

THE **CORRESPONDENCE THEORY** of ministry is a framework that accentuates and expresses our theological convictions instead of programming ministry according to external cultural currents.

GOODNESS



FLOWS FROM



TRUTH

DOING



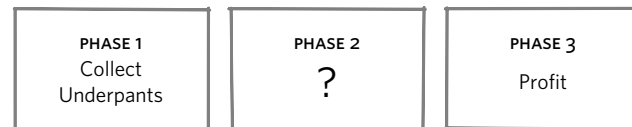
FLOWS FROM



SAYING

BUT There is nothing all that new about saying we should practice what we preach. The insight offered here is that what we practice tends to override what we preach **OR** the practices we pursue are too far removed from the truth of what we preach.

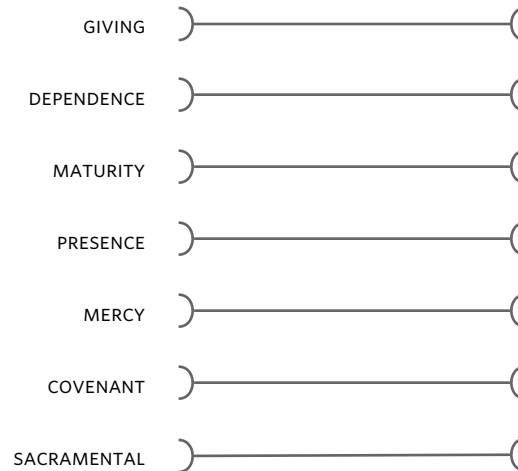
CLOSER CORRESPONDENCE WOULD BE BETTER.



UNDERPANTS GNOMES SOUTH PARK, S2 E17, DEC. 16, 1998.



DISCONNECT between what the church does and the cultural current that shapes it. The [?] must be filled with something to become theologically coherent.



CORRESPONDENCE between what the church does and the theological conviction that shapes it. The [?] naturally becomes irrelevant—people encounter the thing itself.

Churches must recover the **POWER OF PRACTICES** that shape forge mature members and offer outsiders direct access to the goods that come in Christ and his kingdom.

THEREFORE IT IS GOOD TO ASK

- What kind of disciples are we making in the first place?
- How is the ambient culture and its practices catechizing our people?
- Are we engaged in mythic idealism when we justify what we do?
- What kind of counter-catechesis do we need to pursue?
- What practices will embed believers in true belief and embodied goodness?
- How can churches shorten the distance to an encounter with the goodness of the gospel?

COMPARE

- A** We are giving you this meal because in Christ's kingdom to come no one will hunger or thirst; we want you to taste and see that although this world is broken, the Lord is nevertheless good. He has called us to bring that goodness to you.
- B** We are distributing free candy at this Trunk or Treat because good marketing requires a large number of leads and good branding relies on communicating a friendly vibe. This event will give us contact information and will project our brand.

COMPARE

A

B

COMPARE

A

B

RUBRIC FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Give attention to real issues not popular or appealing alternatives.
Acknowledge that Christians are formed by practices not prescriptions.
Seek to upset the theological trade deficit—export instead of import
Accept that the limits of a local church are the source of its strength

PRACTICES TO CULTIVATE

Make membership a practice and not a status
Make Christian education distinctively Christian instead of generically moral
Embed believers in shared narrative instead of individual experience
Open the homes for hospitality
Enter the gift economy