

How Churches Can Solve the Problem of Bullying

Bullying is growing worse at every level. It is present in homes, schools, playgrounds, sports venues and workplaces. It assaults us on television and over radio.

How can the church respond to the growing menace?

The Bible gives ample instructions on how to defeat such poison.

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29).

Unfortunately everyone doesn't read the Bible, and those who do are often the offenders.

There is a solution. What if every church member became a role model for speech that reflects the teachings of Jesus?

When I spoke to a group of pastoral counselors about my book “Say Something Nice; Be a Lifter,” A.C. Holler, a retired chaplain and pastoral counselor, said, “Many people do not know how to pay a compliment. They need to establish a pattern in their brains. You have provided a model.”

Think about his words: “Many people do not know how to pay a compliment.” I would add that many people also do not know how to accept a compliment.

Laying down new pathways is the purpose behind Say Something Nice Day on June 1 and Say Something Nice Sunday on June 3.

We want to make it easy for people to say something nice. Just as important is to encourage people not to say anything negative about another person or any other religious group.

What would be the result if every pastor spoke on June 3 about the power of our words? What if no Christian uttered a negative comment about another person on the same date? What would happen if only uplifting words were uttered on that date? Can you imagine the change in the atmosphere?

As worshippers leave the sanctuary of First Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C., after the services on June 3, each one will be given a daisy with the instructions to give it to a stranger along with a smile and a warm greeting.

People have endured tremendous pressures during the last few years. The workplace has become an even more toxic place.

What would happen to that workplace if Christians did not add to that toxicity? What if Christian managers and supervisors offered truly constructive feedback to their employees? What if the feedback was not destructive or demeaning but truly helpful? Would it change the workplace?

What would happen if every Christian parent said to her or his child as the child left for school, "I want you to say only nice things at school today."?

What if the parent went further? "Some children will not say nice things back to you, but don't let that stop you from being nice."

The situation is serious. Nothing could be further from the truth than the old folk saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me."

Words are powerful. They can do permanent damage. They can also be implements for tremendous good. Words have the power to build people up.

What would happen if the prayer in every Christian's heart on June 3 were the words of the psalmist? "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

These are a lot of what-ifs, but we are in the what-if business. What if I showed

<https://ethicsdaily.com/how-churches-can-solve-the-problem-of-bullying-cms-19486/> April 10, 2012 Mitch Carnell

you how to have a better life?

[MitchCarnell](#) is a consultant specializing in interpersonal and organizational communication. He is the editor of "Christian Civility in an Uncivil World." He and his wife are active lay members of First Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C. Mitch blogs at [MitchCarnell.com](#).