



This month, I want to share an article by radio talk show host Bob Burney on the failure of the approach to Christian ministry commonly known as "Church Growth." This article originally appeared on www.townhall.com on October 30, 2007.

A Shocking Confession from a "Church Growth" Guru

*By Bob Burney
www.townhall.com
October 30, 2007*

Something momentous just happened in the evangelical community. For most of a generation evangelicals have been romanced by the "seeker sensitive" movement spawned by Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. The guru of this movement is Bill Hybels. He and others have been telling us for decades to throw out everything we have previously thought and been taught about church growth and replace it with a new paradigm, a new way to do ministry.

The size of the crowd rather than the depth of the heart determined success. If the crowd was large then surely God was blessing the ministry. Churches were built by demographic studies, professional strategists, marketing research, meeting "felt needs" and sermons consistent with these techniques. We were told that preaching was out, relevance was in. Doctrine didn't matter nearly as much as innovation. If it wasn't "cutting edge"

and consumer friendly it was doomed. The mention of sin, salvation and sanctification were taboo and replaced by Starbucks, strategy and sensitivity.

Thousands of pastors hung on every word that emanated from the lips of the church growth experts. Satellite seminars were packed with hungry church leaders learning the latest way to "do church." The promise was clear: thousands of people and millions of dollars couldn't be wrong. Forget what people need, give them what they want. How can you argue with the numbers? If you dared to challenge the "experts" you were immediately labeled as a "traditionalist," a throwback to the 50s, a stubborn dinosaur unwilling to change with the times.

All that changed recently.

Willow Creek has released the results of a multi-year study on the effectiveness of their programs and philosophy of ministry. Hybels himself called the findings "earth shaking," "ground breaking" and "mind blowing." And no wonder: it seems that the "experts" were wrong.

The report reveals that most of what they have been doing for these many years and what they have taught millions of others to do is not producing solid disciples of Jesus Christ. Numbers yes, but not disciples. It gets worse. Hybels laments:

"Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn't helping people that much. Other things that we didn't put that much money into and didn't put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for. A lot of people in this category, they're saying they're not being fed. That they want more meat of the Word of God. They want more serious-minded Scripture taught to them."

If you simply want a crowd, the "seeker sensitive" model produces results. If you want solid, sincere, mature followers of Christ, it's a bust.

The error of the seeker sensitive movement is monumental in its scope. The foundation of thousands of American churches is now discovered to be mere sand. Their "model" does not help people grow into mature followers of Jesus Christ.

The one individual who has had perhaps the greatest influence on the American church in our generation has now admitted his philosophy of ministry, in large part, was a "mistake." Given the massive influence Hybels and his Willow Creek organization has on the American church today, the extent of this error defies measurement.

Unless there is a return to simple Biblical principles, a new faulty scheme will replace the existing one and another generation will follow along as the latest piper plays.

Bob Burney is host of an award-winning radio talk show. Excerpted from www.townhall.com, October 30, 2007.



New Bible Class "Joy to the World: The Christmas Story in Scripture and Song"

On November 18 we began a new study in Adult Bible Class on Sunday mornings at 10:30am, "Joy to the World: The Christmas Story in Scripture and Song." We are looking at the Old Testament prophecies of the birth of the

Messiah, which we traditionally focus on during the Advent season, and their New Testament fulfillment, which we celebrate at Christmas.

As the title of the class indicates, we are also looking at — and singing! — favorite carols based on these Scriptures. A great way to focus on the real “reason for the season”!



Additional Hymnals Donated

Several months before his death, Paul Rosene expressed a desire to contribute towards purchasing the new *Lutheran Service Book* for our congregation. He went to be with the Lord before he could carry out that intention, but his widow Mary Rosene has fulfilled his desire by designating the memorials given in his honor for the purchase of 46 additional hymnals. This is a very timely donation, because these extra hymnals will be needed when we move into our new, larger sanctuary.

In addition to the hymnals, several important companion books were also given in Paul’s memory, including an

Crossnotes

Published Monthly by

*Holy Cross Evangelical
Lutheran Church*

*149 Bison Trail
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049*

*605-232-9117
pastorvogts@longlines.com*

December, 2007

Volume 5

Number 12



Advent–Christmas Sermon Series

December 2

1st Sunday in Advent

*“Gabriel’s Surprise
for Zechariah”*

Luke 1:5-25, 57-66, 80

Wednesday, December 5
Advent Service I – 7:00pm

“Escape to Egypt”

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

December 9

2nd Sunday in Advent

*“Gabriel’s Surprise
for Mary”*

Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, December 9
4:00pm

*Preschool–Sunday School
Christmas Program*

Wednesday, December 12
Advent Service II – 7:00pm

*“A Multitude of the
Heavenly Host”*

Luke 2:8-12

December 16

3rd Sunday in Advent

Rev. Steve Benson, Guest Pastor

Wednesday, December 19
Advent Service III – 7:00pm

*Confirmation Christmas
Program*

December 23

4th Sunday in Advent

*“The Angel’s Surprise
for Joseph”*

December 24
Christmas Eve

*“Good Tidings
of Great Joy!”*

Luke 2:1-20

December 30

First Sunday after Christmas
Rev. Jason Braaten, Guest Pastor

*“The Name the Angel
Had Given Him”*

Luke 2:21-40

extra set of the organist's editions containing the full accompaniment for the liturgy and hymns, the *Altar Book* which is the Pastor's edition of the liturgy, and the *Agenda* which contains numerous additional rites—such as the dedication of a new church!

These hymnals and companion volumes will be dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of Paul during the service on December 9.

Our thanks to Mary and all those who gave memorials to honor Paul's memory for this generous gift.



Advent Services Begin December 5

Bring your family to celebrate the real "reason for the season" at our special Advent services at on Wednesdays at 7:00pm, December 5, 12 and 19.

The theme for our Advent and Christmas sermons this year is, "The Angels of Advent," looking at the Bible's teaching about angels, and their role in the Advent and Christmas story.

Women's



Women's Christmas Dinner December 10

All the women of the congregations are invited to a Women's Christmas Dinner at Graham's restaurant in Dakota



You Are Invited to a Christmas Open House
at the Home of Rev. Kevin and Terese Vogts
369 Partridge Circle, Dakota Dunes

Sunday, December 2, 1:00pm–5:00pm
Bring the Whole Family – Children Welcome

All Invited – Everyone Welcome!

Dunes on Monday, December 10 at 6:00pm.

Bring a wrapped Christmas ornament (\$5.00 or less) for a gift exchange. An offering will be taken for providing videos and cookies to share some holiday cheer with residents of the Jackson Recovery Center.

Sign up on the bulletin board for a reservation and come join together for fellowship and fun! For more information contact Betty Gunderson or Ginny Peterson.

allows the Vogts family an opportunity for an extended holiday visit.

Rev. Braaten is on the staff of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Following the service he will give a presentation on the work of the seminary during the Bible Class hour.

Our thanks to Revs. Benson and Braaten for sharing with us the Good News of God's Word!



GUEST PREACHERS

We will have two guest preachers during December. On December 16, Pastor Vogts will be with his family in Canton, Kansas celebrating his mother's 85th birthday. Our guest preacher that day will be Rev. Steve Benson, the new LCMS institutional chaplain in Sioux City.

On December 30, our guest preacher will be Rev. Jason Braaten, the son-in-law of Jon and Gail Dorr. This



Church Decorating December 1

Everyone is invited to please come help decorate our "old" church for Christmas one last time, this Saturday, December 1 at 9:30am. A large group makes this task quick and fun.

Afterward we'll enjoy a lunch of delicious soups left over from the Preschool Soup Supper.



I wish to thank everyone for the the cards and greetings on my birthday. It is always nice to be remembered.

Mabel Schibonski



Christmas Carol Communion Service December 23

Because many members of Holy Cross are away visiting family on Christmas Eve itself, for our 9:15am service on Sunday, December 23 we will have a special "Christmas Carol Communion Service." Favorite Christmas carols will be used for the different portions of the liturgy.



Children's Program December 9

The children of Holy Cross Preschool and Sunday School will present their Christmas Program on Sunday, December 9 at 4:00pm. Due to scheduling conflicts, this year we will also have a program for the Confirmation students as well as some Sunday School children at our last Advent service on Wednesday, December 19 at 7:00pm.

Come and experience the wonder of Christmas as seen through the eyes of children!



Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate
the Real "Reason for the Season"

Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24
Family Service at 7:00pm
"Midnight Mass" at 11:30pm

Enjoy Your Favorite Christmas Carols
Including "Silent Night" by Candlelight

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!



We have again arranged for poinsettias through Mosher Garden Center for \$11 each. Sign up on the bulletin board indicating that you wish to have these plants purchased for you, and put your payment in the offering marked "Poinsettias."

The deadline to sign up is Wednesday, December 5. The plants will be delivered to the church on December 7 for display beginning on Sunday, December 9.

You are also welcome to bring your own plants, if you wish to purchase them elsewhere or receive them as gifts. Please sign up on the bulletin board indicating that you will provide your own plants and drop them by the church anytime before Christmas.

After Christmas you may take home the plants you have donated or brought. When you sign up, please indicate whom your plants are in memory or honor of, the way you want it printed in the January newsletter.



The flower calendar is on the bulletin board at the back of the church. Occasions to remember include anniversaries, birthdays, in memory of loved ones, etc. Flowers may be obtained anywhere and you may provide your own vase or use one of the assortment in the church kitchen.

November 4
Jane Michels
In Memory of Jim Michels

November 11
Doug & Sue Jansen
Veteran's Day

November 18
Mabel Schibonski
Birthday

November 25
Deb Stein
Birthday

December 2
Teri & Dolores Hageman
In Memory of Everett Hageman

BIRTH

Aubrey Lynn Hamilton

Daughter of Michael & Heidi Hamilton
Born November 11, 2007

*"Children are a heritage from the
LORD, a blessing from Him."
Psalm 127:3*



Crucifers

December 2
Evan Steemken

December 5 (Advent Service I)
Dylan Sawyer

December 9
Justin "J.P." Peterson

December 12 (Advent Service II)
Trevor Vilhauer

December 16
Keegan Johnson

December 19 (Advent Service III)
Zachary Selby

December 23
A.J. Michels

December 24 (Christmas Eve-7:00pm)
Myron Bose

December 24 (Christmas Eve-11:30pm)
Jacob Vogts

December 30
Myron Bose



December 2
Kylie Martin

December 5 (Advent Service I)
Zachary Selby

December 9
Myron Bose

December 12 (Advent Service II)
Keegan Johnson

December 16
Justin "J.P." Peterson

December 19 (Advent Service III)
Trevor Vilhauer

December 23
Tyler Fletcher

December 24 (Christmas Eve-7:00pm)
Sarah Vogts

December 24 (Christmas Eve-11:30pm)
Jacob Vogts

December 30
Dylan Sawyer



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Plan now to attend our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services on Monday, December 24. A Family Service will be held at 7:00pm, with a "Midnight Mass" beginning at 11:30pm.

"Oh, come, all you faithful!"



In the back of the church is a sign up sheet to bring snacks for after worship. You are welcome to bring whatever snacks you wish.

Those bringing snacks are also asked to please prepare the coffee. Instructions are posted near the coffee maker. Coffee, cups, napkins, plates, etc. are all provided and in the kitchen. Thank you to those providing snacks!

December 2
Gustman

December 9
Martin

December 16 & 23
Need Volunteers

December 23
Finkral



BUDGET UPDATE

As of November 25, 2007

Offerings Budgeted	
Per Week	\$2,615
Total Offerings Budgeted	
Year-to-Date	\$113,785
Total Offerings Received	
Year-to-Date	\$105,270
Total Budget Shortfall	
Year-to-Date	(\$8,515)



Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship specific missionaries sponsored around the world by our congregation, through our Synod and related organizations.

Last month the LCMS appointed nearly 100 additional new missionaries (some of whom are pictured on page 7) to share the Gospel with people in the United States and 17 other countries

December 2
Rev. Roger and Emily Jones
Paris



December 9
Haidee Kuehne
Japan



December 16
Tim and Heidi Norton
Guinea



December 23
Anna Horkey
Macau



December 30
Danelle Putnam
Dominican Republic



By Haidee Kuehne
LCMS Missionary in Japan

An exciting development took place recently with our friend, "Brian." He has been coming to our free class activities for about a year and a half now. He always asked really great questions, and over time he became more and more interested in the Son and what He has done for us.

Then, last winter, he translated some materials for us from English to Chinese and told us about how he would go back to his dorm room at night and read Bible stories to his roommates. He continued to grow. The culmination of his faith walk came recently when he was Baptized!

I have never personally witnessed such a dramatic change in a person. He graduated last spring with a degree in environmental engineering. He's an extremely personable fellow, who's smart, funny, and has a lot of potential.

When he was Baptized, he completely "ruined" his former life, or rather, he gave it away to God. Students here are totally focused on their education and careers, but Brian's number one prerogative now learning more about Christ and serving Him. Brian has interviewed with lots of companies who want to hire him and have given him lucrative offers. However, they all want him to work Sundays, and so he has turned them all down until he can find employment that will allow him to join his fellow believers in worshipping Christ.

LCMS Missionary Installed in Paris

Rev. Roger Jones was installed as pastor on September 16, 2007 at Holy Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church in Paris, France. He and wife, Emily, arrived in Paris six weeks prior from London, England, where Roger had served as head pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

The LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Church-Synod of France and Belgium (EEL-SFB) are continuing their collaborative tradition by calling Roger to serve in France. Having spent ten years in modern language study and mastering French dialect during frequent seasons in residence in a small French village, Jones comes to the pulpit fluent in French, German, and English.

His wife, Emily, was born Chan Cheng in Hong Kong and is fluent in English and Cantonese. She hopes to reach out to first- and second-generation Chinese immigrants in France through a language school on the church grounds.

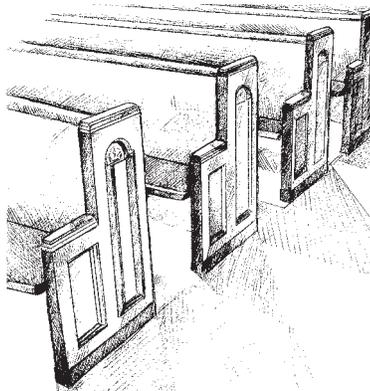
Their multilingual repertoire, they believe, will help attract a multi-cultural, multi-lingual congregation. Families from French-speaking Africa, England, and the United States are already among the church's members.

"It is my conviction that the future of our church is in the Paris region. Here are the most people; here are the most heathen and the most unchurched," said Rev. Jean Haessing, editor of *L'Huerre Luthérienne* and President of the EEL-SFB.

Holy Savior is already a bustling congregation with over 50 members—an impressive number considering the anti-religious climate cultivated in France since its eighteenth century Revolution. "I've only been here three days, and I've already had two people knock on the door," Jones said.

Such interest in the Lutheran Church is an anomaly for France, where more than 30 percent of the population identify themselves as atheist or agnostic, and Lutheran as a denomination is virtually unheard of. According to a 2007 poll, 51 percent of the population identify themselves as Catholic and just 3 percent identify as Protestant.

"The French culture is, in fact, an anti-religious culture," said Haessing. Despite these challenges, Jones reports, "In just the month that I've been here, we've already had six new people attending church regularly."



Pews for Sale

Several members have expressed interest in obtaining pews from the old church. Our new sanctuary will include all new pews.

The Board of Trustees has decided to sell old pews for a minimum donation of \$25 each. All proceeds will benefit the Building Fund.



New LCMS missionaries recently gathered in the chapel on the campus of Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota for their commissioning. They are anxiously looking forward to leaving for the field to share the Gospel with people in the United States and 17 other countries.

You can select your pews now. They will be marked on the underside to reserve for you to pick up after we move into the new sanctuary.

Contact Rob Finkral or John Isley to purchase your pews.



Elders for December
Mike Bargstadt and Jon Dorr

Next Elders Meeting
December 6, 7:00pm



Record of Fellowship Attendance Pads

The Board of Elders has decided to begin using attendance pads to record attendance of both members as well as guests.

Everyone is asked to please complete sometime during each service

the "Record of Fellowship" located in a folder at both ends of each pew. (We are using two attendance pads for each pew because in the new sanctuary some of the pews will be quite long.)

We will still have a traditional Guest Register, but hopefully adding this new system will help us have better records of names, addresses, and those in attendance. Also, the Board of Elders wants to do a better job of tracking the attendance of members.



Randy Stein, December 2
Katelyn Yockey, December 2
Helen Hamilton, December 11
Sherry Isley, December 26
Levi Finkral, December 30

Kevin & Terese Vogts
December 29, 1990

We list members' birthdays and anniversaries in the newsletter each month and the bulletin each week. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the church office at 232-9117 or email holycross@longlines.com.



Church Decorating This Saturday

Everyone is Invited to Come Help Decorate
the "Old" Church for Christmas One Last Time

This Saturday, December 1
Beginning at 9:30am

Soup Lunch Following



You Are Invited to a Christmas Open House
at the Home of Rev. Kevin and Terese Vogts
369 Partridge Circle, Dakota Dunes

This Sunday, December 2
1:00pm-5:00pm
Bring the Whole Family - Children Welcome

All Invited
Everyone Welcome!



Return Service Requested

Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
149 Bison Trail
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

Crossnotes
Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church