

Oak Level Baptist Church

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www.OakLevelBaptist.org

Volume 37

SHARING THE JOURNEY

June/July 2014

Top 10 Reasons our Kids Leave Church

We all know them, the kids who were raised in church. They were stars of the youth group. They maybe even sang in the praise band or led worship. And then... they graduate from High School and they leave church. What happened?

It seems to happen so often that I wanted to do some digging; To talk to these kids and get some honest answers. I work in a major college town with a large number of 20-somethings. Nearly all of them were raised in very typical evangelical churches. Nearly all of them have left the church with no intention of returning. I spend a lot of time with them and it takes very little to get them to vent, and I'm happy to listen. So, after lots of hours spent in coffee shops and after buying a few lunches, here are the most common thoughts taken from dozens of conversations. I hope some of them make you angry. Not at the message, but at the failure of our pragmatic replacement of the gospel of the cross with an Americanized gospel of glory. This isn't a negative "beat up on the church" post. I love the church, and I want to see American evangelicalism return to the gospel of repentance and faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins; not just as something on our "what we believe" page on our website, but as the core of what we preach from our pulpits to our children, our youth, and our adults.

The facts:

The statistics are jaw-droppingly horrific: **70% of youth stop attending church when they graduate from High School.** Nearly a decade later, about half return to church. Half. Let that sink in. There's no easy way to say this: The American Evangelical church has lost, is losing, and will almost certainly continue to lose OUR YOUTH.

For all the talk of "our greatest resource", "our treasure", and the multi-million dollar Dave and Buster's/Starbucks knockoffs we build and fill with black walls and wailing rock bands... the church has failed them. Miserably.

The Top 10 Reasons We're Losing our Youth:

10. The Church is "Relevant"

You didn't misread that, I didn't say irrelevant, I said RELEVANT. We've taken an historic, 2,000 year old faith, dressed it in plaid and skinny jeans and tried to sell it as "cool" to our kids. It's not cool. It's not modern. What we're packaging is a cheap knockoff of the world we're called to evangelize.

As the quote says, "*When the ship is in the ocean, everything's fine. When the ocean gets into the ship, you're in trouble.*" I'm not ranting about "worldliness" as some pietistic bogeyman, I'm talking about the fact that we yawn at a 5-minute biblical text, but almost trip over ourselves fawning over a minor celebrity or athlete who makes any vague reference to being a Christian. We're like a fawning wanna-be just hoping the world will think we're cool too, you know, just like you guys!

Our kids meet the real world and our "look, we're cool like you" posing is mocked. In our effort to be "like them" we've become less of who we actually are. The middle-aged pastor trying to look like his 20-something audience isn't relevant. Dress him up in skinny jeans and hand him a latte, it doesn't matter. It's not relevant, It's comically cliché. The minute you aim to be "authentic", you're no longer authentic!

9. They never attended church to begin with

From a Noah's Ark themed nursery, to jumbotron summer-campish kids' church, to pizza parties and rock concerts, many evangelical youth have been coddled in a not-quite-church, but not-quite-world hothouse. They've never sat on a pew between a set of new parents with a fussy baby and a senior citizen on an oxygen tank. They don't see the full timeline of the gospel for every season of life. Instead, we've dumbed down the message, pumped up the volume and act surprised when...

8. They get smart

It's not that our students "got smarter" when they left home, rather someone actually treated them as intelligent. Rather than dumbing down the message, the agnostics and atheists treat our youth as intelligent and challenge their intellect with "deep thoughts" of question and doubt. Many of these "doubts" have been answered, in great depth, over the centuries of our faith. However....

7. You sent them out unarmed

Let's just be honest, most of our churches are sending youth into the world embarrassingly ignorant of our faith. How could we not? We've jettisoned catechesis, sold them on "deeds not creeds" and encouraged them to start the quest to find "God's plan for their life". Yes, I know your church has a "What we believe" page, but is that actually being taught and reinforced from the pulpit? I've met evangelical church leaders ("Pastors") who didn't know the difference between justification and sanctification. I've met megachurch board members who didn't understand the atonement. We choose leaders based upon their ability to draw and lead rather than to accurately teach the faith. Well, we don't teach the faith. Surprised? And instead of the orthodox, historic faith.....

6. You gave them hand-me-downs

You've tried your best to pass along the internal/subjective faith that you "feel". You really, really, really want them to "feel" it too. But we've never been called to evangelize our feelings. You can't hand down this type of subjective faith. With nothing solid to hang their faith upon, with no historic creed to tie them to centuries of history, without the physical elements of bread, wine, and water, their faith is in their subjective feelings, and when faced with other ways to "feel" uplifted at college, the church loses out to things with much greater appeal to our human nature. And they find it in...

5. Community

Have you noticed this word is *everywhere* in the church since the seeker-sensitive and church growth movements came onto the scene? (There's a reason and a driving philosophy behind it which is outside of the scope of this blog.) When our kids leave home, they leave the manufactured community they've lived in for nearly their entire life. With their faith as something they "do" in community, they soon find that they can experience this "life change" and "life improvement" in "community" in many different contexts. Mix this with a subjective, pragmatic faith, and the 100th pizza party at the local big-box church doesn't compete against the easier, more naturally appealing choices in other "communities". So, they left the church and....

4. They found better feelings

Rather than an external, objective, historical faith, we've given our youth an internal, subjective faith. The evangelical church isn't catechizing or teaching our kids the fundamentals of the faith, we're simply encouraging them to "be nice" and "love Jesus". When they leave home, they realize that they can be "spiritually fulfilled" and get the same subjective self-improvement principles (and warm-fuzzies) from the latest life-coach or from spending time with friends or volunteering at a shelter. And they can be truly authentic, and they jump at the chance because...

3. They got tired of pretending

In the “best life now”, “every day a Friday” world of evangelicals, there’s little room for depression, or struggle, or doubt. Turn that frown upside down, or move along. Kids who are fed a steady diet of sermons aimed at removing anything (or anyone) who doesn’t pragmatically serve “God’s great plan for your life” has forced them to smile and, as the old song encouraged them be “hap-hap-happy all the time”. Our kids are smart, often much smarter than we give them credit for. So they trumpet the message I hear a lot from these kids. “*The church is full of hypocrites*”. Why? Even though they have never been given the categories of law and gospel...

2. They know the truth

They can’t do it. They know it. All that “be nice” moralism they’ve been taught? The Bible has a word for it: Law. And that’s what we’ve fed them, undiluted, since we dropped them off at the Noah’s Ark playland: Do/Don’t Do. As they get older it becomes “Good Kids do/don’t” and as adults “Do this for a better life”. The gospel appears briefly as another “do” to “get saved.” But their diet is Law, and scripture tells us that the law condemns us. So that smiling, upbeat “Love God and Love People” vision statement? Yeah, you’ve just condemned the youth with it. Nice, huh? They either think that they’re “good people” since they don’t “do” any of the stuff their denomination teaches against (drink, smoke, dance, watch R rated movies), or they realize that they don’t meet Jesus’ own words of what is required. There’s no rest in this law, only a treadmill of works they know they aren’t able to meet. So, either way, they walk away from the church because...

1. They don’t need it

Our kids are smart. They picked up on the message we unwittingly taught. If church is simply a place to learn life-application principles to achieve a better life in community... you don’t need a crucified Jesus for that. Why would they get up early on a Sunday and watch a cheap knockoff of the entertainment venue they went to the night before? The middle-aged pastor trying desperately to be “relevant” to them would be a comical cliché if the effect weren’t so devastating. As we jettisoned the gospel, our students are never hit with the full impact of the law, their sin before God, and their desperate need for the atoning work of Christ. Now THAT is relevant, THAT is authentic, and THAT is something the world cannot offer.

We’ve traded an historic, objective, faithful gospel based on God’s graciousness toward us for a modern, subjective, pragmatic gospel based upon achieving our goal by following life strategies. Rather than being faithful to the foolish simplicity of the gospel of the cross we’ve set our goal on being “successful” in growing crowds with this gospel of glory. This new gospel saves no one. Our kids can check all of these boxes with any manner of self-help, life-coach, or simply self-designed spiritualism... and they can do it more pragmatically successfully, and in more relevant community. They leave because given the choice, with the very message we’ve taught them, it’s the smarter choice.

Our kids leave because we have failed to deliver to them the faith “delivered once for all” to the church. I wish it wasn’t a given, but when I present law and gospel to these kids, the response is the same every time: “*I’ve never heard that.*” I’m not against entertaining our youth, or even jumbotrons, or pizza parties (though I probably am against middle aged guys trying to wear skinny jeans to be “relevant”). it’s just that the one thing, the MAIN thing we’ve been tasked with? We’re failing. We’ve failed God, and we’ve failed our kids. Don’t let another kid walk out the door without being confronted with the full weight of the law, and the full freedom in the gospel.

Marc

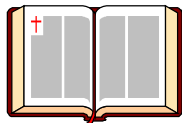
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JUNE BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|---------|--|
| June 1 | John Richard Copeland Louise Vipperman Beverly W. Keaton |
| June 2 | Penny Martin Andrew Thomas |
| June 3 | Lauren Monday |
| June 4 | Michael Turner |
| June 5 | Lisa Slate Ackerman |
| June 6 | Ben Workinger |
| June 7 | Linda Poore |
| June 8 | Peggy J. Ramsey |
| June 9 | Judy Nester |
| June 11 | Tammy Lynn Reel |
| June 12 | Connie Hale |
| June 18 | Jeffrey Ferguson |
| June 19 | Brittany Hausley |
| June 21 | Barbara Cannaday |
| June 23 | Kenneth Keen, Jr. |
| June 24 | Alice S. Brown |
| June 27 | Daisy Barnes Lois T. Ferguson |
| June 28 | Heather Piel |
| June 29 | Garry Barrow |

JULY BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|---------|---|
| July 2 | Tracey M. Foley |
| July 3 | Brenda Ferguson Lena Gardner |
| July 5 | David Turner |
| July 9 | Violet Frith Sharon M. Hall Della Chapman |
| July 10 | Billy Young |
| July 17 | Jesse Cannaday |
| July 18 | Brandi Barrett |
| July 21 | Imogene McMillian |
| July 22 | Betty R. Martin Edna W. Amos |
| July 26 | Donna France David Keen |
| July 27 | Sherri Mason |
| July 28 | Scott Judson |
| July 29 | Betty Jo Foley |
| July 31 | Mike Weaver |



HAVE YOU
READ YOUR
BIBLE TODAY?

NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Blue Ridge Nursing Ctr.
P.O Box 459, Stuart, VA 24171
Viola Turner Thelma Love

Fork Mountain Rest Home,
2925 Fork Mtn. Rd. Rocky Mt, 24151
* Dianne Chitwood *Lillian Forbes
*Pauline Martin *Wanda Stone
Angela Mason Hazel Sizemore

Friendship Retirement Community
327 Hersberger Rd. NW, Roanoke, VA 2410
Albert Meeks

Golden Living Center,
1607 Spruce St. Martinsville, VA, 24112
*Glen Young

Hanson Home
162 Krontz Dr. Bassett, VA 24055
*Betty Sue Sparks

Harmony Hall
P.O. Box 1614, Bassett, VA 24055
Louise Turner Betty Pagans

Stanleytown Health Care Ctr.
240 Riverside Drive, Bassett, VA 24055
Blandean Akers - 9 Grace Mullins - 12
Lillian LaPrade

The Laurel, 72 Chatham Business Park Dr.
Pittsboro, NC 27312
*Lovelene S. Lewis



RECEIPIENTS OF THE JONES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Oak Level Baptist Church awarded 6 scholarships for \$2,000.00 each from the Jones Educational Fund. The recipients of the fund are:

1. **Christopher Pate** - Son of David & Kim Pate and Grandson of Jesse & Barbara Cannaday.
2. **Matthew Pate** - Son of David and Kim Pate and grandson of Jesse and Barbara Cannaday.
3. **Brianna Rouse** - Daughter of Greg and Karen Rouse and Granddaughter of Jesse and Barbara Cannaday.
4. **Rosa Stone** - Member of Oak Level Baptist Church and daughter of Danny & Sherry Stone.
5. **Tyler Stone** - Son of Wendy Stone and Grandson of Ken and Nancy Turner.
6. **Ian James Taylor** - Grandson of James and Edna Seay and son of John and Sherry Seay Taylor.

Congratulations to these students who excel in their studies and were highly recommended by their pastors and youth leaders.



Community Meals Delivered

Once each month the Deacons of Oak Level Baptist Church will deliver a meal to people in our area that a shut-ins or don't have access to a regular meal. If you know of someone who would benefit from this ministry, please call the Church Office at 276-629-7973 and let us know.



Congratulations to Our Graduates

Congratulations to Peyton Ramsey who graduated from Franklin County High School in 2014. He is the son of Kendall and Susan Ramsey and the great-grandson of Ethel Jones.

Congratulations to Nicholas Huston who graduated from Bassett High School in 2014. He is the son of Steve and Leslie Huston and the grandson of Arthur and Betty Jo Foley.

WITH SYMPATHY

Christian Sympathy extended to Louise Vipperman and her family and friends, on the death of her daughter-in-law, Gwen Boone, who passed away in March.

Christian Sympathy extended to the family and friends of Mattie Robertson, who passed away Saturday, March 22, 2014. Mattie was a long time member of Oak Level Baptist Church and will be missed by all.

Christian Sympathy extended to Wilbern & Martha Sue Meeks and their family and friends on the death of Wilbern's brother, James Junior Meeks, who passed away Wednesday, April 2, 2014.

Christian Sympathy extended to Nell Cannaday, Betty Jo Foley, Denver Stultz and Mary Ann Turner on the death of their dear loved one, Eugene Freeman, who passed away Sunday, April 13, 2014.

Christian Sympathy extended to Elmer & Ann Stone, Donna and Drake Winebarger and their family and friends on the death of Elmer's sister, Ida Stone Shelton, who passed away on Saturday, April 26, 2014.

Christian Sympathy extended to the family and friends of George J. Johnson, who passed away Tuesday, April 29, and his son, Daryle W. Johnson, who passed away Wednesday, April 30, 2014.

Christian sympathy extended to the Debra Brown and her family and friends on the death of her husband, Ronnie Davis Brown, who passed away Thursday, May 1, 2014. Ronnie was a member of Oak Level Baptist Church.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone for the prayers, kindness and concerns that were shown to our family during the death of Wilbern's brother, James Junior Meeks, who passed away Wednesday, April 2, 2014. Wilbern & Martha Sue Meeks

Dear Oak Level Baptist Church
I would like to say how honored and thankful I am for your generous \$2,000.00 scholarship. I am very appreciative that you are helping me obtain my higher education. By awarding me with this scholarship you have helped ease my mind about the money aspect of college and now I can focus more on my work. Thank everyone who was involved. This is a blessing. Tyler Stone

In Memory

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>FUND</u> |
|------------------|--------------|
| Mattie Robertson | General Fund |

FLOWERS

Flowers placed in the Church Sanctuary on **Mother's Day**, Sunday, May 11, 2014, were in loving memory of our dear mothers, **Edith Seay Young** and **Louise Turner West** and were given by Benny and Sue Young.



DATES & TIMES FOR YOUTH MEETINGS, PROJECTS & FUNDRAISERS

JUNE MEETINGS - JUNE 1 - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

& JUNE 29 - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

JULY MEETINGS - JULY 13 - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.



PLANNED YOUTH ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY, JUNE 14 - 9:00 - 2:00 p.m.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

SUNDAY, JUNE 15

SHOP FOR GIFTS FOR FATHER'S DAY

SATURDAY, JUNE 28

CAR WASH - HOT DOG FUNDRAISER

JULY 24-27

**CAMPING TRIP TO
JELLYSTONE NATIONAL PARK**



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Registration begins - 8:30 a.m.

VBS - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

We will hide Easter Eggs, have crafts, games, Bible Study and a

bagged Lunch.

LOG SUNDAY CELEBRATION



Our Log Sunday Worship Service will be held on Sunday, June 22, at 11:00 a.m. at the picnic shelter (weather permitting). This is the day we celebrate the beginning of Oak Level Baptist Church, when our congregation would meet under the trees, sitting on logs to hear the Worship Service. Everyone bring your special dishes and desserts, bring a lawn chair and invite your family, neighbors, and friends for good preaching, music, food, and wonderful Christian Fellowship.



SOLES FOR SOULS

Oak Level Baptist Church WMU collected 191 pairs of shoes for "Soles for Souls". Thank you everyone for bringing shoes for this worthwhile project.



Donna Winebarger carrying Bags of shoes to the Truck while Betty Jo Foley took the pictures.



Truck Driver loading bags into Tractor Trailer



Tractor Trailer Loaded with Shoes

Give to the
CBF *Offering for*
GLOBAL MISSIONS 

OLBC 2014 Goal - \$4,000.00

Offering Received - \$1422.00

100 percent of your gift to CBF Offering For Global Missions will help people hear and experience the gospel of Jesus Christ.

JUNE & JULY WMU MEETINGS

Tuesday - June 24 - 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday - July 22 - 7:00 p.m.

If you are looking to become more involved with missions that help people here and throughout the world, you should consider attending our WMU Meetings.

We have such a fun time of Fellowship and working with mission projects. Everyone is welcome to come and be a part of Oak Level Baptist Church WMU.

Please contact Donna Winebarger for more information.

Give Hope.
Change Lives.

One hour of life-changing
WMU® ministry costs \$34.
Give today and change our world.



June 2014

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--------|------------------------------------|---|----------|--------|--|
| 1 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. | 2 | 3 Deacon's Meeting 7:00 p.m. | 4 Men's Breakfast 7:30 a.m. PTS Mtg.-6:30 p.m. | 5 | 6 | 7 Community Meal |
| 8 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. | 9 | 10 | 11 Business Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 12 | 13 | 14 VBS 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Picnic Shelter Reserved |
| 15 S School - 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. Father's Day (Children Shop for fathers) | 16 | 17 | 18 PTS Meeting. 6:30 p.m. | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 S School - 9:45 a.m. Log Sunday 11:00 a.m. (At Picnic Shelter) Pennies for the Precious | 23 | 24 WMU Mtg. 7:00 p.m. | 25 PTS Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. Religious Liberty Sunday | 30 | | | | | |

July 2014

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 Men's Breakfast 7:30 a.m. PTS Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 3 Executive Committee 7:00 pm - HCBA | 4 Independence Day (Church Office Closed) | 5 |
| 6 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. | 7 | 8 Deacon's Mtg. 7:00 p.m. | 9 PTS Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 10 | 11 | 12 Community Meal |
| 13 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. | 14 | 15 | 16 Business Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. | 21 | 22 WMU Meeting 7:00 p.m. | 23 PTS Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 24 Youth Camping Trip To JellyStone Park. | 25 | 26 |
| 27 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 11:00 a.m. Pennies for the Precious | 28 | 29 | 30 PTS Meeting 6:30 p.m. | 31 | | |