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Professional Tools

Doug Lawrence

Quote

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning." —Albert Einstein

Scripture

"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out. A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great. The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him." —Proverbs 18:15-17

Prayer

Lord, we are all trying to answer that which is hidden from us. Where that exercise comes from vanity, we beg your forgiveness. Where it comes from our honest desire to know You, prosper our search! Amen

Leadership



Photo of Rob Bell by Gaylene Trethewey©

Questioning is Good

[Rob Bell](#) said in an interview with the [Whittenburg Door](#)...

I don't believe in Christian art or music. The word Christian was originally a noun. A person, not an adjective. I believe in great art. If you are an artist, your job is to do great art and you don't need to tack on the word Christian. It's already great. God is the God of Creativity. Categories desecrate the art form. It's either great art or it isn't. Followers of Jesus should have the first word instead of coming late to the game with some poor quality spin-off. Let's talk about things before everyone else. —Rob Bell (Whittenburg Door—printed by permission)

I like Rob Bell. He's hip, smart, articulate, wears really cool glasses, and he's a real mover and shaker in the church world. He calls it like he sees, and he has one particular trait that I admire most—he asks hard questions. I like asking hard questions too, even if I don't always have adequate answers myself. It doesn't hurt to ask, and it stirs our God-given gift of thought.

You can call hard (aka irritating) questioning "cynical," but I prefer to call it necessary. It's necessary because it requires real analysis and process. If I say to you, "Money is, and always has been, problematic in the church," you have to, at the very least, dip into your database and see if, in your own experience, you've ever had a similar thought. You have to accept or refute the statement as you read it. You might even continue to read what I have to say and draw a conclusion later, but you will probably eventually conclude that I am either in error or that you want to think deeper on your own about the assertion I made.

Questions demand answers, whether we do that work passively or actively it requires real thinking and a kind of sorting out of our own points-of-view. That's a good thing! It's like doing research before you buy a HD television. You go to the web, you find out what others think about the products available, then you decide for yourself before you drop your hard earned cash. It's both practical and soul-satisfying to exercise your mind over issues that will impact you financially or in some other way.

My friend, Vern Sanders, has been championing "Local Solutions for Local Situations" for years. We want to challenge the Evangelical church to ask hard questions. Are you with us?

Why I, er...we, can't lose weight...



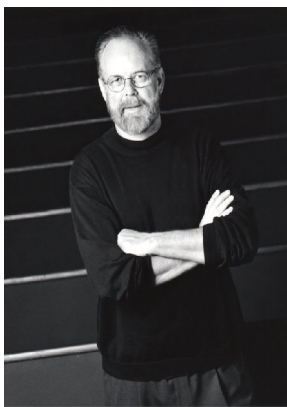
Self-portrait by Author©

I have this friend, George, let's call him (...yeeeh, that's right...George) who went on 6 diets in one year and lost (and regained) 15 pounds—over and over. I asked him why he felt that he had failed to attain and retain his desired weight loss. His answer didn't surprise me. He said, "I've discovered that one size does not fit all (no pun intended)." His journey took him from pineapple soufflés to boiled chicken and back to the spiky fruit once again. He quickly tired of the boring nature of these diets and craved some variety. That's where things went awry. The variety included things like vanilla shakes and French fries and the weight quickly reappeared. So, then it was on to the next book, the next diet, and the next failure. While the experts said he would lose weight if he just stuck to the plan, he was not everyone, and the latest diet expert was clearly not speaking for him when they spoke of miraculous results. The church finds itself currently in something of a "diet guru" implosion.

Christian leaders (at one time we called them pastors) are currently trying everything under the sun to fulfill the Great Commission. Like a failed diet, it seems to be two steps forward and four steps backward. They have an ongoing depression mixed with incredible hope, much like the failed dieter has when attempting to change old habits. They try everything, enjoy small victories, then sometimes realize no real change has happened. They don't have larger congregations, the folks they have don't seem to be changing, and George Barna endlessly reminds them that Christians are pretty much like everyone else when it comes to moral living and resolve.

Is there a plan out there somewhere that holds the key for changing the Evangelical world? Is there a formula for being all that God called us to be. The answer is a resounding, "NO!" Formulas suggest that a truth is going to come from some knowledgeable trendsetter and change everything forever. Innovators do make a difference in our lives and our churches. They take us forward and they challenge us to new thinking, but nobody has a corner on THE answer except God.

So, this week we will begin a new feature as part of the Creator portfolio available on this site as well as other blog-post sites. Mine will be called Doug Lawrence's Honest to God blog and will allow YOU to ask the hard questions. This first week I will simply reprint this article in order to allow you to respond and ask or say what's on your mind. It would be great if we could stick to the general theme of the blog and not beat up on each other too much. Still, won't it be fun to talk in an open forum. I can hardly wait!



Here's how to get there...

[Doug Lawrence](#)

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Doug has been a consultant to church leaders for 35 years and is anxious to be helpful to you in leadership, musical, and staffing considerations. Please click on his name above and email him. He's available to consult on the phone as well.

Also take a look...

This is a great new way for singers to connect. Please take a look and sign up. There are some great tips for singers and conductors!

