

Most Pastors/Leaders...

Would say they want and have a heart for an increased harvest! Think their congregations are ready and willing to receive a greater number of people! Think that there's "room enough" to receive them!

A thought-full challenge: If we work for the Great Shepherd... Who laid down His life for the sheep on a million hills... Who is looking for places to put them... Why aren't more of our churches growing?

Is it because... He isn't willing to share? The people around here don't care about God things? The devil is fighting us... real hard? I had my chance and blew it? It's too late for me to change? I don't have anyone to help me? I've never been interested in numbers?

Maybe there are things in the way of trustworthy shepherding? Maybe our congregations are not as ready as we think? Maybe it wouldn't be prudent of the Great Shepherd?

There are things we can do to prepare for a comeback!

We need to prepare... The Pastor's heart! Re-viewing our perspective and removing the separators!
The Congregation! Renewing their sight/strength!
The "pens!" Rebuilding our place in the world!

Headshots for the Head-strong!

1. "What not to wear!" "When the fullness of time had come God sent His Son, born of a woman... to redeem them that were broken by the law so that we could receive the adoption of sons..." **Gal 4.4,5**

And when God sent Him into the world as His perfect representative, Jesus didn't come in Armani! He didn't turn up in rags! He didn't come in Camo/stars! He came dressed like the *masses* He wanted to touch!
The "few rich" could reach down... The very poor could get a hand up

Dressing for the "*haute*" crowd? "Those who are finely dressed are in kings' palaces..." **Lk 7.25** "Don't the rich oppress you and bring you to judgment?" **Jam 2.6** Who called for the crucifixion?
How much do you look like the people you "live" with?

Giving God our best has little to do with the outward adorning of the cup, platter, tomb... *Casual was/is the gateway to "many!"* Giving God our best has to do with where we are in the transformation! **R8.29** *And His goal is nothing short of "twins!"*

Transformation makes the man, clothing is just a magnet!

2. "Plumber Bob!" "Don't copy the professionals and separatists. They want to be seen, to magnify the appearance of their knowledge and the high estate of their position. They love their preeminence, especially at church. They love their titles... but don't be... like them! Don't be titled! There's only one worthy of a title. So just serve. And by serving w/humility you will be exalted." **Mt 23.1-12**

Jesus did not subscribe to the concept of "*professional distance!*"

"Pastor" is a gracious misnomer, Like 'Daddy's little man...' "**Pastor**" is a term of endearment best used, loosely...
There's only one Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! We are the sheep of His pasture... *On whom He has hung a bell!*

So drop the "bow tie!" (Who trusts a guy in a bow tie?) Jesus warned against the snares (Pride, Power, Separation). It's just a "maybe" when called it! You "better be" if you demand it! Jack: *"Don't try and demand what you cannot command!"*

"That's Peter, Paul and Jesus... what's your name again?"

3. "What am I saying?" "Though I speak w/the tongues of men and angels, if it's not in love, I am like banging brass or clamoring cymbals..." **1Cor 13.1**

"There are many reasons men speak and they are not all noble!"

Sterling new-believer training! Sponsored by Pat/Shirley Boone. *Powered by Jack*. Fully cloned; talked condensed, fast, and much...

General excuses: "Raising the bar!" "Who I am!" "Truth!"

Beloved older man: "Cere, I love you like a son. I just wish I knew what you were talking about!"

"It's not up to the audience to understand me when I speak, it's up to me to deliver so they can!"

No higher bar, no one more real than the Living Truth... Jesus understood that worldly people need *significant topics* and *plain language!* Save the pomegranates and parsing for Greek Class. Deliver the message simply and people will respond!

People still respond to things they "get!" So let's make it real easy...

4. "Where oh where...?" "When they heard that He was in the house, immediately many gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them." **Mk 2.1,2**

People could get to Jesus... Where are we during the week? Walking among them or holed up, crafting messages? Sunday before service? Praying? Maintaining? Preserving? After service? Available "until the anointing wears off?"

Jesus was the energizer among the people because His source was not His own! Where we are is determined by where we are in our walk with Him!

5. "What was I thinking?" "I look for ways to save a wide range of people. I don't take on their way of life. My life is in Christ—but I try to see their world from their point of view. All in an attempt to reach and lead them into a God-saved life. **1Cor 9.19**

We must think aggressively in our efforts to war for lost souls! Must think like fishers-men! Optimists/oblivious/tenacious/Re-source/full! *TP/Alpha/Wilson, Starbucks Café/Auditorium! Prison vans to kid magnets!*

We must think like them because they are not thinking like us! *What would draw me to come to a place like this? What would draw me back and make me want to stay? What do I need to hear to make a difference in my life?*

Would you pay for "fresh eyes?"

We have to get into their heads before they let us into their hearts! Worse; if we don't get into their heads they won't let Him into their hearts!

6. "Scribes to Geeks!" "I will do what I must to win the lost! And I want to win them! So to stay in the race I am running with you, I discipline myself to be – in the middle – in all things so that when I preach to others I am not cast-away!" **1Cor 9.22ff**

Time to catch up! Why would anyone w/surround sound, 50" plasma, home entertainment center want to come and squint at an overhead projector! Why would we not use everything in our power to communicate the timeless message of Jesus!

Use technology; PPT, web, video, lighting, sound, to better deliver the message... Prove you live in the same world! Makes it easier for audience to see, hear *and retain!*

The tools of the living will keep your church from dying!

7. "No Pain, No Gain!" Too many Pastors have lost contact with their bodies... That reality can make you lose the opportunity to be counted a trustworthy leader of increase!

Take care of yourself physically because: God made your body! Jesus lived in one! Holy Spirit lives in yours! Offering of your worship! Vehicle of your service! 1/2 of the Gospel! "No joking" matter!

You cannot live to serve if your body says you have no life!