

Preach With Passion

In the mid-1970s, I remember attending an Easter service with my wife's parents.

We traveled across the country together to spend an Easter weekend with other relatives somewhere near Carlsbad, New Mexico. It was there I survived my first pseudo-skiing experience on an innertube slide down a mountain slope. I made a note to self that synthetic rubber placed in motion down an icy mountain provides no steering potential to the one stuck in the tube.

The pastor was a family member by marriage. We stayed in their large home for the weekend. The Aztec-meets-Warhol art on the walls of the home still stains my long-term memory.

On Easter morning, we were awakened by human alarm clocks called children. They stood at the foot of our bed banging copper pans with wooden spoons.

"Wake up! It's Easter!"

I bit off the ear of a chocolate bunny. It was somewhat satisfying payback.

The Easter service was liturgical. We stood, we sat, we stood, we sat. I struggled to keep up. My ears were still ringing.

I liked the pastor, but he was boring. The recitations were familiar. I knew the verses and I knew the message of resurrection. I responded like a Millennial in the '70s with folded arms.

Later that day, my father-in-law made a statement about the pastor that has remained with me throughout my career and ministry.

"I just don't know if he believes what he preached."

His delivery was monotone, academic and lifeless. Though accurate, he was hard to listen to.

My team must believe that I believe. We command attention by authentic passion.

Love leaders don't teach their teams to "fake it till they make it."

Wild rides on ice and clanging, banging pots remind me that passion penetrates the heart.

"Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8).