

Tailor the message accordingly. by Fred Wilgenburg

I visited Sandy (*different names for privacy*) in jail. She was recently arrested and charged with the murder of David who was killed three years ago. As we knew David, so we have known Sandy for years, mostly in passing as she occasionally came into our Care Center or as we saw her on the streets. Often Sandy was at least slightly intoxicated, and as she is hearing-impaired so she must read lips to communicate, we never interacted a lot. Still, extending basic kindness to Sandy was enough for her to welcome our visits in jail.

At a first visit, in addition to learning about her difficult childhood, I learned about her level of faith in God. She welcomed some literature, so I sent what I thought is a perfect piece for Sandy --- the "Steps to Peace with God" tract. It has pictures of Jesus' cross as the bridge to God, many Bible references, and a prayer at the end.

Upon visiting with Sandy again, she told me that the information I sent her was difficult to grasp. Sandy then specifically asked for stories. In response, I sent her Luke 15, which includes stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. I briefly wrote that the lost

things are us people and the finder is God.

I shared with my colleague, Brian, my need to find the most helpful communication piece for Sandy. Brian also does a lot of pastoral visits, especially to his fellow Native Americans. They are very visual and have many oral traditions, including stories. As well, they have a rich culture with many rituals. When Brian prays over someone's home and family, which his people request as they sometimes sense something spiritually-evil in



their house, he often burns sage, cedar, or sweet grass, rather than placing anointing oil on the doorposts of the home as we do for others.

That led Brian and I to discuss our preaching. We discussed the need to keep messages simple. Not necessarily simple in the way of lacking depth, but clear focus on one topic. If a sermon has three points, they should all clearly point to, or lead to, one topic. Sometimes people compliment

my sermon --- "that was a good point you made about...", or "I agree with you that..." That makes me wonder if I went down to many paths, even rabbit-trails, in bringing out my main topic, so they missed it. Preachers have the vantage point of reading the Bible passage several times. They then decide on the central idea or topic and how best to bring it out in 15-25 minutes. Finally, they review and practice a few times. By Sunday, they know where they are going, but will the listener, who gets one shot?

Bob has been a friend of Center of Hope for many years. A few months ago, I brought up two concerns to Bob about how he is a father to his young adult son. While I won't describe them here, my concerns, and the points I made, were valid, but communicating them over the phone didn't work well. We have since visited in person over the concerns, and it has gone much better.

How well do you do at listening, then tailoring and personalizing a message? Do you offer it in a way so it can be chewed on, and tasted, by the hearer, rather than force-fed and causing an upset stomach?



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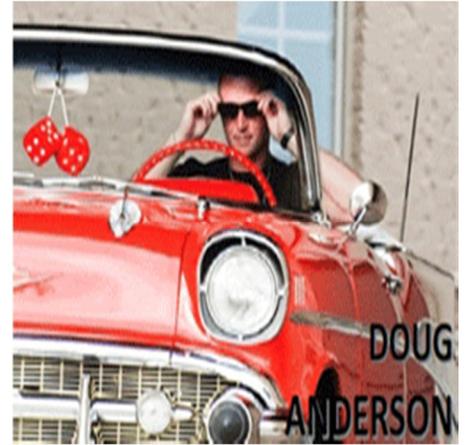
A Night of Hope

Featuring Dove Award Winners

A Concert to Benefit Center of Hope

Sunday, June 28 * 7 p.m.

Sioux Falls First (First Assembly of God)



Tickets can be purchased at Crossroads for \$10 and a free will offering will be received. Hope to see you there.

“Born to be Wild”



Motorcycle Ride for the day with Brett, our ministry director!

June 27, 9 am till approximately 5 pm. There are still 3 more spots available! Cost is \$100 for singles

and \$120 for a couple. The ride route will head north to , Gary, SD (stop for lunch in the Rock Room Bar and Grille), ride around and stop in Madison (stop for Ice Cream) and then back to Sioux Falls. Route and meal locations are subject to change.

Save the following Dates for Center of

Hope: June 15, 4-7pm - Dairy Queen Fund Raiser—

(at 57th and Western). Dairy Queen will give a % of sales to Center of Hope.

July 17 - Our 15th Anniversary —(more details to come)

Oct 24 - Fall Benefit Event

Center of Hope appreciate the gift made in honor of Melanie Bliss , Center of Hope would also like to thank Melanie for her dedication and service to us and many others through the Homeless Coalition. You will be missed! We do wish you the best in your next adventure!

As always, we are happy to have you on our mailing list. Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our list or have your newsletter sent electronically.



Volunteers & Riders are needed

for the FABRAB Tour Sioux Falls ride on June 27. We need people to help hand out pamphlets, water, and help with registration. Also, bike riders are welcome. If you are interested please contact us and let us know what time you would be able to help out. Your time and help with this ride is valuable as Center of Hope receives financial gifts from this ride and it helps promote our mission.



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