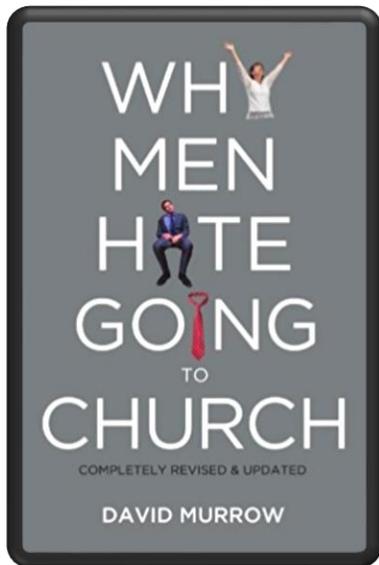
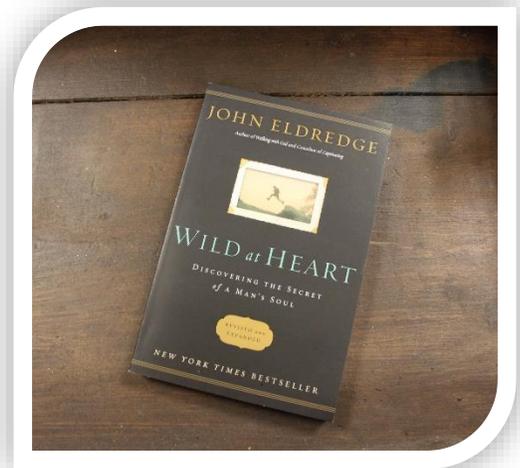


Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

June 19, 2018

In this week in which we've thought a lot about fathers, dads, and men in general, I thought I'd invite you to join our Men in Ministry in a research project. In order to do that, I need to go back in time just a bit.

A dozen or so years ago, I came across John Eldredge's best-selling book, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*. In those days, Matt and Anna lived not far from us in the mountains of East Tennessee, and I read the whole book while waiting for Jill to do some shopping in Elizabethton, where they lived. I was surprised at the stirrings within as I read.



Over the past year, our Men in Ministry have studied that book, and we're currently making our way through David Murrow's *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, also a best-seller. Pointing out that the typical U.S. worship service is about two-thirds female, Murrow notes that "almost without exception, growing churches draw healthy numbers of men, while declining congregations lack male presence and participation" (p. xii).

Murrow goes so far as to claim that "men are the world's largest unreached people group. Men have a unique culture, language, and way of life. They respond differently than women" (p. xiii). For example, look at these two lists and choose the list that best represents your understanding of Jesus and His values:

LIST A	LIST B
Competence	Love
Power	Communication
Efficiency	Beauty
Achievement	Relationships
Skills	Support
Proving Oneself	Helping
Results	Nurturing
Accomplishment	Feelings
Objects	Sharing
Goal Orientation	Relating
Self-sufficiency	Community
Success	Loving Cooperation
Competition	Personal Expression

More than 90% of the time, people choose list B. The interesting thing about this is that these lists come from a best-selling secular book, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*.

According to the author, Dr. John Gray, list A represents what men value, and list B represents what women value. So think about this: **more than nine out of ten adults, both male and female, think of Jesus as endorsing the values that come more naturally to a woman.** Houston, we have a problem.

Murrow and Eldredge argue that men don't naturally hate God, or the Bible, or Christianity, or Jesus. They just aren't drawn to a system that's currently designed to reach someone else.

And this is a problem unique to Christianity among the major religions of the world. As Murrow puts it, “of the planet’s great religions, only Christianity has a consistent, worldwide shortage of male practitioners” (p. 14).

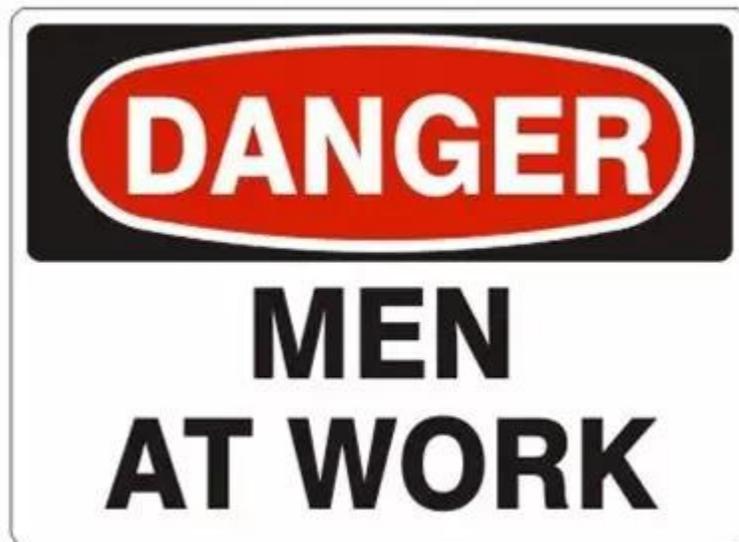
This shortage of Christian men exists all over the world, and according to Murrow, it goes back at least a hundred years. One survey suggested that in the United States, this gender gap is most noticeable in African-American congregations. “Contrast this with black Muslims, who are overwhelmingly male,” Murrow notes. “If current trends continue, the African-American community faces the prospect of separate religions for each gender: Christianity for women, Islam for men” (p. 16). Do I have your attention yet?

For starters, I encourage you to get and to read Murrow’s book about why men “hate” going to church. Both men and women will find much to ponder therein. But while you’re thinking about that, I invite you to complete the attached survey, also from Murrow. Our Men in Ministry have completed a number of surveys, and our answers have been very similar overall.

If you choose to complete the survey, please print it out, complete it, and give it to Calvin, Rebecca, or to me. Don’t identify yourself on your survey except to indicate whether you are male or female. And thanks 😊!

It will be interesting to see what happens

Dave



How guy friendly is your church?

This is a 50-question, non-scientific test that will help you assess your congregation's "man friendliness." Choose a number between 1 and 9 for each question. Any number is acceptable (For example, if your church falls between a 3 and a 5, write in "4.")

When you're done, add up your score and read the scale at the end of the test.

No.	Question	Score
1	Let's start with first impressions. Does your church have men in the parking lot welcoming people in? 1 —Never 3 —Rarely 5 —Sometimes 7 —Often 9 —Always	
2	How good is your church's signage (pointing people to the sanctuary, restrooms, classrooms, offices, etc. Include parking lot and roadside signage) 1 — No signage at all 3 — A few signs 5 — Signs at some corners 7 — A lot of signs 9 — A ridiculous number of signs	
3	What condition is your church facility? 1 - Old and tired 3 - Old but functional 5 - Well kept 7 - Nicely updated and kept 9 - Cutting edge	
4	Your sanctuary is decorated 1 —Like a ladies' parlor (quilts, banners, lace and flowers) 3 —Somewhat feminine (fresh flowers) 5 —Gender neutral 7 —Somewhat masculine 9 —Intentionally masculine	
5	On a typical Sunday, what percentage of the people on stage are men? 1 - Under 20% 3 - 20 to 40% 5 - 40 to 60% 7 - 60 to 80% 9 - 80 to 100%	
6	When you walk into the church, how much of a "buzz" or a feeling of excitement is there? Choose a number between 1 (Funeral Parlor) to 9 (The Super Bowl)	
7	The quality of our music is 1 —Amateurish 3 —Not great 5 —Pretty good 7 —Very good 9 —Professional	

8	How often do we sing a song that could become a top-40-love song if the word "Jesus" were changed to "baby"? 1 —Every week 3 —Monthly 5 —At least 10 times a year 7 —Two or 3 times a year 9 —Never	
9	Also regarding the music, what's the maximum number of times you repeat the same chorus over and over? 1 —It feels like 100 3 —10 or more repetitions 5 —5 to 9 repetitions 7 —3 to 5 repetitions 9 —We never repeat more than 3 times	
10	How long are your pastor's sermons? 1 — 2 hours or longer 3 — 1 to 2 hours 5 — 30-60 minutes 7 — 15-30 minutes 9 — Under 15 minutes	
11	How often does the pastor include a strong visual component in the sermon, such as a physical object or a film clip? (Words on the screen don't count) 1 —Never 3 —Two or 3 times a year 5 —At least 10 times a year 7 —Once or twice a month 9 —Every week	
12	Does your pastor choose illustrations and metaphors that appeal to men? (drawn from battle, adventure, sports, survival and the like) 1 —Never 3 —Rarely 5 —Sometimes 7 —Often 9 —Always	
13	How often do individuals share prayer requests during your worship service? 1 —Always 3 —Often 5 —Sometimes 7 —Rarely 9 —Never	
14	How often do children perform in the worship service? 1 —Every week 3 —Twice monthly 5 —At least 10 times a year 7 —Two or 3 times a year 9 —Never	
15	How long does the worship service typically run? 1 — 120 minutes or longer 3 — 90 to 120 minutes 5 — 75 to 90 minutes 7 — 60 to 75 minutes 9 — Under 60 minutes	

16	How much laughter is heard in your worship services? 1 – None 3 – An occasional bit of laughter 5 – We laugh at least once every Sunday 7 – We laugh multiple times during each service 9 – It feels more like a comedy club than a church service	
17	How much racial diversity do you have in the pews? 1 – We’re over 95 percent the same race 3 – 90 to 95 percent the same race 5 – 75 to 90 percent the same race 7 – 50 to 75 percent the same race 9 – We’re totally mixed, with no dominant racial group	
18	How often do you invite people to hold hands or encourage people to hug during your worship service, adult Sunday school or small group? 1 —Every time we meet 3 —Every other time 5 —Sometimes 7 —Rarely 9 —Never	
19	How would you rate the overall quality of your worship service? 1 —Amateur hour 3 —It’s good enough for church 5 —We do pretty good 7 —Consistently well done 9 —Cutting-edge creativity	
20	How often does something completely unexpected happen during your worship services — something so unusual people are startled or shocked by it? 1 —Never 3 —Two or 3 times a year 5 —At least 10 times a year 7 —Once or twice a month 9 —Every week	
21	In your worship service, how emotional do the people become? 1 —Extremely emotional (crying, fainting, hollering) 3 —Quite emotional 5 —Somewhat emotional 7 —Not very emotional 9 —Someone could die and nobody would notice	
22	Rate your pastor’s sermons 1 —Consistently boring and irrelevant 3 —Usually not very good 5 —Some are quite good, others not so good 7 —Consistently good sermons 9 —Astonishing, challenging sermons every week	
23	Where does your senior pastor fall on the manliness scale? 1 —Feminine 3 —Soft 5 —Average 7 —Manly 9 —Jock	

24	Where does your worship leader fall on the manliness scale? 1 —Feminine 3 —Soft 5 —Average 7 —Manly 9 —Jock	
25	How active is your church's men's ministry? 1 —Nonexistent 3 —Annual retreat 5 —Meets monthly 7 —Meets weekly 9 —Men meeting regularly in small groups	
26	What percentage of your men participate in the men's ministry? 1 —Less than 10 2 —10 to 20 3 —20 to 40 4 —40 to 60 5 —you're lying!	
27	What percentage of your lay ministries are headed by men? 1 —Less than 10 2 —10 to 20 3 —20 to 40 4 —40 to 60 5 —more than 60%	
28	What percentage of your volunteers are male? 1 —Less than 10 2 —10 to 20 3 —20 to 40 4 —40 to 60 5 —more than 60%	
29	Think about your midweek activities. What percentage of your adult participants are male? 1 —Less than 10 2 —10 to 20 3 —20 to 40 4 —40 to 60 5 —more than 60%	
30	What percentage of your church staff is male? (count ministry and office staff, but not custodial & building maintenance) 1 —Less than 10 2 —10 to 20 3 —20 to 40 4 —40 to 60 5 —more than 60%	
31	If your church offers a men's ministry program, does the pastor participate? 1 —Never 3 —Rarely 5 —Sometimes 7 —Often 9 —Always	

32	Your Children's Sunday school format is: 1 —Traditional classroom, lecture style 3 —Mostly classroom with some activities 5 —Classroom plus active learning 7 —Mostly active learning with a bit of lecture 9 —All active learning —no lecture	
33	Does the high school youth group sing worship songs? If so, how many minutes do they typically sing? 1 —More than 30 minutes 3 —30 to 20 minutes 5 —20 to 10 minutes 7 —10 to 5 minutes 9 —They do not usually sing	
34	In your small groups, how often do you ask people to look up passages in books (including the Bible) and read them aloud? 1 —Every time we meet 3 —Every other time 5 —Sometimes 7 —Rarely 9 —Never	
35	Is your Senior Pastor a strong leader, or more the shepherd type? 1 - A gentle shepherd 3 - A consensus builder 5 - A cautious leader 7 - A deliberate leader 9 - A charge ahead leader	
36	Does your church ever conduct meetings that seem to have lost their purpose? 1 - Always 3 - Often 5 - Once in a while 7 - Rarely 9 - Never	
37	How well known is your church in the wider community? 1 - Virtually unknown 3 - Known within our denomination 5 - Known in our neighborhood 7 - Known in our city 9 - The best known church in our area	
38	Along the same vein, how many times in the past five years has your church done something that generated a news story? 1 - Never 3 - Once in the past five years 5 - Two to three times in the past five years 7 - Once in the past year 9 - They write about us all the time, many times a year	
39	How often does your church attempt big, risky things? 1 —Never 3 —Rarely 5 —Sometimes 7 —Often 9 —Always	

40	How often do male visitors show up without wives or girlfriends? 1 - Can't remember the last one 3 - It's pretty rare 5 - Sometimes 7 - Pretty often 9 - Every week	
41	Does your church offer ministries that take advantage of guy-skills (such as car repair, home repair, strategic planning and the like) ? 1 - None 3 - One 5 - A couple 7 - A few 9 - Many	
42	What is your ADULT gender ratio in worship? 1 - less than 20% male 3 - 20 to 30% male 5 - 30 to 40 % male 7 - 40 to 50 % male 9 - more men than women	
43	How many worshippers does your congregation welcome on a typical weekend? 1 - 100 or fewer 3 - 100 to 500 5 - 500 to 1000 7 - 1000 to 5000 9 - over 5000	
44	Let's say a tone-deaf member of your church asks to sing a solo. What will your music director do? 1 - Let her make a joyful noise unto the Lord 3 - Put her in a trio 5 - Put her in the choir, but don't give her a solo 7 - Encourage her to find another ministry, but let her sing 9 - Remove her from the choir	
45	How is your church's theology, generally speaking? 1 - very liberal 2 - leans liberal 3 - right in the middle 4 - leans conservative 5 - very conservative	
46	How are people in your church expected to dress? 1 - Suit and tie for men, dresses and skirts for women 3 - Jackets for men, pant suits for women 5 - Business casual 7 - Casual Friday (jeans and t-shirts) 9 - Anything goes	
47	How much does your pastor delegate responsibilities to staff and laypersons? 1 - He does it all himself 3 - He delegates a few tasks 5 - He delegates many tasks 7 - He delegates almost everything 9 - He delegates too many tasks	

48	Let's say your church has a ministry program that's outdated, poorly run and not producing much fruit. How will your congregational leaders handle it? 1 - Do nothing - just let sleeping dogs lie. 3 - Assign a committee to study the problem 5 - Shuffle the leadership of the program 7 - Phase it out over time 9 - Kill it immediately	
49	How often does your pastor say something controversial from the pulpit? (Taking a very strong stand on an issue, sure to offend some people) 1 - Can't remember the last time 3 - It's pretty rare 5 - Sometimes 7 - Pretty often 9 - Every week	
50	What percentage of your congregational life takes place outdoors? 1 - We never meet outdoors 3 - Easter sunrise service only 5 - We have a few outdoor meetings 7 - We're outdoors quite a bit 9 - We're outdoors all the time	
	Congratulations! Now add up your score and place it here:	

Interpreting your score:

As you've probably figured out, the higher the score, the more likely your church is to appeal to men, with some important caveats:

1. Not all men are alike.
2. While a score of 50 would indicate a serious problem reaching men, a score of 450 would not be desirable either. It's too masculine.
3. The best churches for men will score in the 300s. A score of 350 is just about perfect.
4. As I frequently say, the spiritual trumps the practical. If God's spirit is living and active in your church, none of this matters. The pastor could preach in a Hello Kitty suit and if God is present, men's lives will be changed. However, practical things do help men feel more welcome in our houses of worship. Just as a missionary tailors his gospel presentation to the people he's trying to reach, we must not forget men when we present the gospel.