

A LESSON FROM TOM SAWYER

by Michael P. Morris

My favorite part of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is in chapter two where Tom has been given the job of whitewashing a fence. The extensiveness, time requirements, and unfavorable aspects of his task cause him to tap into his resourcefulness and devise an alternative. Tom uses his best salesmanship and charm to attract the attention of his friends as they pass by on their way to fun and freedom. In no time at all, Tom's friends are whitewashing the fence for him. He is able to cleverly persuade his peers, who were on their way to fun activities, to work on the fence instead.

At one time or another, every pastor may feel as though he or she has been left to toil in ministry alone while everyone else in the church is out having fun. Often, the extensiveness of ministry can overwhelm those of us in church leadership, making it easy for discouragement, loneliness, and a sense of isolation to set in.

Maybe what many of us need is a dose of Tom Sawyer's creativity and vision. Is there a way for us to persuade our people—the friends we worship with every Sunday—to join us sharing the obligation of the everyday ministry of the church as well?

This is a question I've often asked myself. Over the years I've discovered a few principles that have helped me create a foundation for shared ministry in the local church.

I. **Everyone Is a Minister**

We need to see every regular attendee of the church as a potential minister. We believe that each person has a responsibility to use the gifts he or she has been given by God in ministry. This truth effectively makes the entire church part of the ministry team.

II. **Promote from Within**

When looking for staffing options, it's easy to focus on high visibility staff members from other churches and forget to mine the gold within our own congregation. But there are many benefits to promoting from within your own church. These men and women bring with them a special appreciation for their church, a better knowledge of its operations, and they are already "known" by the other leaders and church members.

III. **Bi-Vocational Staff**

Early retirement is rapidly increasing in our society, which may provide us with many people with tremendous gifts and abilities who also have the time to devote to ministry. And in many cases, their own financial security may allow the church to secure their services without the financial obligations that a traditional full-time staff person requires.

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Shawn Siegfried

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As pastors and leaders it's important to remember that there was a time when someone believed in us enough to allow us the opportunity to serve in a ministry of some kind. We may not have felt adequate or capable, but we were given the chance to be used of God to make a lasting difference in the lives of those we served.

There are future pastors and missionaries sitting in our congregations every Sunday. Let's do our best to see them and to equip them with opportunities to serve. Who knows, we may even discover that whitewashing the fence together is far more exciting than being someplace else.



— Michael P. Morris, Senior Pastor
Richfield Church of the Nazarene
Otisville, Michigan

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SHAWN SIEGFRIED, SENIOR PASTOR
VISALIA, CALIFORNIA
FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

When God called me into ministry I was a sheriff's deputy. It was a contrast of two worlds. In law enforcement, we often had to "restrict" people's freedom. In ministry, we seek to set people free. Deputies don't really care what people think of them. But as pastors, it's important how people view us and for them to feel as if they can relate to who we are and where we are coming from.

Since entering the ministry in 1989, one of the best books I've read is *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. A key passion of mine and my church is to be relatable and relevant to the culture in which we live and minister. We've discovered that people will not respond to us and our message if they cannot "connect" with us. When I take the time in a sermon to share my heart and tell the congregation, "This is how this text affects me," I can see a visible shift in their attention and connection with what I am saying.

It's usually after I've shared a personal success or failure that someone will come up to me later and say, "You were speaking right to me today." I believe people like to hear that their pastor struggles from time to time. In his book, *Churchnext*, Eddie Gibbs wrote about the new generation of people that we minister to: "They respect honest people who are prepared to admit that there are things they don't understand as well as own up to their own shortcomings."

Recently, over a period of 14 days, our church family had to deal with the loss of three of our young people to tragic deaths. A 19 year old boy and 4 year old girl were killed in separate car accidents, and a few days later a 31 year old woman lost her short battle with cancer. One of the most comforting things I was able to tell my congregation and those at the funerals is that I didn't really know why God allowed these events to happen. I've learned that sometimes sharing an honest question can minister more than a giving a prepared answer.

As God has helped me switch from working as a deputy to serving as a pastor, He's taught me the importance of being open and willing to connect with others. When we're willing to be ourselves with people by being honest and humble, a real connection can be made. It's through this connection that they're able to see and understand the real person of Christ and His incredible love for them—a love that will set them free.



For more resources on connecting with your people . . .
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How's that Workin' for ya?



THE COMMUNITY OF ADSIDEO CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
PORTLAND, OREGON
JIM WICKS, LEAD PASTOR/AMBASSADOR AND FRIEND

WHAT: *The Community of Adsideo* (A new start church in southeast Portland)

WHY: The Latin word "adsideo" means to sit, stand, or be at one's side. Since our church's beginning we have worked to purposefully intertwine our lives with the people and story of this neighborhood. Our goal, as we gather together, is to explore how God calls us to posture ourselves in relationship to Him, to each other, to our community and our environment, and in relationship to our past, present, and future as we experience His faithfulness.

HOW: We consider it our quest to discover together as a community the fullness of God's mysterious love by:

- being relationally motivated,
- living as messengers of hope to everyone we encounter,
- maintaining solidarity with the poor,
- and by being socially concerned and community minded.

RESULTS: Over the last year several people have added their stories to our community. For instance, Scott, after many years of leaning away from the church, walked through our door one morning with his girlfriend, Teleea. Teleea, unlike Scott, had never been to a church gathering but had begun to feel that there was something missing in her life. Every Sunday, Teleea and Scott continue to grace our community with their smiles and their warm desire to be relationally connected.

And then there's Ron. One morning Ron came in as the song "Carry on My Wayward Son" played in the background. He found his way to a seat with a full plate of food and a hot cup of coffee. When I greeted Ron he candidly said, "Now this is my kind of church." After years of drug addiction and a battered life lived on the streets, Ron is now vital to the heartbeat of Adsideo.

We know God is truly involved in the story of Adsideo. We're thrilled to join Him as co-laborers as He extends His grace and peace to those living in the world and in the color scheme of our eclectic neighborhood.

(For more information about *The Community of Adsideo* or to contact Pastor Jim, visit www.communityofadsideo.com.)

Improving Your



Small-Group Resources



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resources for this book, s
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www.ct.nazarene.org



A Way with Words . . .

Several years ago a man and his wife were found frozen to death in their car. A blizzard had dumped tons of snow in the area, burying their vehicle. Before she died, the woman scribbled a note on a piece of paper and stuffed it in the glove compartment. The note read: "I don't want to die this way." Tragically, less than six feet from their icy grave was a stranded bus, whose festive passengers remained warm throughout the night.

—*Today in the Word*, October, 1990, p. 28.

Corny Pastor Joke

A group of expectant fathers were in a waiting room, while their wives were in the process of delivering babies. A nurse came in and announced to one man that his wife had just had twins. "That's quite a coincidence," he responded. "I play for the Minnesota Twins!" A few minutes later another nurse came in and announced to another man that he was the father of triplets. "That's amazing," he exclaimed. "I work for the 3M Company." At that point, the third man slipped off his chair and fainted to the floor. When they revived him, the nurse asked if he felt ill. "I'm afraid so," he responded. "I happen to work for 7-Up."

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The Covenant, DVD + Book

James L. Garlow
COZZ978-0-8341-2331-1
\$24.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2007

inSIGHT media

This exciting small-group resource is part of the new *In Sight Media* series, which offers a book, a printable leader's guide, and DVD video lessons in one complete package. This combo features the book, *The Covenant: A Study of God's Extraordinary Love for You*, by James Garlow (senior pastor at Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego) and includes a DVD with six video lessons of Pastor Garlow explaining the various chapters. This bestselling Bible study explores the history and symbolism of the Abrahamic covenant and offers new understanding, meaning, and appreciation for the Christian faith. It provides leaders with intriguing six-week discussion material that's perfect for adult small groups of all ages.



Answers for Chicken Little, DVD + Book

Dan Boone
COZZ978-0-8341-2330-4
\$24.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2007

Also part of the new *In Sight Media* series, this bestselling Bible study offers an honest and insightful look at the Book of Revelation. The DVD includes six video lessons from author Dan Boone, who shares additional engaging material for group discussion and study.



Gutsy Faith

Hard Conversations with God
Jeff Edmonson
COZZ978-0-8341-2262-8
\$14.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2006

This is a great resource for small groups looking to move beyond the "pat answer" discussion. It provides several opportunities to explore the difficult questions we ask God in order to understand the deeper purposes of our lives. A free downloadable journal and leader's guide are available online and discussion questions are included at the end of each chapter.

The Eco-Conscious Wedding

Eco-friendly and organic weddings are becoming a popular trend in the billion dollar wedding planning industry. According to Gerald Prolman, founder of **Organicbouquet.com**, this "something new" in wedding planning has come about because, "people are making purchasing decisions based on environmental concerns." So...should the opportunity arise, consider suggesting potato-made biodegradable forks for your church's next wedding—it'll make the mother of the bride *and* Mother Nature proud.

—Mireya Navarro, "The Modern Bride Turns Green," *OrlandoSentinel.com*, 3/25/2007

College and University Ministry

In 1970, there were 8.6 million U.S. college undergraduates. In 2004, that number had grown to 17.3 million. This exciting growth trend offers churches located near college and university campuses valuable and needed opportunities for community outreach to the students and our future leaders.

—Excerpted from *The Foster Letter-Religious Market Update*, (3/10/2007). For more, visit www.garydfoster.com

Gone Country

Hobby farming among boomers and Gen-Xers is on the rise in America. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "lifestyle" or hobby farms now make up 2.1 million farms in the U.S. and are increasing by 2% each year. Some believe that the new interest to grow lavender, raise llamas, or provide other niche products stems from the desire within the younger generations to reconnect with and appreciate our natural world.

—Diane Wedner, "On a Rural Route: City Dwellers are Leaving the Rat Race to Buy Small Scale Hobby Farms," *Los Angeles Times*, 3/25/1007, pp. 1-2, www.latimes.com

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Calls to Compassion

300 million people, each surviving on less than a **\$1** a day, live in India (the majority live in urban slums.) They make up **1/4** of the world's most impoverished people.

—Cara Davis, "Give a Man a Buffalo," *Relevant Magazine*, Issue 25, March-April 2007, p. 43

The last national census found that **9%** of homeless people live in rural areas.

Visit www.endhomelessness.org/section/policy/focusareas/rural to learn more.

"The worship that occurs in most sanctuaries is great worship—not because we are brilliant—but because the people come to do the work of worship. And this work did not begin with an order of worship. It began in the heart of God, who is the self emptying love know as the Trinity. True worship is the fellowship of the Father who sends the Son who gives the Spirit."

—Dan Boone, *The Worship Plot: Finding Unity in Our Common Story*, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2007, pp. 7-8.

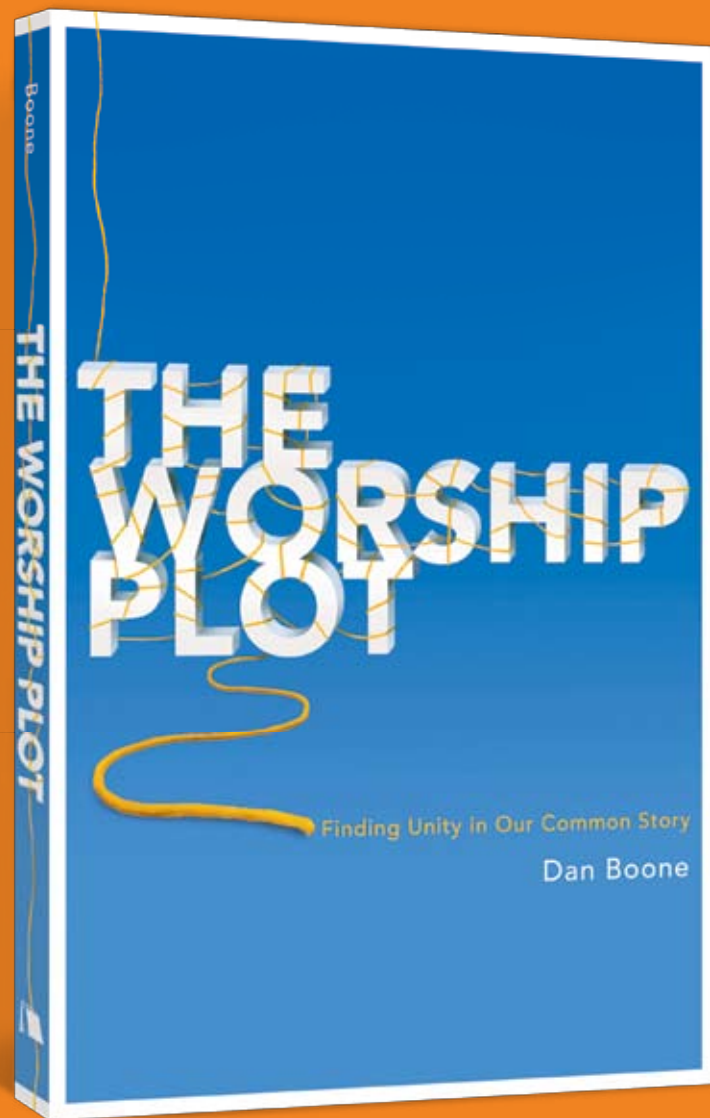
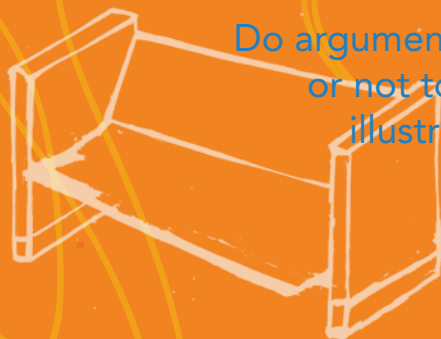
Strategic Marriage Initiative

Would you like some help with pre-marital counseling and marriage enrichment in your church?

Visit www.clt.nazarene.org or www.nph.com to order *Making a Marriage* (the 2007 Continuing Lay Training resource) as well as free downloadable resources to use in marriage enrichment classes.

Are there disagreements in your church about worship?

Do arguments break out over whether or not to use drums, sing hymns, or illustrate sermons with movie clips?



COZ978-0-8341-2312-0
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Worship is not about personal preference or platform performance.
True worship flows from the heart of God.

Dan Boone discusses five Acts for the drama of worship. He shares ways to combine the diversity of our church family to celebrate God's love together and then go out with blessing—ready to serve the people of the world and share with them God's amazing story.

www.youthquiz.com – Youth Quizzing site for the Church of the Nazarene
Coaches and quizzers can receive total access for this helpful website on its sign-up page or when they purchase the 2007-2008 Quiz Coach's Kit.

www.hutchfirstnaz.org – First Church of the Nazarene, Hutchinson, KS
This attractive website isn't overdone and does a good job of relaying vital information about the church in an easy-to-navigate format.

www.eleven72.com – Creative videos, photography, and more
This site offers quality videos, sermon aids, and other media options from creative artists and filmmakers who are passionate about Christ. There are no membership fees and you can sign-up for email updates for new products.

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore. [Psalm 125:1-2]

communicator@nph.com

A Word from *Matt*



"Salvation." Lately, I've been thinking back to the moment when I gave my heart to Christ and allowed Him to cleanse me of my sins and make me new. I've come to realize that salvation means more than just saving me from my sins. To truly enjoy its grace, salvation must be lived out in the everyday moments of my life. I feel the power of salvation when I can help feed the homeless or offer overnight shelter to neighborhood children when their mom leaves to go out drinking. And when I listen to your stories of the joys and challenges you've encountered as you serve your congregations and communities, my salvation takes on greater meaning because I can see it working in the lives of others.

For me, the meaning and magnitude of Salvation has expanded to include the large community of past and present believers whose stories combine to tell the amazing story of God. And it's through our stories and conversations and life moments and labors that we're able to come together and celebrate the salvation that Christ offers us all.

So, thank you for your stories and for your dedication to share the message of salvation with the people you serve. And please don't hesitate to share with me your ideas, suggestions, insights, and needs on how NPH can help you in your ministry. We want to do all we can to help partner with you as you share Christ's gift of salvation with the world. You are prayed for and appreciated.

— **Matthew S. Zimmer, Editor, Church Resources Manager**
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