

I am going to try something a little different with newsletters this year. I plan to still write student and parent newsletters, but instead of printing them I will make them available to you electronically. I am told that in the facebook/twitter world we live in that this is the way to go, so I'll give it a try. I will email newsletters and ask Dave to post them on the church's web page. I am trying out twitter. If you are a twitter user, I'd appreciate it if you'd become a follower to read our stuff. Let me know you tweet and I'll attempt to become a follower of you also. So here we go in this new chapter of attempted communication....



Upcoming Schedule:

- 9/4 – Kickoff – bowling/ice cream
- 9/11 – Discipleship night – more info to come
- 9/18 – Fun night – Amazing Race
- 9/25 – Discipleship night

** You can see our full schedule up to Christmas on the church web site:

<http://www.firstreformed.com/youth/index.htm>

Stuff...

I will include different things in the newsletter like articles I hope you will read, quotes, excerpts from books, humor, etc. Below is a cool article from Christianity Today by Crystall Kirgiss called "**Michael.**"

It's lunch hour. And the cafeteria is a zoo. At a round table near the edge of the room, I'm brown-bagging it with six of my friends. We almost always sit together, at the same table, in the same seats. We talk about our teachers, our classes, our parents, and the cute guys sitting a few tables away. We talk about what we'll do together after school or over the weekend. We decide homeroom is kind of fun and accelerated classes are manageable, but what about that weird biology teacher with the bad hair and squeaky voice?

Lunch hour for us is safe and predictable and routine. There's never any stress or worry about where we'll sit, who we'll sit with, or what we'll talk about. But over there, a guy named Michael sits alone. Every day. I've never seen him sitting with anyone. For that matter, I've never seen him walking in the hall with anyone, talking to anyone between classes, or hanging out with anyone after school. I only see Michael alone.

Michael is tall and thin. His shoulders sag. He walks slowly. His brown hair is straight and long. His face looks sad and hurt. Michael doesn't hide his loneliness very well. Michael is in my P.E. class. He is not athletic. He can't throw well, he runs awkwardly, and he obviously doesn't enjoy the class. By the end of the semester, after being laughed at and ridiculed by nearly everyone, Michael's face begins to look more guarded. He seems to keep all his feelings on the inside.

When I see Michael in the hall, he seems lost and confused. Instead of going to his locker between classes, he carries all his books, so he's always dropping stuff. He walks along the wall where he can avoid all the crowds. Sometimes I wonder if anybody ever even notices him.



I'VE BEEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT I
HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING MY MESSAGE ACROSS
LATELY

Sometimes I notice, but I don't do anything about it. What does it matter, anyway? I don't have any obligations toward him. He's just another kid in school who really has nothing to do with me. Right? My youth director wouldn't agree. His big thing this year is "Reaching Out to Others," "Being a Good Christian Witness," "Stretching Beyond Your Comfort Zone." Stuff like that. My youth director talks about it all the time—gently, but in a way that still challenges us. I have no problem with these ideas. Hey, my close friends are from different faiths and backgrounds. I tell them what I believe. Some have even come with me to youth group. Isn't that Reaching Out? But reach out to Michael?

Halfway through the year, while I sit in the lunchroom with my friends, I glance up and notice Michael sitting alone—again. And I realize I'm not really Reaching Out or Stretching Beyond My Comfort Zone. Silently, I plead with God to leave me alone, to not bug me about Michael because surely there's someone else who could befriend him. For me, it would be so inconvenient, so uncomfortable, so embarrassing. But God doesn't leave me alone. And so after a few miserable days, I walk into the lunch room. I walk past my table of friends, without telling them what I'm up to. And I sit down across from Michael.

My heart is pounding. My face is burning. I feel like everyone is staring at me. And for some reason, I am afraid. I say, "Hi." Michael says nothing. I say, "How are you?" Michael says nothing. I want to shrivel up and die, but I eat my lunch and make small talk while Michael just eats his lunch in silence. I do this the next day and the next. Soon several days have passed, and I am beginning to feel a little resentful because, after all, I am doing my part. I am Reaching Out. I am talking about school and classes and stuff. But Michael is not doing his part by being grateful or friendly or nice. I wonder, What's the deal? I'm doing the right thing, aren't I? Why aren't things going more smoothly?

The next week, I no longer see Michael in the lunch room. His schedule has changed, and now he has 5th-hour lunch. So my lunches with Michael have ended. I go back to sitting with my friends. We talk about school and classes and teachers and what we'll do after school or over the weekend. They never pry about the whole Michael thing. For now, I just tell them it seemed like maybe he needed a friend.

Michael never stops me in the hall to say thanks. He never acknowledges the fact that, for a few days, we were lunch partners. He never says I really changed his life and now he's a brand new person because someone took the time to reach out to him. I have no idea how he feels about the whole thing, or if he even noticed me.

But as I think about it, I realize that I've changed. And I've learned: God is asking me to obey him all the time, in all kinds of ways, even ways that might not seem obvious at first. Obeying isn't always easy or comfortable or fun. And being obedient doesn't guarantee recognition or a tangible reward. But if I obey, something inside of me will be right with God. And that's a good enough reason for me.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/truelifestories/ithappenedtome/7c2055.html>

1 John 2:3-6: "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."

A Little Humor...

A lady was cleaning her house and singing Gospel songs as she worked. She began singing, "Soon and very soon, we are going to see the king..." Her little son was in the next room and began singing along with Mom. Something was a little off, however, so Mom stopped to listen. The preschooler's version: "Soon, and very soon, we are going to Burger King..."

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03-17-2000

EVERYONE PLEASE BROWSE TO
BIBLE.GOSPEL.COM.NET AND BRING UP PSALMS
FOR TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READING