

ALTO



REFORMED CHURCH

ARTICLES

But I Don't Want to Teach (Part 9 of Pathways to Maturity)

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

The ninth requirement of pastoral ordination in the Alliance of Reformed Churches is preaching. Specifically, one is required to be competent at expositional preaching*, small group leadership, and humbly receiving feedback.

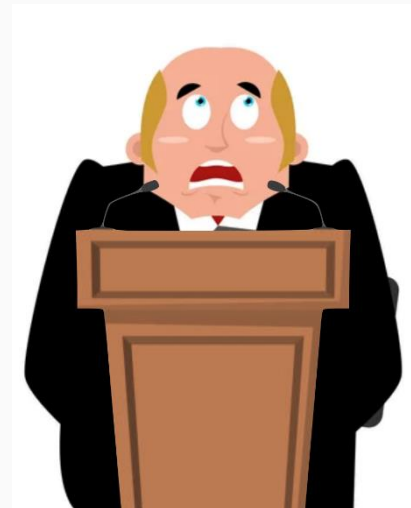
I am sure you are glad that there is some expectation of your pastors to have some training and competency at preaching. You probably want me to add some more competency to my teaching and I am seeking to grow in this area.

I am also certain 99% of you never want to preach.

So, why am I writing this?

#1. We need more preachers in the world. Pastors are retiring or just quitting and churches are searching high and low for pastors.

Matthew 9:37–38 (NIV) Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the



workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

#2. God is nudging some of you to step up. The path to being equipped as a pastor has never been more accessible. You don't have to move. You can go at your own pace. And you can do it for basically no cost. (Talk with me if you want to explore this.)

1 Corinthians 9:16 (NIV) For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

#3. Every believer is called to be a messenger of the gospel. True, preaching often refers to teaching in a formal setting, but Jesus and Paul often consider witnessing or evangelism preaching. All of us need to learn to communicate the gospel, that's preaching too.

Acts 10:42 (NIV) He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

#4. Many of you are parents and you are commanded to train up your children in the Lord. You must be able to preach to your children and that is a great place to begin.

Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

#5. If you remain silent, people may never hear...

Romans 10:14–15 (NIV) How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

So, this ability to explain the Bible accurately and in a compelling manner is for you.

My Story...

In elementary school, I hated speaking in class. In 7th grade, I hated speech class more than anything else.

When I was in college I began to sense God's call on my life to build up the church.

After graduating, I spent a year working as a worship leader in a small baptist church. With a degree in music education I only felt partially equipped. The next year, as Steph and I served with Intervarsity at the University of Northern Iowa, I discovered an essential gap: my biblical knowledge.

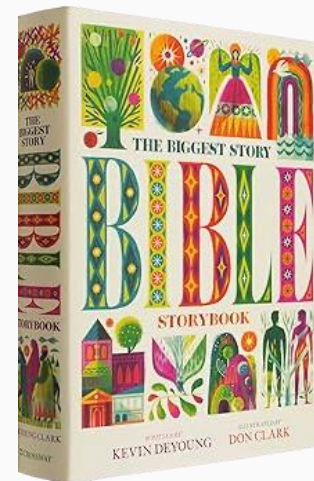
We prayed and God directed me to seminary. The more I learned, the more I sensed a call to teach. I cannot believe God took a horrified & mortified speaker and stuck me in the pulpit.

So, don't check out, God may be up to something big with you! Let me give you some practical nexts steps that might not make you the next Charles Spurgeon, but then again, you never know.

Where should you start if this is all new to you?

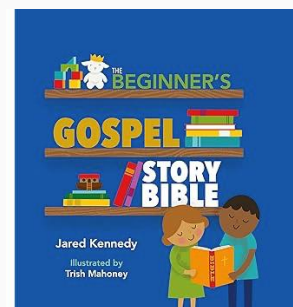
The answer is simple, but hard: Start with your kids or grandkids. Start the habit of reading the Bible as early as possible. They may not understand, but this is good for you as you learn the stories.

1. Get a good children's Bible.
2. Read a story.
3. Apply that story to your child's life.



The following three options make the application a lot easier.

- *The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible* for ages 2-5 has an application question and comments after each story.
- *The Biggest Story Bible* for ages 6-12 has a short prayer after each story
- *The Spark Story Bible* for ages 4-8 has a practical question after each story.



What are some next steps if you feel you have a solid foundation?

Teach Kids:

We have awesome programs for kids on Sunday and Wednesday, and we can always use more teachers. Lynnae empowers teachers with some great curriculum

that is designed to make prep easy. Here's a helpful training video even for those who have been teaching for years: *How to teach kids - 10 tips* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp1hdeU4zFE)

Prepare to Lead a Small Group:

6 Tips for a Great Small Group by Bill Search (6 Sessions 7 Min Avg) will equip small group leaders with practical guidance on creating friendly, efficient, relational group experience. In six short lessons, Bill Search shares simple, proven leadership skills that will help groups stay on task, remain inviting to newcomers, study the Bible well, and foster relationships. <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/351527>

Start/Lead a Small Group:

Co-lead a small group with someone who has done it before. Work through the selection of materials and group leadership together, working on continual improvements to the group. Contact Katie Derksen for options.

Learn to Preach:

Read Haddon W. Robinson's *Biblical Preaching*, it's the standard, a bit outdated, but practical. For a current challenge watch *Preaching: A RightNow Conference Collection* (<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/510067>) If that's not enough, check out Christian Leaders Institute (www.christianleadersinstitute.org) it's an incredible resource for the church and you.

PRAYER:

Lord, would You raise up workers for the harvest. Would You stir in the hearts of Your people to be devoted to studying, obeying, and teaching Your Word (Ezra 7:10). Raise up preachers from our church that change the world. Move in me that I might do Your will. Amen.

* The most succinct definition of expositional preaching I found is a nugget from John Stott's longer definition. Expositional preaching "makes plain what is obscure." (www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-expository-preaching/) No doubt accurate interpretation and application of what the text says is vital (I addressed that in part 4). Expositional preaching must also make the Bible text relevant today.

Best Moments in Youth Ministry - Part 1

By Jessa Wedel

As my time in youth ministry is coming to a close there are so many great memories to reflect on. For the months of March, April and May my articles will share some of these moments. There are way too many to write every one down and I'm sure over the 11 years there will be some that I forget to mention, but it's been a blessing of a ride and I want to celebrate that with you. I'm going to begin with the most recent ones since they're the freshest in my memory.

1. Middle School Overnighter, February 2024. Normally I dread the middle school overnights because it's hard for me to go without any sleep. This one was no different as I geared up for it, but God sure blessed me through it. During our worship service that night I had a band full of current and former students, then got to share with the kids about why Jesus matters, and then listened to 8 of my former students and 2 current seniors share with the kids why Jesus matters in their lives. If I was looking for a culmination experience of my 11 years in ministry - it happened that night. Kanon Smit was in the first 6th grade class I ever had in ministry and I got to witness him and 9 others that had gone through my time at Alto witness to, love on, and disciple 42 current middle schoolers. Wow God! He sure is good. What a privilege it's been to witness God work in each of their lives and see the way He uses them to work in others.

2. Praying over each of our high schoolers that attends Winter Retreat at Silver Birch. Instead of doing our typical small group questions after the Saturday night session, 6 years ago we started taking that time to lay hands on and pray over each student, one at a time. We have the opportunity to speak truth into their lives, share the vision God is giving us for them, and encourage them in their walk with God. I cry every time, but it's all in amazement at what God is doing in and through those kids.

3. Experiencing God with young adults over the past 2 years. On Sunday nights after middle school youth group I have the privilege to meet with a small group of young adults that are wanting to grow deeper in their faith. This time of life can be so hard for that age - with such big decisions happening and feeling like life is moving so fast that you don't know which way to look. It's also been great for my faith as I always continue to wrestle with patience and faith in God's plan. God really shows up in

those conversations and we truly learn what it is to experience Him working in our lives and how to join Him in His will instead of living for our own.

4. Question and Answer nights. I might miss these the most out of anything! Have you ever gotten into deep theological discussions with a preteen or teenager? If not, I encourage it. The seeking that these kids are doing is inspiring! They have taught me so much with the questions they ask and we learn each time what it looks like to defend our faith and how to share the reason for the hope that we have. At middle school youth group last night I started turning the questions back to them - and guess what - they've got it! God has equipped them not only to ask the right questions, but now to teach others the answers. The other big blessing for me on these nights is to have the coaches help answer the questions. When we first started I answered them on my own. Now there are so many people willing to help answer that we can barely fit enough stools up front in the youth room. How cool is that?! We also started having to give time limits for answers because we all get so passionate about the questions that we could take all night answering 1!

If you want to experience God through the eyes of a preteen, teen, or young adult, please come talk to me. I'd love to pass your name on to the next person that's hired, or get you into one on one discipleship. I promise you that the time and effort you put into it will be a blessing and your faith will grow leaps and bounds.

MESSAGES

Thank you for the cards and candy and also for those that bring the tapes.

-Marion Tolsma

Once again we come with grateful hearts to our church family and friends. Thank you for all the prayers, thoughts, visits, food that was brought, cards--the list goes on and on! Thank you, Thank you! Rick's knee is healing well without hardly any pain, Praise God! Jean continues to get stronger and is continuing with her progress at Pulmonary Rehab. She also sees her oncologists every 6 months for checkups. We would also like to thank you for your sympathies in reaching out to us in the loss of our brother, Norb. He was a great guy and will be missed but Praise God we will see him again!

"My soul finds rest in God alone, my salvation comes from Him! He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken!" Psalm 62: 1-2

-Jean & Rick & family

EVENTS

March Events

Mar
10

Sunday, 7:00pm

Community Prayer Service

Join us for an evening of prayer during the Community Prayer Service formerly known as the Crops, Livestock, & Industry Prayer Service.

Mar
28

Thursday, 7:00pm

Maundy Thursday Service

Join us as we celebrate the Last Supper.

Mar
29

Friday, 1:00pm

Good Friday Service

Join us as we commemorate Jesus' crucifixion on the cross.

Mar
31

Sunday, 9:30am

Easter Service

Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ!



NEWS

Update from Consistory:

- Ryan & Breanna VandeZande requested baptism for their daughter Amity Kay.
- Wyatt Guell & Libbi Campbell's wedding date was approved - August 17,

2024.

- The Crops & Industry Prayer Service will now be called the Community Prayer Service. This service will be held on March 10, 2024 and be a prayer service for community needs and needs of our own congregation.
- The Associate Pastor Search Team includes Dewey Bille, Jenna Bille, Bill Bruins, Carrie Bruins, Andy Derksen, Katie Derksen, Stephanie Lenz, Ben Leonard, Jerry Medema, Linda Mulder, Pastor Kevin Van Wyk, and Ryan Vande Zande.
- The Equipping Youth Director Search Team includes Adrea Daane, Missy Derksen, Jensen Jahn, Lynnae Loomans, Brant McDowell, Joel Ruis, and Miley Ter Beest.
- Alto Reformed Church has always been supportive of members of our congregation who wish to attend seminary and ask for financial support. With changes in schooling such as online courses and other pathways to ordination the Deacons made changes to the financial guidelines and the Elders will look at changing the bylaws to fit these guidelines. Currently Ian Van Wyk and Randy McDaniel are on the pathway to ordination through the Alliance Network.

Address Update:

Barrie & Ardyce Tenpas
452 Fox Lake Rd, Apt 212
Waupun, WI 53963