9	10 Youth Basket-Packing, 10:30 am
11 Christmas Caroling, 5:00 pm	12	13 Deacons' Mtg., 7:00	14 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	15 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	16	17
18 Christmas Hymn Sing, 6:30 pm	19	20	21 AWANA (Store)/ Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	22 NO Ladies' Bible study 12:15	23	24 Christmas Eve Service, 6 pm
25 No Evening Events	26	27 Elders' Meeting 7:00	28 NO AWANA or Bonfire Youth!!	29 NO Ladies' Bible study 12:15	30	31

Sunday Events:

- Early Service, 8:30 am
- Sunday School, 9:30 am
- Morning Service 10:30 am
- Jesus Lodge, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
- Sunday Evening Bible Study, 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Important Events:

- Quarterly Congregational Meeting/Jesus Lodge - December 4th, 6:00 pm
- Youth Basket-Packing - December 10th, 10:30 am
- Christmas Caroling - December 11th, 5:00 pm
- Christmas Hymn Sing - December 18th, 6:30
- Christmas Eve Service - December 24th, 6:00 pm
- Christmas Day Sunday - one morning service at 10:30 am
- AWANA / Bonfire - Dec. 7, 14, 21, & Jan. 11, 18, 25, 6:15 p.m. - 7:45 pm
- Food Contest - Soup, Bread, Pie - 5:30 pm
- Bible Study - January 15th, 2017, 6:30 pm
- Baptism - January 22nd, 6:30
- Jesus Lodge - January 29th, 6:30 pm
- Ladies' Bible Study - December 1st, 8th & 15th, - Thursdays 12:15 - 2:15 pm - resumes January 5th)

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January 2017

1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2	3 Deaconess Mtg, 6:30	4 NO AWANA OR Bonfire.	5 Ladies' Bible study, 12:15	6	7
8 Food Contest Soup, Bread, Pies, 5:30 pm	9	10 Deacons' Mtg., 7:00	11 AWANA & Bonfire Youth 6:15 - 7:45 pm	12 Ladies' Bible study, 12:15	13	14
15 Bible Study 6:30	16	17	18 AWANA & Bonfire Youth 6:15 - 7:45 pm	19 Ladies' Bible study, 12:15	20	21
22 Baptism, 6:30	23	24 Elders Mtg. 7:00	25 AWANA & Bonfire Youth 6:15 - 7:45 pm	26 Ladies' Bible study, 12:15	27	28
29 Lodge, 6:00	30	31	1 AWANA & Bonfire Youth 6:15 - 7:45 pm	2 Ladies' Bible study, 12:15	3	4

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