

Off Course? How Your Church Can Correct Mission Drift

An important fishing lesson that I've learned the hard way can help local churches assess their ministry and its impact.

I enjoy fishing, especially when I'm in a boat and can work the shore under the overhanging trees and shrubs.

You can maneuver your boat to a place where the fish are biting and begin to work that spot for some time.

There is nothing like casting your line near the bank under a branch and watching a big bass leap out of the water to take the bait. You set the hook, and the tug-of-war begins.

Finally, after the give-and-take of reeling in the bass, you pull the fish into the boat and admire your catch. Fishing is fun when you find the right spot and work the shoreline.

But sometimes something happens. You find a good spot and start catching fish. You become absorbed in casting your line and waiting for the fish to take the lure as you reel it in.

You cast this direction and then that direction. You aim for a perfect spot where you know the fish will be. You run your line on the surface and then you run your line deep. You work the shoreline anticipating a catch.

And then it stops. No fish. No hits. No bites. Not even a nibble.

What happened? Is my bait wrong? Did I scare away the fish? Why am I not pulling in fish anymore?

The answer: Boat drift. You look up and realize that your boat has drifted away from the spot where you were catching fish.

You were so absorbed by the process of fishing that you did not sense the drift of the boat.

The current has pulled you away from the hot spot. You are still casting and working the bank, but you are no longer where the fish are.

You are adrift. You have been pulled away from your purpose.

We are almost midway through the year 2018. It is time to remind ourselves of our purpose and mission. It is easy to get mission drift if we are not careful.

We can get busy doing a lot of good things while missing the mission. We can get sidetracked by a variety of demands on our time and resources and suddenly look up and realize that we have neglected our mission.

Individuals can get distracted. Families can get diverted to other activities. Churches can become so routine that they become irrelevant to the community.

Look around: Are we on mission? Are we adrift?

Let's get back to our main purpose, which is to lead people to Jesus.

We were thrilled to baptize one of our teenagers recently. He is a product of our Sunday School and youth programs. He is the fruit of countless teachers and workers who have invested their lives in our children and youth.

He is the reason why each parent needs to make sure their children are present for good Bible study, youth programs, Vacation Bible School and Christian mentoring on a consistent basis.

Everything we do is to lead people to Jesus.

It is time to stop the drift. It is time to get back on mission. It is time to realize

that we personally must adjust our boat to get back to where the action is and the fish are biting.

It starts with you and me making a commitment to stay on task.

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