Removing Obstacles To Jesus

Mike O'Brien

As we recruit, train and encourage our sound and media teams it's vital to remind them of the importance of invisibility and "seamlessness." Certainly, the Lord can use imperfect productions for His glory, but when our tech work is smooth and seamless it clears the way for the God's message to be heard. It can make an eternal difference! Invisible, seamless service certainly made a difference in my life: when I was 10 years old my mom and I visited a small church near our house as a last ditch effort to find a remedy to a domestic abuse situation we were involved in. That one little service changed our lives forever. The songs, the sermon, and collective community made a huge deposit into my soul and led me on a pathway of salvation of discipleship that continues to this day. All the men and women of that church worked together to lead me to Jesus, and I am thankful!

Our gatherings are vital not only for the believers who gather but also for the souls who come [to] church searching for a place to belong. One of our most important tech roles is to remove barriers between the people who attend our services and the one true God. Things like microphone feedback, missed cues, sloppy transitions, and poor grammar on presentation slides can all become unnecessary obstacles. These seemingly small things might indirectly become barriers to meeting Jesus.

In Luke's gospel, we see a picture of several men doing everything they can to get a paralyzed man in front of Jesus so He could heal him. There was an impossible barrier around the house so they found a way to get the man to Jesus: "And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus." (Luke 5:18-19)

Jesus had the ability to simply heal the man despite the crowds, but this story reveals how faithful servants can remove barriers to Jesus. When we clear the way for the story of God to be clearly communicated, our work can make an eternal difference! Here are a couple [of[ways we can help remove barriers to Jesus in our weekly productions:

Go to the Roof

Be inventive in looking for solutions that are not obvious. Sometimes our modern church culture gives the idea that "easy beats better." We would rather be consistently mediocre than occasionally **excellent**. Excellence comes not from merely checking off a to-do list, but also opening our eyes to what God might be doing in any situation. In this example from Luke's gospel the men could have given up and gone home when they the saw the crowds — but they didn't! They resorted to extraordinary measures. Each week at our services the solutions might require the

same from us. Are you prepared to crawl under the stage? Return home to get your laptop? Run from one side of the building to the other to address a need? For the men in Luke's story, there was nothing easy about bringing an invalid up a flight of stairs!

Teach your teams the value of removing barriers in solving problems. Allow those under your care to identify problems and implement solutions. Ask them, "Do you see anything going on here that could be distracting?" and, "What do you think we can do about it?"

Be "Invisible"

The servants in this story are the nameless, faceless heroes. This idea is no surprise to those who have served behind the scenes, but it's good to be reminded that church works best when we don't get the attention (or the credit). We fix problems that 99 percent of the people in the room didn't know were problems. However, never equate being invisible with being unseen. Later in the passage after Jesus heals the man he says, "And when He [Jesus] saw their faith, he said, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you' " (Luke 5:20). The Lord sees you in the sound booth or media station!

Tech leaders should excite the idea of invisibility on their **teams**. They should celebrate the ordinary. We should all make an effort to praise our teams when nothing goes wrong!

Make the Meeting "Seamless"

We should identify each transition point in a meeting, and rehearse those transitions with worship leaders, speakers, ushers, and prayer and ministry teams. Do it for the glory of God, knowing that these seamless transitions help people focus on the message — and not our missed cue!

Every week our sound and media teams have the privilege and honor of helping people experience the Love of God the Father through Jesus. God gives us His Spirit as a guide, a comfort, and motivator to move us along. It's not our job to make God show up, or bring in His presence; rather, we are to host his presence. It's a question worth asking: how can tech volunteers help people better encounter Him? What obstacles can we remove so people can see a greater revelation of God? Sometimes faithful service is opening a space where there wasn't one before by removing the barriers to Jesus.