

Northeast Park BAPTIST CHURCH

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Ministerial Musings

In April, I attended the biennial conference known as Together for the Gospel (T4G). One of the sermons was given by current IMB president David Platt. He spoke about racial reconciliation from the same passage once used by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. encouraging justice to flow like a river (Amos 5). Knowing the sensitivity of the topic, Platt spent the first five minutes or so giving caveats and placing his message in a very particular context. He was not speaking politically. He was speaking about his own failure. He knew that the passage spoke to justice in general, but Platt was going to apply it specifically to the topic of racism.

That's when Twitter and the Conference live stream lost its mind.

Many "tweets" and "posts" began to appear speaking of Platt's improper use of the text (a point with which I would disagree- I thought his application was on point), his political leanings, his ulterior motives, how T4G had gotten political when it should be ecumenical, and many other very negative posts. The one that truly had me shaking my head was the one that publicly declared he did not think racism was an issue because he had never met a racist Christian. Really? The whole public outburst truly broke my heart.

We must realize that when we speak of social issues as believers, it does not necessarily follow that we are making political statements. Our comments may address the same issues politics address, but the Scriptures address the morality of social issues. Believers need to be able to hear someone speak about the social justice issues of the day without declaring about how we should not speak about politics.

Racism is an issue. We need to be joining together with our brothers and sisters in Christ who have a different skin color than ourselves. We should long for our congregation to look like the great congregation that is seen around the throne in Revelation Seven. We should acknowledge that many times we have not truly heard people of color on their concerns because we believed they were seeing the world through the lens of their color. In reality, every man and woman on earth sees the world through the lens of their own culture.

If we want to truly honor Christ, we must celebrate that Jesus Christ died for the sins of men and women of every tribe, nation, tongue, and people and live our lives in light of that truth. We must learn to hear one another for what they are truly saying, and when our sin is rightly pointed out to us by the words of another, we must not hide behind politics or social civilities; we must repent and find forgiveness in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

God is good.

Steve

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. Acts 10:43 ESV

Is the Gospel Good News or Just Above-Average?

DANIEL SLOTT | MARCH 9 2018

[HTTPS://WWW.IMB.ORG/2018/03/09/GOSPEL-ABOVE-AVERAGE-NEWS/](https://www.imb.org/2018/03/09/gospel-above-average-news/)

“If this gospel is such good news, why did it take *two thousand years* to get here?”

That was the response from an East Asian college student after hearing the gospel the first time. A short-term team with gifted evangelists from my home church had spent time sharing the gospel on a university campus in East Asia. They shared the good news with many students and even led a couple of guys to faith. It was an exciting experience until they met one student who declined to believe the gospel for a startling reason.

When asked if he wanted to follow Jesus, the student said no, but not because he didn't necessarily believe the content. He wasn't rejecting the claims of the gospel: man is sinful, and the only way to a reconciled relationship with God is through repentance and faith in Christ.

Rather, he had serious doubts about the gospel because of the length of time it took to get to him. He reasoned that if the gospel is a true story, he should have heard about it before now. No one in his village had ever heard this story. How could it take so long to reach him?

Have We Made the Gospel Small?

Although this student's logic doesn't invalidate the truth of the gospel, I understand why he wondered how it could take so long for the best news in the world to reach his province. In his view, something that is universe-altering should not take millennia to reach the ears of any person, regardless of where he or she was born. It wasn't the gospel content that caused him to reject Christ, it was how *small* the gospel seemed to him due to the length of time it took to get to him.

We know there are people who have yet to hear about Jesus, but if we're not careful, we could easily become desensitized to the inexcusable reality. We could casually accept it like we do tragic events on the news that shake us to our core, only to find ourselves a few weeks later calloused and indifferent to the horror that took place. The student's response forces us to answer, “If the gospel is so great, why is there not an urgency attached to sharing it?”

“Either the gospel is the greatest news ever heard—and thus we must urgently proclaim it—or it is only “above average news” that we can casually share at our discretion and convenience.”

It's forced me to ask myself if I treat the gospel as a pearl of great worth ([Matt. 13:46](#)) that is deserving of my full surrender. Or do I treat it like a dirty leaf that is the center of my toddler's universe for three minutes, as she

shares the splendor of her treasure with everyone on the playground, only to discard it into the abyss of her stroller, never to be seen again? The exposure an object deserves is intrinsically connected to its value. Invaluable artifacts don't belong in a dusty closet; they are meant to be marveled. Either the gospel is the greatest news ever heard—and thus we must urgently follow it and proclaim it—or it is only “above average news” that we can casually share at our discretion and convenience.

Finding Fuel for Our Urgency

I've heard it rightly argued that we should actively share the gospel because every day thousands, if not millions, of people die without having a chance to respond to the hope found in Jesus. This is true.

But we should also stress the urgency of world evangelization because of the value of the message. This message compelled a Samaritan woman to run into town and breathlessly share of her encounter with the merciful Savior. After an experience with Jesus, a healed leper widely proclaimed the miracle this Messiah had worked in his life. Both shared the news because they treasured their experience with Jesus. And their message rightly pointed others to the One deserving such glory.

If we have lost our sense of urgency, it's because we have underestimated the value of the message. We must resolve to share Christ with every nation, tribe, people, and language as a testimony to the worth and immensity of the news—the King of Kings has made a way for man to be forgiven and reconciled to God. This begins with a personal and corporate celebration of how great the gospel is. The gospel is not simply above average news; it is the greatest news. It meets people in the darkest of times and provides hope. It confronts people in their despair and provides purpose. The gospel is the greatest news available, and we should treat it as such. It is worthy of our urgency.

We all have a responsibility in this. Visit imb.org/east-asia to find ways you can get more involved.

Daniel Slott is an IMB training strategist in East Asia where he serves on the student strategies team developing training for student and young adult missionaries. He is the author of [The Christ-Centered Life: 31 Discipleship Letters Explaining How the Gospel Shapes Foundational Christian Practices, Values, and Beliefs to Be Centered in Christ](#). You can follow him [@DanielSlott](#) and the East Asia student team [@Eastudent](#).

Business Meetings and the Church

"A properly planned and executed series of business meetings will go a long way to establish stability and reliability in a church membership. The opposite idea is also true! Nothing aggravates church conflict like a poorly planned series of business meetings." (Dr. Walter Jackson).

The Constitution at NEP regulates these meetings as follows:

ARTICLE VI – Meetings

Section 3 - This democratic church shall meet in regular business session bimonthly during the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Section 4 - Other business meetings may be held at the discretion of the moderator or clerk.

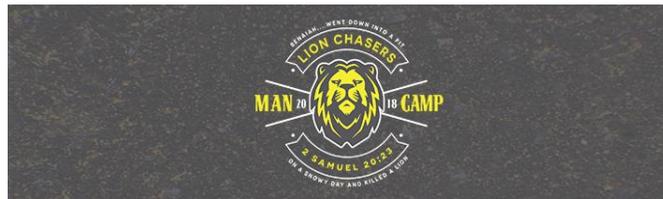
Section 5 - All internal disputes shall be resolved internally. In such instances, business meetings shall be "the court of last resort."

Section 6 - The pastor shall moderate all business meetings except those mentioned in Article VIII, Section 3. In his absence, the Assistant Moderator shall preside. In the event neither is present, the church shall elect a moderator for that meeting.

Section 7 - Business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

Section 8 - Members must be present in a business meeting to vote

So, the next time (May 6th) you think of the business meeting and shutter, remember, it is to the glory of God. Just think, one of these days you may be the assigned person to dismiss the meetings.



This year's theme: "Lion Chasers" The scripture is found in 2 Samuel 20:23b, *"Benaiah went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion." 2 Samuel 23:20b*

Each year NEP sends Fathers, Grandfathers, Uncles and male friends along with sons and grandsons to MAN CAMP. Each year it starts with a hog roast. There are bon fires and marshmallows. There are games such as archery tag, bb guns and hatchet throwing, capturing the flag, and many theme styled games all of which are geared to growing closer to each other and closer to God as they learn about the courage that can be found in Christ. They will connect through worship, fun and spending time together. The "Challenge Winner" has his name placed on the "infamous trophy".

There is one-on-one time along with a guest speaker, Rick Porter, who serves as Director of Operations for Highland Lakes. If you have not yet signed up, do so immediately at <https://scbi.campbrainregistration.com/>.