

The Logic of the Kingdom

A while ago I posted a link to this (rather outrageous) article on my facebook wall.

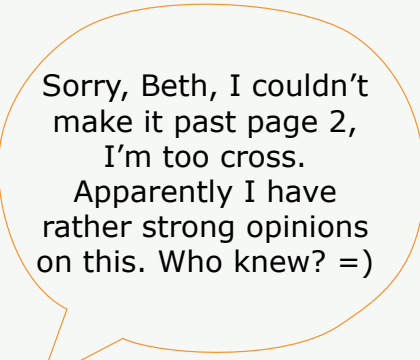
[Why We Don't Allow Children in Our Worship Service](http://www.churchleaders.com)
www.churchleaders.com

The pastor-author of the article is no idiot; he has presented a very thorough and clear argument, developed logically and strategically. He makes sense. But I disagree with him. I think this is a powerful example of where depending on logic alone fails us, because the logic of the kingdom is a paradoxical reversal of the values of power that dominate our current human 'rationality'.

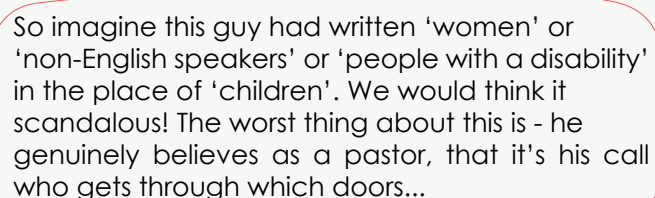
It drew a large number of comments which I have given a sampling of here. Most of the comments are from people who are regularly engaged with children, in all aspects of life, including recognising the presence and life of God in their midst. But there is also input from people who are not part of a faith community, but who can hear the dissonance between the view of this article, and what they understand of the ethics of Jesus of Nazareth.

Perhaps this might serve as a discussion starter or shaper for your community.

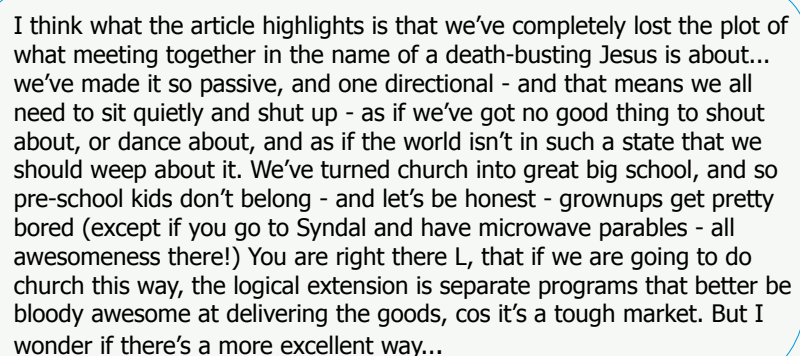
The Comments:



Sorry, Beth, I couldn't make it past page 2, I'm too cross. Apparently I have rather strong opinions on this. Who knew? =)



So imagine this guy had written 'women' or 'non-English speakers' or 'people with a disability' in the place of 'children'. We would think it scandalous! The worst thing about this is - he genuinely believes as a pastor, that it's his call who gets through which doors...



I think what the article highlights is that we've completely lost the plot of what meeting together in the name of a death-busting Jesus is about... we've made it so passive, and one directional - and that means we all need to sit quietly and shut up - as if we've got no good thing to shout about, or dance about, and as if the world isn't in such a state that we should weep about it. We've turned church into great big school, and so pre-school kids don't belong - and let's be honest - grownups get pretty bored (except if you go to Syndal and have microwave parables - all awesomeness there!) You are right there L, that if we are going to do church this way, the logical extension is separate programs that better be bloody awesome at delivering the goods, cos it's a tough market. But I wonder if there's a more excellent way...

Leadership

The Logic of the Kingdom continued...

On the bright side, this article illustrates so excellently what is wrong with the current model of how we do church. In the current model of church-as-lecture, kids aren't welcome. LaMorey is right in that the current model of church doesn't bring children closer to Jesus.

So how can it bring adults closer to Him?

And is Jesus actually "far away" from people, anyway?

During passover (as I understand it - I could be wrong!), children are absolutely integral to the whole celebration - they instigate the telling of God-stories by asking questions, and together with their families, they eat, recite parts of the story, sing songs and celebrate. How beautifully enriching for both adults and children alike! If church isn't working for kids, then it isn't working, period. That's the point that LaMorey seems to have missed. Rather than generating separate programs for all the different generational categories (there seem to be more everyday) - which only perpetuates a trend of society at large, we could provide something completely different something far more healthy; a model of family, a model of community, a model of being together in ways people otherwise wouldn't experience. That sounds a heck of a lot more like being close to death-busting Jesus to me!

But are these awesome programs teaching kids knowledge of God, or simply about God? The grown-ups were being taught, I'm boldly assuming it was knowledge about God... If we continue to teach our kids facts, and treat church like school, we ... we are really missing the point.

Enjoying the comments people. Can we change the order of the words: Why don't we include children in our worship service? And see what happens then?

oh boy oh boy oh boy.... grrrrr deep breath so I am wondering if at about 15 -17 a whole bunch of people stop going to that church and then don't turn up ever again in any church or only turn up again when they have kids of their own that need an "excellent kids programme"

... I am a little terrified by this guy keeping his church so nice and quiet and kid free - so that his adherents can be busy listening intently and writing down 'the rules' as he pronounces them from the pulpit - I want to go and visit with the boys just so that we can cause a massive scene when someone tried to 'guide us' away from the church :-)

Not a lot of 'wondering' about that Louise. Except the age of departure seems to be dropping...

Members are apparently entitled to share a particular ritual in a public place, free even of apprehension of distraction and questioning. What a potent symbol of political power!

I was reading Isaiah 28:9-13. It struck me as relevant.

Very much so, my friend. There are many alternative beautiful, subtle intuitive models of learning and nurture woven through the Bible... thanks for highlighting this one. It's especially good because of the juxtaposition with the other model.