

We Can, But Should We?

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:14–15

Code: B120104

Technology continues to advance at a pace that renders every new smartphone, tablet computer, gadget, gizmo, and doohickey obsolete almost upon purchase. And for every successful product—one that actually makes it on the shelf and turns a profit—there have to be ___ failed attempts. That's why we take a bit of a "wait and see" approach to innovation here at Grace to You. We're not about to jeopardize our stewardship by riding on the bleeding edge of every new fad that comes down the pike.

Has anyone else noticed how many new and innovative approaches to ministry have become commonplace in evangelical conversation? If you attend one of many faithful, biblically-sound churches around the country, you're probably scratching your head. But let me mention just a few I've noticed over the past year or so.

—Multisite churches are now all the rage. If you don't know what that means, you're better off for it. Still, if you'd like to know, take a look at [this tutorial](#). No matter what that video claims, there is no biblical justification for multisite church ministry, where satellite congregations watching the main preacher's pulpit ministry remotely via video screen. Technology makes multisite possible, but is it spiritually beneficial for the saints of God?

—It would seem that to accommodate the multisite model, some are trifurcating the duties of a pastor into categories of prophet (preacher, exhorter), priest (counselor, encourager), and king (visionary, overseer, administrator). Never mind that those are *roles*, only fulfilled by Christ, *not* biblical categories for different kinds of leaders. Here's my question: Doesn't the biblical elder/pastor strive to follow the Chief Shepherd in being *all* those things to his congregation?

—What qualifies as biblical preaching these days is clear evidence of pulpit decline. There truly is a famine in the land. But that's not what groupies, fans, and followers think. Taking hype, celebrity, and conference appearances as proof-positive that "this guy is solid, deep, and theologically sound," many are unable to discern that their favorite preacher keeps missing the point of the passage. If the *Holy Spirit's* intended meaning isn't communicated in the sermon, you can be assured that is *not* solid, deep, or theologically sound.

—The departure from biblical authority in church ministry has led to at least two closely-connected errors: unqualified leadership and an appeal to personal experience for validation. The biblical qualifications for church leadership (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1) don't seem to be that important, so long as you have a good dream, vision, or voice-from-God story that justifies your deal, you get a pass on the qualifications. And has anyone noticed how charismatic theology goes unchallenged? Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* is excellent, mostly; he's got some [serious problems](#) with the exegesis underpinning his charismatic views.

So, the question is not, "Can we do church, ministry, leadership, church planting, etc. in this way or

that?” Advancing technology has opened many vistas of new possibility, so, of course we *can*. The better question, the righteous question, is this: “*Should* we do thus and such in ministry?”

The “should” question indicates accountability to a greater standard. And if it’s church ministry we’re talking about, that standard is *sola scriptura*. You won’t find the flavor of the month in churches submitted to the biblical model of ministry (of which there are many, even if they are small and unknown), but it’ll save you from having to trade out your shiny new ministry gadget every year or two as well. Just think about what God can build over the course of your life when you trust and obey the old standard to do its transforming work in your life and church.

We’ll consider what that standard has to say in coming posts.

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