

# Turning Our Church Inside Out – Part 3 – Safety is not first!

## 1) Opening Illustration:

### a. Three Amigos

- b. *Clip: "I'm drawing a line."* This clip begins in the middle of chapter 11 if you are using a DVD. If you are using VHS, begin the counter at the opening of the movie where the Orion Pictures logo appears. The clip begins at approximately 49:40. In the scene, the Amigos return to the town of Santo Poco after having been run off by El Guapo, the leader of the bandito gang. The town is now in shambles, and the Amigos must decide whether to return home or to stay in Mexico and fight El Guapo. Ned, one of the Amigos, draws a line in the sand and asks the other two to make the choice. The scene ends with the three riding off into the sunset.
- c. *Clip Introduction:* Today we're going to watch a clip from a really funny movie called The Three Amigos. The movie is about three actors, who used to play the parts of three heroes called the Three Amigos, but now their show has been canceled. However, some people in Mexico saw their show and thought it was real, and have hired the Three Amigos to come and fight off the evil El Guapo, leader of the banditos. The Amigos don't realize that this is real, so they go to Mexico thinking they will be making a movie. Now, they have discovered that El Guapo is a real man and that his banditos are real, and that if they stay and fight, they actually may die. But if they leave, they will be leaving a small village unprotected from El Guapo and his gang. Let's watch the clip and see exactly what the Amigos decide to do.
- i. LUCKY: Let's go back to Hollywood.
  - ii. DUSTY: The sooner the better.
  - iii. LUCKY: It's too hot down here.
  - iv. DUSTY: Bad for my hay fever.
  - v. LUCKY: We don't belong down here anyway.
  - vi. DUSTY: Where's Ned?
  - vii. (NED is reloading his pistol with real bullets.)
  - viii. LUCKY: Ned, what are you doing?
  - ix. NED: What do we have to go back to? We have no jobs. No money, no place to live, no friends, no women, no self-respect—
  - x. DUSTY: Ned, we could get killed.
  - xi. NED: Back there the Three Amigos are already dead. Here we could be the Three Amigos for real. I'm drawing a line. Men or mice, what'll it be?

### d. Transitional Statement: I love the Three Amigos. These guys are guys who have found a mission, a life-altering opportunity, and they have gone for it.

- i. This particular scene is the pivotal scene in the movie. All their lives, the Three have only been the “fake” Three Amigos. But now, they decide that they must finally make a decision: return to the comfort zone of home, where things will be dull, or become the real Three Amigos and live a life of adventure and danger. And in this scene, it's one or the other. There is no middle ground.
  - ii. They must make a choice: stay on their side of the line or cross the line. Either way, they will forever be changed by their decision.
- e. This is because **every decision we make changes us.**
- i. When we say “YES”, even though we don't do it perfectly, we grow in grace. Through success and setback, we embark on a great adventure and are often used to change the world.
  - ii. When we say “NO”, we are changed as well. We become a bit harder, a bit more resistant to God's call, to His voice, to His love, and are more likely to say no again. We also miss out on a great adventure!
- f. **We are talking today about letting God turn us inside out, allowing God to change our focus from being internally focused to becoming externally focused, with all of its risks and rewards.**

## 2) Get out of the Boat!

- a. Matthew 14:22-32 NIV: *Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." 29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" 32 And when they climbed*

*into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*

- b. This story is one that is rich in meaning. But there are a few things that we don't notice right away.
    - i. Jesus tells his disciples to cross the lake (during the onset of a storm).
    - ii. Then Jesus comes by around 3am walking on the lake. (In Mark's gospel, it says "he was passing by.")
      1. That passing by is the same term used when God "passed by Moses" on the Mountain when Moses wanted to see His glory; it is the same term used when God "passed by" when Elijah was in his cave.
      2. In other words, Jesus fully intended on "revealing who he was" to his disciples, that was why he sent them ahead in a storm and that was why he decided to walk on the water, defying the laws of nature...so they could see His glory!
    - iii. The disciples are terrified by what they see, thinking it is a ghost or a spirit, but Jesus reassures them. Then good old Peter sticks his foot in his mouth and says, "Lord, if it is you, tell me (command me) to come to you on the water."
      1. I wondered about Peter's motivation for what he said here.
      2. I wondered if he was showing off, or just being foolish.
      3. But as I think about it, I believe that Peter just wanted to be doing what Jesus was doing.
      4. That is the heart of a true disciple! You want more than anything to do what Jesus is doing and to go where Jesus is going.
  - c. This is where symbolisms become important to the story:
    - i. **The boat represents safety.**
      1. Most of us know better than to stand up in a boat, and certainly we wouldn't try it during a storm, much less decide we want to leave it during a storm. But Peter does.
        - a. I would like you to ask yourself today, what is your boat?
        - b. What is it that prevents you from being turned inside out.
    - ii. **The boat represents our comfort zone.**
      1. What is it that you don't want to give up even if it keeps you from walking with Jesus?
      2. Your boat is whatever keeps you from joining Jesus on His mission.
    - iii. **Our "boat" is revealed by our deepest fear.**
      1. What is it that most produces fear in you?
        - a. Is it leaving the security of your income and career?
        - b. Is it a fear of losing a relationship with someone?
        - c. Is it a fear of your deepest, darkest secret being revealed?
        - d. Is it the fear of giving up a dream?
        - e. Is it the fear of meeting or associating with people who are different from yourself?
- 3) Before b/coming a pastor, I worked for Nabisco as a packaging foreman. We had some pretty big machinery that moved really fast, and wouldn't stop if an arm or a finger got in the way. Safety first was our motto.
- a. **But Safety first is not a good motto for a Christian.** (It must be "Christ First.")
  - b. As you think about Peter, getting out of the boat, what most of us remember isn't that Peter walked on water but that he sunk! We are like the other 11 disciples who played it safe and said, "*see, I told you so! He's going to get wet!*"
    - i. Those 11 others never got to learn what Peter learned. Look at what Peter learned:
      1. Peter experienced the humility of sinking and doubting.
      2. But he also knew the glory of defying nature and walking on water.
      3. He also knew what it was like to attempt something that wasn't humanely possible!
      4. He discovered what it was like to be rescued by Jesus.

5. This was Peter's most important, life changing event prior to his denial of Christ. He realized first hand that Jesus was wholly adequate and able to save him!
6. He found out that failure is neither final or fatal!
- ii. The 11 who stayed in the boat were so afraid of failure that they never risked the adventure.
  1. They were boat potatoes.
  2. They chose safety over significance.
  3. They were the ones who truly failed. Peter didn't fail, he merely faltered. The 11 who refused to risk anything are the ones who failed.
    - a. They aren't noticed, they aren't named, and they aren't criticized. They are invisible characters in this story. Only Peter risked enough to be named.
- iii. I hate to say it but our churches are full of pew potatoes.
  1. Jesus is looking for someone who will say, "I may be a small potato, but Lord, this spud is for you!"

#### 4) Risking Failure

- a. Risk and comfort (refusal to risk) both become habits.
- b. Every time you get out of the boat, it is easier to do it next time. It isn't that the fear goes away but that you realize that fear cannot control you any longer!
- c. **Failure is not an event. It is a judgment we make about an event.**
  - i. Churchill "I was given a 2<sup>nd</sup> opportunity to get it right."
  - ii. Salk, "200 methods that didn't work for polio"
  - iii. The best baseball hitters "fail" 2 out of 3 times to get a hit!
- d. These folks didn't fail...they were stretched in their search to become significant, and risked everything and kept on choosing to risk.
- e. Ultimately, when we chose safety first, we are saying "NO" to God. God is not a God of safe...He is the God of risk and adventure.

#### 5) Where are the risks in being turned INSIDE OUT, of becoming Externally focused?

- a. Most humans are by nature, tribal beings.
  - i. We prefer to be around people who are just like us.
    1. We will gather in conversations with people who talk about things we are interested in.
    2. We make friends with people who share our common interests.
  - ii. **We tend to avoid people who are different from us.**
    1. We feel uncomfortable being around people who talk or act differently than we do.
    2. We might even steer clear of folks who like different music than we do.
    3. We avoid folks who have different values than we do.
    4. We don't engage people who want to talk about stuff we aren't interested in.
- b. All of these things are normal because they are a part of our human nature.
  - i. But these tendencies will also PREVENT us from engaging with a world that needs Jesus.
- c. Consider what Jesus did:
  - i. He was a king, and he walked among his subjects.
  - ii. He was the creator, but he lived among his creation.
  - iii. He was holy and sinless yet he mixed with sinners.
  - iv. If there was ever anyone who by NATURE didn't need to mix with folks who were different from Himself, it was Him, but he CHOSE to come among us and to live and die for us...people radically different (strangers to holiness) from Himself.
- d. In light of this, God calls you and I to get out of our comfort zone, out of our sacred space, outside of our cozy walls and to mix with people who are radically different from ourselves.
- e. Let me read a quotation from a person who is committed to being and inside-out Christian.
  - i. *I actually turned the car radio on to a Christian popular music station today. My wife was as shocked as I was by this behavior. I did not mind the "family safe programming" for a few*

- minutes. This is a fascinating development given that i do not participate in the Christian Subculture as a general rule. Some people i know only have Christian friends, talk in Christian terms, listen to "Christian music " (not worship but "Christian pop") and have only a passing contact with those who live in a world apart from God. i am closer to the other extreme.*
- ii. i usually listen to the Alternative Rock, Classic Rock, or Jazz. Most of my friends are not believers in the Lord, do not attend church in any form, have little interest in God and generally live as moral a life as they can. Many of the friends I have who know Christ were my friends long before they met Christ. It has taken some of them up to 11 years to come to know Christ. I believe in living in the world as a Christian. This is a difficult path. I find it relatively easy to keep God in my heart and mind while living all of my life within the context of the Church. But I choose not to live in that narrow subculture. I rather exercise my faith while truly being in the world but not of it.*
  - iii. Christianity is not about inviting people to church. It is about taking God to people. That is why we need to be missionaries like Jesus was. To enter our Fathers work in the world and not just play it safe. (By The Way: when did "safe" enter the Christian vocabulary? Ask any Christian in China or the Middle East and you will discover that it is risky to be a Christian.) Living for Christ in the world is not easy. Then again, I am privileged to be a witness to many different people as I live for Christ in their world. I think it is plain arrogance for Christians to expect people to come to us. It is the "Field of Dreams" mentality ~ build a church and they will come. [HYPERLINK](http://thinspaces.typepad.com/thinspaces/2004/07/when_did_safe_e.html)*

[http://thinspaces.typepad.com/thinspaces/2004/07/when\\_did\\_safe\\_e.html](http://thinspaces.typepad.com/thinspaces/2004/07/when_did_safe_e.html)  
[http://thinspaces.typepad.com/thinspaces/2004/07/when\\_did\\_safe\\_e.html](http://thinspaces.typepad.com/thinspaces/2004/07/when_did_safe_e.html)

How difficult would that be for you to do? I want to choose to try to do it. And I must say, it will be a stretch for me...

Imagine reading magazines and books that people in the world read just so you can be conversant with them?

If you are a youth worker, you might watch American Idol or some other show that unchurched kids are drawn to, so you can build bridges to them.

- 6) Will you get out of the boat? Are you waiting for a promise of no difficulty?
  - a. Are you choosing Espn over the opportunity to make a difference in this world?
    - i. Have you chosen stagnation over leaving your mark on the world?
- 7) Closing Story: Larry Walters, balloon ride, 14000 ft.,
  - a. 3 July 1982
  - b. LONG BEACH, Calif, July 2 (AP) A truck driver with 45 weather balloons rigged to a lawn chair took a 45-minute ride aloft to 16,000 feet today before he got cold, shot some balloons out and crashed into a power line, the police said.
  - c. "I know it sounds strange, but it's true," Lieut. Rod Mickelson said after he stopped laughing. "The guy just filled up the balloons with helium, strapped on a parachute, grabbed a BB gun and took off."
  - d. The man was identified as Larry Walters, 33 years old, of North Hollywood. He was not injured.
  - e. The Federal Aviation Administration was not amused.
  - f. Spotted by Airline Pilots
  - g. A regional safety inspector, Neal Savoy, said the flying lawn chair was spotted by Trans World Airlines and Delta Airlines jetliner pilots at 16,000 feet above sea level.
  - h. "We know he broke some part of the Federal Aviation Act, and as soon as we decide which part it is, some type of charge will be filed," Mr. Savoy said. "If he had a pilot's license, we'd suspend that. But he doesn't."
  - i. The police said Mr. Walters went to a friend's house in San Pedro Thursday night, inflated 45 six-foot weather balloons and attached them to an aluminum lawn chair tethered to the ground.

- j. This morning, with half a dozen friends holding the tethers, he donned a parachute, strapped himself into the chair and had his friends let him up slowly.
  - k. Minutes later, he was calling for help over his citizens band radio.
  - l. "This guy broke into our channel with a mayday," said Doug Dixon, a member of an Orange County citizens band radio club. "He said he had shot up like an elevator to 16,000 feet and was getting numb before he started shooting out some of the balloons."
  - m. Mr. Walters then lost his pistol overboard, and the chair drifted downward, controlled only by the gallon jugs of water attached to the sides as ballast.
  - n. The ropes became entangled in a power line, briefly blacking out a small area in Long Beach. The chair dangled five feet above the ground, and Mr. Walters was able to get down safely.
  - o. "Since I was 13 years old, I've dreamed of going up into the clear blue sky in a weather balloon," he said. "By the grace of God, I fulfilled my dream. Asked why he did it he replied, "You can't just sit there can you?" (mediocre)
- 8) Are you going to just sit there when there is an opportunity of a life time to impact someone's life and to have an adventure with Jesus? Will you take a small step (like sign up to cook something for the spg. dinner at the Trailer Park) or a bigger step, like show up to assist with children or youth on Tuesday evenings or Thursday at 1pm? What are you waiting for?
- 9) I have never met anyone who PLANNED on living a mediocre life. But I have met many mediocre people.
- i. God invites us to be UNSAFE outside of these walls!
  - ii. If our church disappeared, would we be missed
  - iii. Just because you can't do everything doesn't mean you can't do something.
- b. God is at work at HHBC. We are called to follow God here. God is at work at Western Reserve. God is at work in our camps. God is at work with the mission teams who will be here. Join us. Don't play it safe.