

“...EMPOWERING PASTORS & LEADERS OF CHURCHES WITH MOSTLY NEW AMERICANS, WHO ARE REACHING THE WORLD!”

NEW ROOTS MINISTRY

REQUIRED TO BE USEFUL & HELPFUL

The title of this article is true for me, at least as a student in the doctoral program at Sioux Falls Seminary. To be given a degree after three years, my research must meet standards of being trustworthy, relevant, useful, and ethical. To be given a degree, my research will need to be available for the public and worthy of being considered a professional contribution to the Church.

Yes, I am intimidated by the requirements, but I am also excited. I intend to focus on researching effective Gospel conversations across various ways of communicating—in-person, social media, other. Included will be learning what motivates non-believers to listen to the Gospel and what motivates believers to share

the Gospel. My advisors will probably require me to tighten-up my focus, but I am excited about this new journey because I am passionate about Gospel-sharing, and I believe if I do the research well, it will meet requirements of being helpful to the mission of the Church.

How about for you, my

A good summary from Philippians 4:8-9: “My friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. Put into practice what you learned and received from me (Apostle Paul), both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.”

fellow pastor and Christian leader? You might not be “required to be useful & helpful” in the way of receiving a degree, but do you have personal standards as someone who has → →

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answered the call to be a Christian leader—an Ambassador for Jesus? I hope so because I believe what you are doing is most important for the world as it needs Jesus!

So, let's always try to give our best. But, what is our best? Giving our best includes being interested in learning and growing, seeking to be flexible when we should be, reflecting Jesus' graciousness toward others, and challenging ourselves not to be stuck in traditions if they do not work best. Here is an example: I have a friend who is a pastor in India. He leads three small churches in his community that is 90% Hindu. Overall, I think my friend does a good job as a pastor. However, one thing I question him about is that he only baptizes people in his church who are over 18 years old and who have gone through theology/Bible classes. That has been the tradition of churches in his area for many years. I do not

say he is wrong, but as he and I read together about *Church Planting Movements* in a different part of India where churches and believers are multiplying, and that this strategy encourages baptizing new believers very soon after they receive Jesus, I challenge my friend to not get stuck in tradition but to seek the most effective ways. Discipleship and training of new believers is important within *church planting movements*, but they happen after their baptisms.

Giving our best also includes taking care of ourselves and our families. If you make mistakes, or if you are feeling tired, be gracious to yourself and get some rest—you need Sabbath like everyone else. Also, be sure to take care of your personal relationship with God so you are clearly fulfilled, passionate, and full of peace in God. If you are feeling spiritually dry, do something to feel fresh again. If this is true for you, as it can be for me, please feel free to talk

with me.

You are important, and your role as a Christian leader is important for the world. "Thank-you for seeking to serve our Lord well."

Let me know how I can help you and your church. As part of my doctoral studies, I will be leading Gospel Conversation Training events with some friends. These fun events take about 6 hours, typically on Saturdays, and they are for anybody interested. Also, they will be fit for the context of your church, including to whom your church most effectively reaches. Part of the training is to go out and talk the Gospel with people. Let me know if there is interest.

Let me know if you would like to visit and pray together—I would be honored to have coffee and a donut, or a meal, with you.

---*Fred Wilgenburg*

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