

We are a church with one mission: to grow followers of Jesus through grateful worship, genuine community, and generous service to each other and our world. We believe by loving God and loving people we can have an impact that really matters, and would like to tell you more about that. If you are interested in being a part of what God is doing with us, or just have some questions, **fill out the contact card** or ask the person next to you.

Please feel free to call or email too if you have any questions.

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#### GOD'S FAMILY TIMES

BIBLE CLASSES  
Building—9:30 am Sunday

WORSHIP  
Building—10:30 am Sunday

GROWTH GROUPS  
Grose's -- 6 p.m. Sunday  
Irwin's -- 6 p.m. Sunday

BIBLE CLASSES  
Building—7 pm Wednesday

## FAMILY NEWS AND NOTES

**Dinner before Class:** Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you plan on attending and what food item you can bring to share.

Check your mailboxes for new phone lists and address sheets. Please edit these and let Paula know if there are any errors to your phone number or address so that we know that they are accurate.

Also in your mailbox is an update letter from Nathan and Anna. Their team's proposal to serve in North Africa has been approved. Their family will be moving from Lyon, France to North Africa in July. God has been faithful in His provision of teammates and a place to settle.

Please remember to give your Betikara donations directly to Sally Duriez if you desire to help with the monthly support of our lamb, Toavina.

Needed: Communion preparer for July and December and Coordinators for the Wednesday meal before class for April forward.

Two men from "Healing Hands International" will be at the Whitehall church of Christ in Pittsburgh on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

#### Happy Birthday

- 3/1 Sharon Mack
- 3/11 Cliff Brown
- 3/17 Marvel Fasanya
- 3/19 Carol Morandi-Delimp & Callie Grose
- 3/20 Gary Minser
- 3/21 Ray Umbaugh
- 3/24 Paula Irwin
- 3/28 Ron Duriez & Alexis Stutzman

#### Happy Anniversary

- 3/15 Ray & Fay Umbaugh

*Announcements for family news can be*

# FAMILY MATTERS

## Indiana

## Church of Christ

724.463.7240

March 19, 2017

### Why You Most Certainly Will Fail to Reach Your Secular Friends

By Khaldoun Sweis

Man has, in Aldous Huxley's phrase, "an infinite appetite for distraction." Thus, our pastimes have evolved into weapons of mass distraction: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, and on and on. Pascal told us "that the sole cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room."

"I don't want or need your god, thank you very much," she said as she walked away from the boy giving his tracks. He had a look of shock and awe. We Christians try to reach our secular friends with transcendent truths, but we fail at it neither because our methods are not stellar or impeccable, nor because we did not do the proper marketing or sociological, demographical research (although these are very important). The bottom line is that for many, they do not want or need God. (At least that is the story many have swallowed. See Romans 1.)

We error when we ignore the trends and zeitgeist of the times, and we make grave mistakes when we try to stereotype people into this or that category. According to the Pew Research Center, those who select "none" as their religious affiliation are growing at record rates. They not only think that they don't need God, but many have never been given a single reason as to why He is relevant to their lives.

According to the Pew Research Center, those who select "none" as their religious affiliation are growing at record rates. They not only think that they don't need God, but many have never been given a single reason as to why He is relevant to their lives.

They find discussion of these issues like a perpetual hamster running in circles, thus they fill their lives with distractions and don't want to be bothered with ultimate questions. And when we try to give the gospel to them, they ignore us as radicals and go back to drinking Frappuccinos and continue watching their iPhone.

When I am told by someone that they don't believe in God, I ask, "What god do you not believe in?" Nine times out of ten, it is usually a god I do not believe in either! The caricatures and misrepresentations of the Christian God are abundant.

Below are three principles that have worked for me in presenting in the secular arena for the past 15 years. I believe these leave a fragrance for Christ that cannot be ignored.

# CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Nathan Irwin and family as they are in Lyon, France for language training and are preparing to move to North Africa to serve there in July.
- For Mary Fasanya's asylum request to be granted and for the girls as they are in the USA without their husband and father. Also for Ezekiel as he is in Nigeria without his wife and daughters.
- For Mayleen Niehenke's visa approval to come to the United States from the Philippines and for a co-sponsor so that the procedure can be quickly expedited.
- Bill Tonkin who is at Indiana Square Personal Care Home, 1703 Warren Road. Lois says cards and visits are always welcome.
- Louanne Brown for healing of her vision in her right eye which has been impeded by at least 50%. Also for peace and acceptance that the eye may never get back to "normal" since it is no better or worse at this time.
- Nick Ruffner, John & Gail Gromley's step grandson, who had another round of chemo in his treatment for leukemia in January.
- Katherine, Lin & Jo Broadway's (former members) daughter-in-law, who has been diagnosed with cancer and was anticipating surgery in February.
- Janet Anoyke's mother in Ghana who recently suffered a stroke.
- Jay Stenman, Louanne Brown's husband, who suffered a concussion the week of January 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Hailynn Magas has been diagnosed with Type1 Diabetes. Pray that the family can learn and adjust to a new diet and insulin testing and injections.
- Linda Biller Post, Jimmy Biller's mother, whose leukemia is no longer in remission. She will be receiving chemo treatments.
- Cliff Brown was recently hospitalized. He came home March 5th but still deals with heart problems.
- Karen Plowman, Brenda Antonio's cousin, for healing of broken bones in her leg due to a recent fall.
- Marilyn Magas who still is "not up to speed" as she adjusts to her new medications.
- Jason Canose for healing as he continues physical therapy and thanksgivings for successful surgery to remove his gall bladder on March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The family of Fran Mumau, Teri Brown Mumau's mother-in-law and Tyler Mumau's grandmother, for comfort and peace as she passed away this week.
- Dixie Kirk, sister in law of Dan & Debbie Kirk, whose testing of her lung showed no spots. She continues to heal from pneumonia.
- Chuck Sickles, a friend of Don Baker, for God's will to be done for his recovery or peaceful eternal rest.

**Principle #1: ENGAGE.** Sit at the table. Get a seat at the secular public square where you will have the attention of your secular friends.

What I mean is for us to make a difference by connecting with people, getting involved with Apple computers, with Congress, with your high school leadership team, with sports or whatever place the Lord opens a door to. Sit at their table—the table where most of the major decisions are made for government, culture, media, and education. By the way, these are also the four major arenas of secular thought in the world.

Use the pluralism diversity thesis to gain a seat at their table. After all, according to them, Christianity is just another paradigm, and since they don't want to be intolerant of any viewpoint, you should be allowed to speak too.

**Principle #2: ENQUIRE.** Turn the table. We must be open to listening and taking the important questions our friends ask, turn them around, and allow people to open up and connect with us in a genuine and uncontrived manner. In doing so, we can expose the unstable foundations of their worldview.

Scripture says to "walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Colossians 4:5-6).

"I do not believe in anything that is not physical. I only believe what science tells me is true," is what a student of mine told me as he came into my office. I asked him if his idea was physical. He paused. He was invoking a first-person perspective—which is itself not physical. By the way, the idea that "I cannot believe anything that is non-physical" is itself a non-physical idea.

This is what we call a contradictory statement. Once he realized that the table was flipped and his foundation was false, I was able to share with him ten other things science itself cannot prove.

The most brilliant example of turning the tables in all of literature is in the story of Nathan and King David in the book of 2 Samuel 12. Nathan does not condemn David; rather, he gets David to condemn himself. Then, more productive conversations can emerge.

**Principle #3: EDIFY.** Reach across the table. Love individual people redemptively.

The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. God either loves or hates, but He is never indifferent.

George, whose father died over ten years ago, never forgot that I was one of his only friends who came to that funeral. If you know people long enough, they will inevitably go through difficult times. This is the opportunity to show them the love of Christ. Be with them to rejoice with them and weep with them. It is demanding, if not impossible, for people to forget that! When the heart is tender, it is more open than any other time!

The gospel is ultimately about relationships, if it is about anything at all. Matthew 5:13-16 says, "You are the redeemed by God, the salt of the earth and light of the world." How are you going to be his salt and light today?

*Prayer requests can be added to the family prayer book*  
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