

ASSISTANT PASTOR REPORT: 2009

The year 2009 has come and gone. Many of us will say, "Where has the time gone?" only to come to the realization that time is truly "short" in this life and we had better focus on living it now versus looking to next year to finally get serious. As I look at the ministry of EBC that God has called me to, I can see that He has given me the strength and wisdom to carry out His plan for my area of service. I can look back at 2009 and say with confidence...it was all about Him and not about me. Here are a few areas for which God has used me to serve.

Assistant Pastor:

My role as assistant pastor is just that...to assist our pastor in various areas of responsibility to aid in the overall ministry of EBC. In this role, I have performed 8 weddings, 33 home and hospital visits, 140 counseling sessions, and in any other manner that was needed to allow Bill to focus on the areas God has given to him to perform.

Small Groups:

Small groups are a great way to connect with people from our church...and connect people to our church who don't attend EBC. There has been some numeric growth in this ministry. January through June's session averaged 137 participants, while September through December averaged 195. Though this is a nice numeric growth, we are still falling short per our average adult attendance on Sunday mornings. I am excited about the leaders that we have and continue to praise God for their continued faithfulness in serving each and every week. The small group ministry, which is built on a solid foundation of God's Word, is devoted to developing healthy believers through discipleship, fellowship, worship, ministry, and evangelism. We will continue to work hard at developing our small group ministry to meet the needs of our ever growing and changing church body.

Outreach/Community Service:

I am a firm believer that, outside of God's working in a life, each and every believer is important to reaching our area for Christ. Each of us has someone in our circle of life that needs to be affected with the Light...and God has chosen each of us for this task. This is why one of my favorite seminars to teach is "Just Walk Across The Room". This seminar shares the importance of living out our faith on a day to day basis so that we may earn an audience to share the gospel with friends, family, or coworkers. This year, we have also organized events to make connections with those not following Christ and events to reach out into our community. Some of these events were: "The Case for Christ" video showing, Vacation Bible School, the "Fireproof" movie night, the Red Cross blood drives, our EBC golf league, our other adult sports leagues (softball, basketball, and volleyball), our community raking project, the Thanksgiving Eve community dinner, the Ring the Bell collection at BiLo, and HALO. In 2010, we will continue to reach out into our community. We will continue to share Christ's love with others in the hope that those without Christ will find Him and give their hearts to Him.

Celebrate Recovery:

Hurts, Habits, Hang-ups...for some, these have such a stranglehold on their lives that they just need something...something to help them focus on life...turn things around...start living again. Celebrate Recovery is here for just that purpose. Through the structure of a 12 step Christ-centered program, CR takes the "through Christ, your life can change" approach toward a healthy life. CR is about character change, not just altering some habits. It is about taking 2 hours of each week to come together to focus on the solution to our hurts rather than focusing on the hurt itself. It is about giving different choices -- better choices -- to overcome the hang-ups that have handcuffed us. Every Tuesday night, dedicated leaders show up to "walk life" together with others. The road to recovery can sometimes be lonely, so our leaders have given of themselves to aid in the recovery of others...to not only overcome their own hurts, habits, and hang-ups but to demonstrate and teach that it is possible for anyone. This past year, we have averaged 38 people in attendance, and we praise God for the changes in peoples' lives. We have also had a booth at the Ashtabula County Fair and for the first time participated in the local Relay for Life cancer research fundraiser.

On a Personal Note...

I once again traveled to Estonia to teach at the Jogevea English Camp. This year, 39 teens attended the camp with several giving their hearts to Christ. Added to that, we just got word recently that one of the young ladies who came to camp as a nonbeliever just gave her heart to Christ and was baptized...PRAISE HIM!! I was also privileged to perform the wedding ceremony for my nephew as well as the renewing of vows for my in-laws 50th wedding anniversary. I am more in love with my wife than ever before...our children are doing well...our granddaughter is now 1...and life is good. With turning 49, I have been on a personal journey of reflection lately...looking at my life and asking the question, "am I being most effective for the Kingdom?" This year, more than any before, is a year that I believe will define me for the rest of my days. I thank Bill, Chris, Becky, the Board, and all of you for allowing me the opportunity to serve my Lord here at EBC.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Black