

Beloved friends in the ministry, “Idea Days” have been a trend lately (2016-2018). Anyone who knows me will tell you I do nothing that is trendy. The “Idea Day” sponsors have slammed me, slandered the Fundamentalism that put them in the ministry, and ridiculed separated, old-fashioned, Independent Baptist thinking, to the point of writing an article on how they are “Redefining Fundamentalism” (which is like a man redefining the universe). Fundamentalism existed long before us, and we have no ability or wisdom to redefine something so incredible and beyond our knowledge. But God gives great liberty to men, and as such, we go through life seeing the foolishness of man on both large and small scales (and often enough in our own backyard); we are just men.

On the subject of ideas, someone asked if I might attend one of their “Idea Days.” I assured him that my attending the meeting would do nothing but hurt the spirit, and as such, would not be welcome or helpful. But in response to the ideas many say they seek, here are a few of mine. These were posted one a day on our church website; but I am posting them here, in one place, for easier access. I scribbled these down as I traveled in the Philippines with a group of eighteen others from our church. The ideas are nothing special, just ideas that anyone in my era of Baptist preachers could give anyone who wanted a “time-tested idea.”

Five ideas for the newer church or the young pastor:

“New Church Growth”

(published 1/11/18)

1. Go soul winning forty hours a week — four hours in the early day, four in the evening hours.
2. Fast at least once a week.
3. Read and study your Bible at least one hour a day.
4. Pray at least one hour a day.
5. Date your wife every week.

I received these ideas from Brother Hyles. The recipe worked for him in his early pastorate, and I kept to nearly the same system in the early years of my church as well.

Disclaimer: these ideas have been tested and found successful by two generations of Independent, old-fashioned, separated, soul-winning Baptist preachers. These ideas might be dangerous to the contemporary or compromising reverend.

Five ideas for the newer church or the young pastor:

“Reaching Young People”

(sent 1/12/18)

1. While out soul winning forty hours a week, constantly look for young people you might personally pick up to bring to church. In five years, the children who are eight to eleven-years-old today will be your teen department.
2. As soon as you have one or two teens, plan an activity, a simple one. We did this within two months of starting our church. You can not compete with the world and its glitter, but you can love the teens — that is something the world cannot do.
3. Have teens in your home and around your family; they need to know that homes can be happy and enjoyable. They need to see obedient children and a loving dad and mom — the world cannot give that to them.
4. Intermingle Bible lessons and Bible memory with everything you do with teens, whether enjoying a burger meal or a volleyball game. A great deal of Bible memory makes the difference.
5. Begin teaching your teens to witness, and do it with them. First, each of you just pass out one tract, then witness and allow them to hear you do it.

Five Ideas for the newer church or the young pastor:

“Reaching Young People” (Part 2)

(sent 1/13/18)

1. Allow young people to ask about anything. Be very open and available. Answer questions and show them what the Bible says, not what you think. We sat around an hour before church with young people singing Scripture songs and allowing them to ask anything about life, God, the Bible, and church.
2. Pick them up and drop them off for church and activities. Many years into our ministry, I asked faithful adults who were once our teens, “What were your favorite times?” Many answered regarding the time we spent driving together to or from church.
3. Find a way to get young people back to Sunday night and Wednesday night church; attending church and listening to preaching is vital for reaching youth.
4. Take them to preaching events. Anywhere there was a fundamental preacher preaching, we attended: youth conferences or anything that would not take them away from our church on a Sunday or Wednesday.
5. Do not allow a compromiser to teach teen Sunday school. Your very best and most separated, soul-winning adults should be your youth workers. You yourself can teach adults and run activities, but do not allow compromise to gain leadership over your teens.

Five ideas for the pastor:

“After a Few Years and Growth Takes Place

(sent 1/14/18)

1. Visit everyone who is in the hospital (daily if possible).
2. Keep a list of seniors and shut-ins, and visit at least one each day.
3. Dr. Lee Roberson told me that his rule of thumb was to make twelve visits a day, five days a week. Knocking on a door, visiting someone in the hospital, passing out a tract: any contact is an important one; but discipline yourself to maintain twelve a day.
4. Plan social activities that center around God’s people, not the world. As adult numbers grow, break down your numbers by demographics (age, family size, maturity in Christ). People are social creatures and will get social life somewhere; allow the church to provide social time for them.
5. Date your children each week, individually or as a whole; but get time for them with their dad just having fun together. A date with your child need not be expensive, but it requires time: riding a bike, throwing a ball, shooting a slingshot or gun, swinging at the park, hiking, etc...

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Five ideas for the church and pastor

“Keeping Things Right”

(used 1/15/18)

1. Regularly, read the book of Acts.
2. Read much, but read books written by successful, older preachers of the past generations. Do not read books written by your contemporaries; their story is yet to be told.
3. Do not look for an easy way to do anything; success takes a great deal of hard work, whether it be in the home, church growth, or youth work.
4. Get your members involved in the work. Find a job for everyone: ushering, singing in the choir, setting up and taking down, bringing refreshments, or working in the nursery. Find a job that each person is qualified and capable of doing.

5. Make church-wide soul winning the biggest priority in the church. Have testimonies every week of those who witnessed. Find new times and ministries that will allow busy members the chance to witness.

Five Ideas for the church and Pastor “Media and Technology”

1. Technology - use all that is available, but remember, you cannot improve on what Jesus did; He walked among people and helped them, preached to them, and loved them. Be sure you spend much more time on people than you do on anything else; do not lean on social media to build your church.

2. Media - Be first-class; make media your tool, but do not let it run you. If you spend more time organizing and putting together your Sunday media than passing out tracts and witnessing, forget it and go soul winning. Make being with people the first and biggest priority.

3. Video and Audio - Considering recording, televising, and posting services on social media and radio, I have made these observations: Since 1982, I have watched churches, and the rule of thumb is, the churches with the fanciest, sharpest AV ministries of each era have all gone liberal or gone out of business completely. That which Jesus did will keep your church going; spend time with people. Thirty to fifty-year-old churches never had to have the hottest or coolest stuff to impress their preacher friends.

4. Websites - Use them; they are a great tool, but make no mistake, great churches may develop great websites, but great websites do not develop great churches. I have NEVER seen this rule broken. (Sorry, website developers!)

5. If you spend more time on social media and technology than you do with young people and adults in your church, you will have a sorry ministry.

Disclaimer: these ideas have been tested and found to be successful by three generations of Independent, old-fashioned, separated, soul-winning Baptist preachers; these ideas may be dangerous to the contemporary or compromising reverend.