

## **BCL ep322 The Crucial Forgotten Element**

As parents, we're not meant to raise our children alone. We're supposed to be in community, partnering with our schools and our churches and other families to build a shared vision and a distinct culture. But in a world where everyone is always so busy, meaningful communication is harder than ever.

After all, when was the last time you asked somebody how they're doing and they said, you know, I'm just relaxed, there's not much going on. So how do we communicate in a world like this, where schools and parents are so needing to be connected to one another? We've got some real solutions, exciting updates, including some key discoveries from the first year of Zipcast and the way that we have transformed the way we communicate and connect as communities. So join us as we jump into this episode of Base Camp Live.

Mountains, we all face them as we seek to influence the next generation. Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate and flourishing human beings. We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation.

Welcome to Base Camp Live. Now your host, Davies Owens. Welcome to another episode of Base Camp Live.

Thank you, as always, for making the decision to hit that play button. You know, it's hard to sort through all the options today. This is really what we're talking about in this podcast.

There's more noise coming at us. I remember years ago being at a national podcasters conference, which by the way, is a really fascinating thing to attend because you've got everybody from major networks and ESPN is there. And then you have the person that went to Costco and bought the microphone and started their own podcast.

So it's a very wide variety of options. I think there's three plus million podcasts in the world at this point. We apparently are ranked in the top 1%, which sounds very impressive.

And then you realize so many people start podcasts and never continue them. We've been doing this for eight years. So you do something for a long enough time, you get pretty good momentum going.

But it's really only happening because people like you are listening, which we super appreciate. This is a really fun conversation with Hannah, who's no stranger to Base Camp Live. She's my daughter.

She's a K-12 classical Christian graduate and works alongside me at Zipcast and is really jumping in with me trying to sort out how do we do life together in community with our home and our school and our church. It is critical that we're all locked arms together. I kind of call it

the holy trifacta.

One of the things that I'm very curious about, in fact, I'm doing some summer conference workshops on the topic of parent engagement. I'm a coach with the Herzog Foundation. We do a whole two and a half days on parent engagement.

So this is very much on my mind. So we've put together what we're calling the Zipcast National Communication Survey, and it's really for school leaders. So parents, encourage your school leaders to take the survey.

It's just a short number of questions that are available on the [zipcast.media](http://zipcast.media) website. But the idea is how is communication working for you? Where do you see successes? Where do you see challenges in that partnership between the home and the school? And parents, we obviously would love to hear just general feedback from you in terms of what you appreciate about communication from your school. It's complicated.

Most schools are sending out more messages than they realize from the grade level teacher to the athletic person to the front office. So how do we do this partnership? Well, it's kind of what we're talking about. We're going to get into all of that in just a moment, but check out that survey link at [zipcast.media](http://zipcast.media) or in the show notes.

A big shout out in this episode to Wade Dobson, head of school at Calvary Christian School in Alton, Illinois, as well as Daniel Bonsall, head of school at Redeemer Classical Academy in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Appreciate you guys and your teachers and your parents listening each week to Base Camp and being a part of the Zipcast Network. As always, we have amazing partners that have resources that extend the reach of your school and your home.

Classical Academic Press, great folks. Check out their resources, as well as Wilson Hill Academy, Gordon College, the classic learning test. And Zipcast, of course, is a part of our, always part of our sponsor's world.

So at any rate, all that to say, here's the interview that Hannah and I have around this important conversation about connection and communication. Well, welcome back to Base Camp Live. I am not Davies, but we did an episode like this, about a year ago, helping you to know Davies a bit better.

And for those of you who don't know, I'm his daughter, Hannah. So we thought we'd sit down and have a conversation about a really crucial part of education that Davies has really given his entire life to, and hopefully you can take away something from this. So it is my honor to introduce my dad, Davies Owens.

Thanks, Hannah. You're no stranger to Base Camp, people. I go around the country, they're like, oh, I love Hannah.

We love Hannah. And for people that don't know, maybe you just stumbled on this as a first

episode. So we have three kids, Holly and I do, and you're the oldest, you're firstborn.

So you get special privilege being firstborn, only girl, overachiever. No, you're just, no, you are amazing, as every dad would say about their daughter. But in all seriousness, it's a joy to be kind of on the other side of the K-12 journey.

I say this when I go around and speak. There were days where I would stand up as a young head of school and you were in third grade, and I'm thinking classical Christian is the most amazing thing ever. And I'm like, I have no idea if it's really going to work.

Well, none of us have rebelled yet. Well, and more positively than that, I think you've got, there's no question in my mind that what I call the holy trifacta of parents, and I think a clearly fallen individual that I am, and imperfect in every way, and yet was trying to be faithful and have been faithful to raising you, as your mom and I did, in a Christ-centered home, and then the partnership, the trifacta of the school, which is obviously why I'm such a fan of K-12 education and of classical Christian, and then the church. I mean, this is the way all those voices unite together.

It's a very powerful formula. And it's collaboration. I say more and more that schools are all collaborative.

Like, we have to work together with our family, with our schools. So, and then you have two younger brothers, for folks who want to know. Yes, I have two younger brothers, and I married a classical Christian graduate.

That was a requirement. I guess, because my brother is marrying a classical Christian graduate. Well, it's really a fun story, because her folks started a classical Christian school, and they were Base Camp fans before they met each other at Baylor.

So, it's really kind of, I was joking, really Base Camp Live is a means for me to recruit spouses for my children. So, by the way, if you have a daughter at one time, no, all right, never mind. But it really is a totally different approach to life.

Everything is affected by our worldview through this. Well, and the very fact that you've been raised and formed to love things that are true, good, and beautiful. And so, you're naturally going to want to be in relationship with other people that think that way.

And that's one of, when we've had Liam on before, it's something he talked about a lot was being at college. It's just like, sometimes it's just frustrating that Christian girls and guys that are not wanting to think deeply, and they're very into consumerism, and just like, where are the people that want to live life with substance and purpose? And so, again, I say that with total humility. You don't have to go to a classical Christian school and come out loving Jesus and having substance, but it sure helps when you can have this, again, the church and the home and school kind of all working together.

So, it's a blessing. Yeah. Well, we dove a bit into your story about a year ago.

Like I said, that was a really popular episode. First, before we dive into this really important topic, maybe we can go over a little bit of that again. First of all, with your name, I think a lot of people think your name is Davey.

It's not Davey, it's Davey's. Like a last name. Like a last name.

And this has been your whole dedication of life is- Explaining my name. Explaining your name, but also just reinforcing the classical Christian approach through Base Camp. So, this is our eighth year of doing this.

I've been helping you with this over the last year, which has been fun. But tell us a bit more about why you feel that that is the most important effort you could give. Well, I mean, it's really a math problem, if you think about it.

I mean, the sobering statistic is that as parents, 75 plus percent of the time that we will ever spend with our children while we're alive is over and done by the age of 12. And then when you look at by the time your child is 18, you're down to 90 percent of your time that's left with them. And it's very true.

Time moves quickly, days are long, the years are short. And so, the reality is where you spend time influences you. So, if you're spending time in an amazing home environment, that's great.

But ultimately, those hours get fewer and fewer as children move out and start having other activities and eventually start driving. And that's, leave and cleave, God kind of designed it that way. But there's no question that the partnership, the communication that happens between the home and the school is absolutely vital.

I think it's the last best hope for our civilization in the sense that if we're going to form what our children love, we've got to be on the same page. Yeah. So.

So, we have several things to talk about in this vein today. But before we dive into that, I just want to mention that we have launched, you want to tell them about it? The National Zipcast School Communication Survey. You want to tell them a bit about this and why we are sharing this? And we'd love for people to fill this out.

So, the survey that we've put together, I'm really excited about it. In fact, when I talk to school leaders around the country, I often ask, how have you found success in communicating with your parents? Because we need to be on the journey together. And most leaders will say, it's really, really difficult.

And we're going to get into some of those challenges. But if you're listening and you're a school leader, we have a short survey really just asking the questions like, what's working and not working with communication? Because, you know, I often think of, you know, can you imagine

like, I mean, you're married, but I mean, being, imagine being you only see your spouse a couple times a year, like that would not be awesome. I think, you know, somebody said once, can you imagine a crazier business model? I mean, imagine somebody comes in from like, you know, another planet, and they've never heard of anything to do with classical Christian education.

And you said to them, hey, I've got an idea for a really amazing business. It's going to change generations. It's just incredible.

And they're like, oh my goodness, what is it? Well, we're going to start a business and we're going to be on a minimum of a 13 year with the customer. And over this 13 years, we're going to be dealing with the customer's children and their faith, and they're going to give us some money because it's going to be transactional too. And by the way, you're hardly ever going to see the customer.

You're just going to have a small child who will then go through like a hormonal period as they become a young adult, and they're going to be the ones that will be kind of the ambassador between your school and the home. How does that sound? What could possibly go wrong with that business model? Oh, man. Yeah, that does not sound like a business that I would invest money in, if you straight up just told me that.

If you just said it that way. And yet, God is faithful, and it's working, and we believe, I think, again, it's the best- It's so much more than that. I think it's the last best hope for our civilization, other than certainly Jesus.

But I mean, the reality is that we can work together as home and school. So, clearly, there's a problem or a challenge, and we're not going to be doing life that closely every day. And yet, I do think all schools today need to be collaborative.

There are hybrid collaborative schools where parents are literally doing homework a couple days a week or teaching their children a couple days a week. But the day of sort of outsourcing your child to a school and in the same vein of outsourcing your clothes to the dry cleaner or your car to get the oil changed, that is not how school works. It's going to be successful.

And you believe that this is really the most crucial element to a successful education? I believe it's absolutely ground zero. And I think a lot of, quite honestly, I think there are schools that are uncomfortable with what I call the jurisdiction problem. And as an ordained pastor, I will say I fully support the church, make no mistake.

But the challenge is that in that old three-legged stool of the church and the home and the school, historically, we've been a bit cautious in saying, well, we don't want to tread into the space of the church, meaning we're not going to do spiritual formation and we're really not going to teach Bible and we're not going to teach parenting. We're really here to educate children. And like in a pure world, I'm like, that makes total sense.

The reality is today, most churches are not talking about parenting education. The reality is that most people don't even live near extended family. According to Pew, it's only like 30% even live within a hundred mile radius of their extended family.

So there's not a lot of generational wisdom. So as I go around the country and I meet with young families and I do informal focus groups at schools where I'm speaking, I often am told by these young families, we parent basically by YouTube. There is nobody that's sort of giving us that clear direction.

So the school is in a really tough spot because we want to have this amazing outcome, the goals of the portrait of the graduate, but you are not going to get there if it's only the school and the proverbial rowboat rowing in one or the parents are not rowing in tandem. And so if a child comes home and they're on a, you know, on their phone all day, like most American kids, that's going to really undermine the work that the school is doing or whatever the example may be. So the rules of engagement are not clear.

And so that's a tough spot for a school to be in. And it's a tough spot for the parent to be in. So how do we do this together is a big question.

So generally, I'm confident that everyone's kind of aware that there's a problem. But the problem seems to expand beyond just trying to get parents updates when it comes to the spring picnic coming up. Can you identify some of those other problems that are touched by this issue that maybe aren't as direct that people may not be thinking about? Well, I think that's what I'm getting.

I mean, I think there's, what else assume whatever 30 years ago, there was sort of a, maybe more of just a cultural norm of generational wisdom about how to parent well, or how to create a home environment. It's a classical home. What does that look like in terms of home habits? I mean, I give you an example, you know, your aunt Dory, my sister has been teaching 26 years teaching fourth grade in classical school.

She said since COVID, the number of times that she has her fourth graders jump out of their seat and cannot physically stay seated. Why in probably large measure, because so many homes now are not reinforcing just basic home habits, like having dinners together where you stay seated at a meal. And so the habits don't pair up necessarily the way homes are being run is not really classical in some ways.

And so these things make it harder on the school. So I think the communication is not just, Hey, everybody carpool lines earlier today, whatever, or, or that kind of timely content information. It's the evergreen content that we need to understand about how to parent well and partner well.

Yeah, well, we'll dive in today to some of these things that we're seeing that you may not even be thinking about. And, you know, if you are a parent listening to this, this is helpful for you. If

you are a school administrator, we want this to be helpful for you.

But also, if you're a homeschooling parent, there are co-op elements to this, there are homeschooling elements to this that affect you too. So let's dive in to some of these problems. Okay.

Well, I think the problems are, you know, it's probably how long do we have to talk about? I don't, you know, I don't want to over, I think most of us are going to, Oh yeah, welcome to the world we're in. I mean, we're in a world right now. Let me just run through a list of things I think are really core to our communication challenges.

And this is true in any aspect of life. But if again, back to the, if we're supposed to be rowing in this boat together as parent and school, then we probably need to communicate. And number one is without a doubt is digital distractions and information overload.

I mean, we are, we are so consumed right now in noise that swirls around us. I, this is a, this is a crazy stat that I came across which just again, speaks to kind of the, the amount of digital noise that's coming out. So if you think about like in a normal day, the amount of content that, that the average American is having to consume it's about 74 gigabytes of information.

That's about as that's like watching 16 movies of just raw information that's coming at the modern person through gadgets, through billboards, whatever. Here's what's fascinating. That's increasing 5% a year.

So this is not getting any better, but this is what's a shocker go back 500 years ago when everybody's reading the great, you know, many of these great books and 74 gigabytes of information would have been what a highly educated person would have consumed in a lifetime through books and stories. So you're talking about what we process in a day was what they would have processed an entire lifetime. And that's probably all high quality, great books level discussion.

Whereas this is like Tik TOK ads. This is doom scrolling. It's noise.

It's just at the bottom line is it's a moment in time with even the most intentional families. Let's say it's 24 gigabytes, not 74. I mean, you're still dealing with, you can't, the refrigerators, they have screens on them for crying out loud.

It's constant distraction, information overload. So it's very hard to pay attention, which then leads to this whole problem of just shorter attention spans. And again, I say it all the time.

It's, it's out there statistically. I think the attention span of a goldfish is nine seconds. We're under that like eight for the average American, but we're classical.

So we're maybe 12, but I mean, you're still dealing with a problem moment where it's very hard for people to slow down. So, and also if I could add your children may be classical, but the

parents who probably didn't have that classical education or write that in that goldfish zone. They're in the goldfish zone.

And even, even I often quote Nicholas Carr, who wrote, wrote probably 15 years ago in Atlantic Monthly, an article winsomely titled is Google making us stupid. And they went on to write the book, the shallows. And he says this, this was in 2010.

So just think this is three years after smartphone hit the world. He says something or someone has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. I'm not thinking the way I used to think.

I feel it most strongly. When I'm reading, I used to find it easy to immerse myself in a book or a lengthy article. My mind would get caught up in the twist of the narrative and the turn to the argument.

I'd spend hours scrolling through long stretches of prose. That's really the case anymore. Now my concentration starts to drift after a page or two, I get fidgety.

I lose the thread. I began to look for something else to do. And I feel like I'm always dragging my wayward brain back to the text.

The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle. So this is the modern moment. And again, I love our schools because we're actually creating an antidote to that.

We are reading long form. We are having these conversations, but to your point, most of us as parents are not. So again, it's tough, short attention spans.

Let me do a couple more and then we're gonna take a break. So, you know, get a little more positive. Well, no, this is the, let me just kind of, we're setting up the, this is the challenge.

So, you know, you know, you've got competing priorities. I mean, 58 plus percent of parents today are involved in two or more afterschool sports, the FOMO fear. We're signing up.

We're worried. We're worried. You got to do more, got to do more, not having meals together.

We want instant, we want convenient communication. And that's part of the problem too, is, oh, the school sent an email out. Well, like, well, good luck finding where the email went.

And then, so that leads to just communication fatigue. I mean, when I talk to schools and I ask the question, you know, how is it that you're communicating with families, which is part of this communication survey we want to get out. The reality is that most schools have utterly no idea how much and where communication is coming from.

They've got everything coming from the front office to every teacher send stuff. I had a, I had a literally two weeks ago, I was at speaking at a school and had a parent, a dad came out and said, we have, we have four children and we get about 12 to 14 emails and communications



from the school per day. And now it's coming from all these different, it's coming out of, you know, all different locations.

It's text-based, it's email-based. And so at some point I had a dad say to me, look me in the eyes, I won't name the school and said, I have never read the school newsletter and I never will because it's just too much. I mean, that's where we're at and it's really sad.

So why don't we take on that happy note? Yeah, it is very sad. It's just, let's be, let's be sober and honest with where we're at. We have a communication problem.

So let's take a quick break. I'll come right back. I'm going to hit a couple more of these and we're going to get in some, some positives here.

Let's do it. Hi, this is Dr. Christopher Perrin with Classical Academic Press. Grammar is a critical tool for a student's development that enables them to write, read, and speak with clarity, brevity, and precision.

The well-ordered language series from Classical Academic Press is designed for grades three through seven, and it will kindle the curiosity of students to learn and understand the structure of language, how it works, enabling them to order and enjoy language, all language. Visit [classicalacademicpress.com](http://classicalacademicpress.com) and use the discount code BASECAMP space live to save 20% off your next purchase. I want to take just a moment during our break and let you know about the great work that's being done by Wilson Hill Academy.

They offer a vibrant, rich, and accredited classical Christian education available to families and schools almost anywhere. With a click of a button, students join master teachers and friends live online from all over the world to engage in deep and lively discussions, solve math problems, conduct science experiments, translate Latin, deliver thesis presentations, and so much more. At Wilson Hill, students make lifelong friends and graduate well-prepared for college and beyond.

Discover what's possible for your family or school at [wilsonhillacademy.com](http://wilsonhillacademy.com). Well, welcome back to Base Camp Live. We are diving into the challenges of communication in schools. We got through a few.

There's a lot more. Tell us more. Boy, this is like Debbie Downer here.

Like, gosh, this is hard. But we're all, anybody listening is going, yeah, I know. It's hard.

And this is not an indictment on anybody. It's just we are, let's be honest with where we are today. And I see schools all the time when I ask, well, what are you going to do to offset that? Like, well, we're trying to engage with parents.

We've got a book club. Like, I love that idea, but you're probably not going to get everybody showing up for the book club. But maybe if you could create something a little bit more simple,

which we're going to get to, that might bring them into deeper.

But all right. So, here's some of the challenges. So, to the point, I think we've got fragmented communication platforms, which is, again, we're hitting everybody from everything from the parent square, school management software communication thing, which includes grades, all the way to the e-newsletter, all the way to the flyer in the grammar schooler's backpack.

Well, and it may not be separated based off of platform that it's sent from, but part of the school. So, you might be getting athletic emails, you might be getting homeroom emails, you might be getting front desk emails, you might be getting drama club. And then there's group me.

Some schools are like, I've talked to schools. I mean, part of what I really want to try to do is help schools think, which we're talking about, this like comprehensively, you've got to get this, you know, kind of right and left hand have to be on the same page. We've got like, you know, parent associations that go off and create a group me that's firing off more information.

There's Facebook groups and there's like, and I think in many cases, schools don't actually know comprehensively what's going on. So, there are communication platforms. This is interesting.

I think there's an emotional barrier, meaning like, I just don't, I'm just overwhelmed. And again, I could, we don't have time to get into all this, but the frame of unfortunately, modern parents, even Christian parents is just survival mode in many cases. So, like, I don't really want to be reminded of either what I didn't do right or what I need to do differently or take on criticism.

Sometimes that happens just when you read it and you feel like, well, I'm not that good of a parent because what it says in here, I'm supposed to read to my child every night and I don't read it. So, I think again, a lot of grace is being extended, but sometimes that flood of communication also triggers in us senses of like, well, I didn't volunteer, I didn't do the thing. And that's not the intention, but it makes us feel that way.

So, then you're less resistant, you're more resistant to opening up. I think there's also a reduction in just simple face-to-face communication skills. We certainly see this with students today.

I mean, just crazy. They'll, you know, you walk around restaurants, like, look, the couple's texting each other. That's not awesome.

I remember I had a friend that actually went on a date and they're so, I don't know, novice at it, but they were just texting each other across the table. It is so sad. That's a whole nother podcast.

Then there's the, I think there's just a general lack of engagement with long-form content. I mean, it's great to do book clubs. It's great to do long-form podcasts.

I mean, thanks for people are listening to this, but the reality is most Americans are not only going to subscribe to about three total podcasts. So, by the way, if anybody's listening to this, I'm really honored because you're like in the, we're in the top three of your podcasting choices of the ones you're even going to listen to. We're also in the top 1% of all podcasts, which is pretty cool.

That's pretty cool. And then there's a disconnect from just in general, the school community. Parents just are, because of, you know, whatever you're going to blame it on the economy right now, you got tuition payments, everybody's having to work.

There's just got a lot going on. So there is clearly a problem with the rowing the boat together and who's, you know, where is, where is it, is it working or is there just the schools out there and the boat's going in a circle because mom and dad never got. We touched on this, but can you address to the difference between communication that's just giving updates and the parent education element? Because I think, you know, you talked about the three-legged stool, but I, in our analysis, this has been something that schools don't really know what to do with because they have a parent night and maybe five people show up and it's the same five people that come every single time.

And maybe you paid for catering and you're paying for a space to have all these people there and they're just not engaged. Well, and it's maybe more than five, but I mean, it's like, it's paraded the 20% that already kind of know everything show up that the 80% don't. And again, it's because everybody's going at Mach eight and, and how do you, how do you, how do you find margin for that? I think again, that the reality is that, that our schools have become very important communities in the life of families.

And it takes a community to raise a child that again, another day podcast, five to one ratio, sticky faith, chap Clark's book. We need each other in this way more than just, you know, information being taught in a classroom. It's about quote, doing life together in a community.

And again, that should include the church. But the point is that we need, we need to share best practices. When I ask parents, how do you know how to parent? It's usually I phone a friend and usually the friend is another grade level parent at my school.

And we're kind of navigating life together. And so being a community together means we need to connect and hear each other's stories and learn from each other. What does it look like to be a biblical parent? So that is a really important element that I think schools more than ever are having to start addressing, uh, parenting best practices.

So, yeah, well, we want to get into some things that you can implement and take away from listening to this. So you're not just in a world of confusion and then sending out more emails. Well, I think, I think, let me just speak to, you know, kind of base camps, kind of 50, 50, half of you listening are school leaders in some form and the other half are parents.

So I would just say again, by the way, I've got, I'm a big fan of the Herzog foundation. I'm actually one of their coaches. We do trainings.

We just launched a parent partnership training. It's two and a half days. It's free.

Everybody, if you're a school leader, um, check out Herzog foundation and look at parent partnership because we spend two and a half days going through what I'm about to give you in about one minute. But there are things like every school ought to audit all of their communication. You ought to know exactly what's going on, on what platform, how often just reduce the white noise.

There are schools, as you know, with zip casts that you talked to that have very high open rates in their newsletter because they've been able to really concentrate that down like, Hey, this is how we communicate. And it's coming through this one. Well, it's about creating clear expectations for parents.

And then it's, I think within that it's clear and concise communication. It's more bullet points or summaries. Again, we've seen this with zip casts where it's like, let's read for three minutes, 15 facts and dates and information.

It's like, it's probably better just to put it like in a quick top five kind of summary and then point back to more details that they want more. I think that's another piece on just being concise. I think there's definitely differentiating between timely content like, Oh, Hey everybody carpools and a half an hour earlier date and timeless content, which is what you're getting to, which is really like, what do we all need to know? Like five years from now, having family meals together, still going to be an important thing to say and talk about.

And so that's something that we're, we're talking, we'll talk more about it, but that's a solution. Like, what do we want in terms of if we had a big whiteboard on one side, I'd say, what's the content on the K-12 journey? Every school needs their parents to know. If you're a new parent, what are the things, you know, if you're a parent of a senior, what do you need to know? There is actually a curriculum that parents need to know that schools could help organize.

That's important. And then we get into the delivery problem, which we'll talk about in a minute. Well now, great, but how do I know all of that? And I think just being flexible with parents and realize that they're going to, they're on the go.

Dads are on the go in a different way that moms are on the go. And so is it a text thing? Is it an email thing? I mean, honestly, sometimes the old school flyer and the grammar schoolers backpack is actually pretty helpful. Sometimes paper is actually still a good idea, but I think ultimately it's creating feedback loops to understand how parents prefer to receive communication and setting standards and norms and expectations within the school.

Yeah. Is there anything parents who are listening to this and they maybe feel the strain of this and they're not in the school administration? Yeah. So parents, I mean, first of all, just know

that we're all on the same page.

We're all on the same team. I think the biggest, quite honestly, is just, sorry to say this, but you're going to have to make it a priority to pay attention to what's coming from the school. And I understand that distraction, that pressure.

And dads, for sure, you're not out on this. You'd be really important to know. And I think the more schools are providing information that's really helpful, again, timely and timeless would be a really important way to just be in the loop, be in the know.

Because then when your kids come home, you can have a more engaging conversation. Like, oh, I didn't know it was pioneer day. Well, now you do.

Well, how was pioneer day? You get your tracking with what's happening. Be prepared to ask good questions and just communicate well with the teacher in the school. The teachers are, as one teacher to X number of students, it's a lot for, they're trying to communicate with you.

So if you get communication directly from a teacher, respond back and be attentive and be engaged. And schools are trying to figure this out and your feedback is so appreciated. So if you feel like you're getting way too many emails or you are feeling the strain of these problems that we've been talking about, please go to your school and share that with them.

They're probably already aware of it, but your feedback is ultimately the most helpful thing. Yeah. And it's just a spirit, like we're collaborating together.

We're all working this together. So this is something we need to be talking about. So, all right, why don't we take another break? We're going to come back and jump into some updates.

This episode of Base Camp Live is sponsored by the Graduate Leadership Program at Gordon College, a nationally ranked Christian liberal arts college located just north of Boston. Earn your graduate degree in leadership in a program uniquely tailored to the classical renewal movement. Study a wide range of material from the philosophy of classical Christian education to private school law.

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CLT's assessments for grades three through 12 provide a meaningful metric of students' abilities, equipping parents and educators, and helping students pursue a fulfilling future. Explore CLT's assessments by visiting [www.cltexam.com](http://www.cltexam.com) forward slash Base Camp. Last year, when we sat down together and talked about some of these issues, we touched on them.

They were really a part of a conversation bigger in relation to your story, which, by the way, if you want to hear that, we can put that in the description. You can listen to all about Davy's journey with classical Christian education. But you were sharing about how this has really become your mission in life, to fix this communication problem.

You find it so critical, and that's why you started Zipcast. And so, of course, you may have heard about Zipcast a little bit, and we will put that in the description too. You can watch some videos to learn more about it.

But this has really become your mission over the last year of doing this. I guess we've been calling it season two that we're going into, although we did a pilot, so you could call it season three. Yeah, I mean, it's been incredible.

We just did some, I can share so much about it, but we just did a huge survey, and four out of five parents are feeling like they know more about classical Christian education. It's more than four out of five. It's like 4.5 out of five.

More about classical education, more updated in their school communities, learn more about parenting. But what are some of the biggest takeaways when it comes to communication that you feel like you've learned doing Zipcast? And how do you feel that Zipcast has been a great way to remedy that? No, and I think this really is literally a life calling for me. In the early 90s, I was the pioneer, not the pioneer, but a pioneer that figured out like we could actually record sermons in churches and hand out the cassettes.

And I did my doctoral dissertation using internet-based technology to build community. I worked for Christianity.com, and 25 years in the school world. So my entrepreneur bug is like, we are going to solve this problem.

And when we started Basecamp, we did so in part because the modality of giving people something to listen to. I love people that come up to me, by the way, when I'm speaking, and they'll say things like, you always ask, I want you to know I listen to you when I'm doing laundry. Or the dad that came up and said, every time I hear your voice, I think of cut grass.

I'm like, that's weird, because he's cutting the grass. So I knew that we could solve some of this problem by giving people a way to engage on the go. And so when Zipcast was born a year ago, as a company, it was out of testing this in this, you know, when I was at Ambrose, the idea of could we just create in a simple 10 minute on the go, it's Monday morning, you're getting in the minivan, you forgot to read the newsletter.

So here's the news and the announcements from the school, read by your school leader. And then there's a joke of the day. And then there's syndicated content of things that are really, the school probably didn't have time to go and record an answer, like why do we teach Latin or whatever the classical question is, or a parenting thing, like a Keith McCurdy, and there's a scripture.

And that sort of on the go, is has been well received, because it's suiting the needs of people that are looking to connect. And I'll share with you where we're going with this, which is a bit mind blowing to me in terms of the the ability to get really personal content to people. But what's sweet is to see people say it's become my favorite part of the week.

I'm like, really reading the school announcements has become your favorite part of the week. You're talking about the administrator saying this or the parents? Parents, parents have said, Oh, my goodness, listening to Zipcast is my favorite part of a Monday morning. They're like, wow, okay.

That's great. We've really changed something from reading the school news on an email. But anyways, it's just amazing to see the transformation.

And the vision here, just to be very clear, is not necessarily, it's not just Oh, wow, they figured out a way to indulge short attention spans by creating little hacked up segments of information. That is not, I am not trying to indulge this. I'm just trying to acknowledge we live in an on the go culture.

And could we could we condense down rich ideas, you know, hacks, tips into 90 seconds with a link to deeper content, deeper community. So really, what I would say we've discovered is really this is a way to extend and enhance the voice and the reach of your school. This is not about just a technology play here at all.

And it's about giving school leadership the tools to communicate in their voice to parents. We've seen, well, over the last year, we initially started out with this professional voice talent that was reading the news and announcements. And we've, we've got schools that do that have seen some great success.

But the schools that have had their head of school, their students, their house leaders read the news for themselves every week, it goes straight to parents, and actually communicating with those parents from their voice. It has transformed it. Well, and it's not, it's more of a far side chat.

I mean, some schools are having grammar schoolers are coming in and say, you know, what's your favorite part of our school? Or, you know, we've got, we've got like this song. We had a song. I heard a song.

Yes. So it's there. It's your platform.

We're just giving you an easy way to record your content. So for people, by the way, I should just mention, what's exciting is that, you know, 2.0 is coming out. So we're a for profit company.

We did it that way, just because we knew we're gonna need the capacity to build the resources. We have a technology partner, that's probably one of the top, I would say probably best person, best group I could even imagine. Are you able to share? Yeah, it's John Frindle's Capital Group.

They are behind 70% of conservative media. They run, you know, the platform that Daily Wire, Ben Shapiro's platform is on, PragerU, Breitbart. They are super connected.

And they love this idea, because they see the same problem and the same need. And there's certainly applications that we can, you know, again, for time, I'll be brief. But I mean, we definitely see using this mode, this platform, we're already going to be piloting next month, using it for classical schools to better connect to teachers.

So teachers are getting news and announcements and reinforcements of how to teach classically and how to even soul care, you know, encouraging them. I see an application. Keep going.

Yeah, real quick, just for anyone who's never heard about Zipcast, can you just walk them through the experience of what it's like? Yeah, let's do it. Great question. So again, you're a parent, it's Monday morning.

Let me back up one step. So the school, you know, signs up, it's an annual subscription. It's very affordable.

We'll talk about that in a minute. There's an opportunity for, you take a quick, you know, scan a QR code. We all know how that works today.

Mom and dad are in the system. Monday morning comes, it arrives on their phone, they hit play. It's super simple.

It's, you know, it's 10 minutes, 12 minutes long. As you, if you drive in, the school has already sent in or, you know, recorded their news and announcements. Our system blends it all together.

It's super easy. You get to preview it. So there's no surprises from the school, like, oh, what's in the content.

And it goes right to the parent. It's really, it's a very simple production process. And you can communicate with them.

We can have feedback from parents. We do a word of the week where they can message in the hidden word. And there was one week, a couple of weeks ago where we were trying out something new and we just didn't put it in there.

And, oh my goodness, the world fell apart because everybody loves the word of the week and schools use it to get engagement and they give kids stickers and you just can integrate with your whole community. The way it works for us is we give away an Amazon gift card, but schools have said, if you come in and mention the word of the week, now we're going to reinforce that. So I know that's kind of gamey and whatever, whatever gamification, but it's like, look, it's, we like doing fun things.



I mean, there's nothing wrong with doing a little raffle type drawing thing occasionally, but the spirit of it, the content is substantive. And I think that's what people appreciate. And I'll say that there have been several schools that in years past have tried to do a podcast themselves.

And that is so admirable. And that's something you might be listening to this and thinking, oh, well, maybe I should just start a podcast in my school. We could have local leaders come.

And one of the reasons we're doing it in the model that we are though, is because we want to combine your local news and announcements with the voices of trusted experts. So it's a little bit of both. And it's just, it's pretty easy in terms of a weekly element that, you know, contributing your stuff, although we're giving you the tools and giving you all the resources you need to, to take it and run with it.

It's not, it's not a plug and play thing necessarily. Well, it's also not necessarily meant to replace the newsletter or replace the long form podcast or replace the book club or any, it's literally like somebody saying, well, the movie trailers are going to kill the movie industry. Like, no, no, no.

The movie trailer invites you to get a quick overview of what's out there. It's like a multivitamin of, of all these little segmented pieces that then links you to deeper connections. So it's good.

Well, I just wanted to ask you real quick about this next year. Some people might be listening and thinking this could be a really good opportunity for them. They want to learn more.

There's so much more we could share, and this isn't meant to be like a, a dedicated sales pitch or anything. It truly is our mission here. But if you want to click the link in the description and sign up for a next steps call, I will sit down with you and share more.

But can you share with us about what's changing from this year to next year? Yeah, absolutely. So 2.0 is on this new super platform as opposed to us kind of hand building these, which is why we ended up with a large wait list to schools just because we couldn't build them any faster. So we can scale very quickly.

It's a much more rich experience. Schools can go on, they have a full dashboard, they can upload content, they can set delivery schedules, they can have more custom segments. It's a lot more interactive and the analytics are per segment.

It's really amazing tech that we're building on. It's actually a patentable system that we're developing. And then there's the parent experience is going to be on an app we're developing.

And it's an easy to use app, but it allows much more two way communication, analytics, web based app, web based. So it's not a big clunky thing, you've got to go, it'll be an easy on board. So I think just everybody's experience gets better in terms of just being able to, you know, connectivity, we don't have to deal with a lot of the, we had some issues with just, you know, cell phone providers, and sometimes, you know, Verizon, right? Like we don't even get a block stone.

Yeah, we just running things on text, you end up with issues. So we've got, you know, we're going to be piloting Zipcast in Australia, we've got a lot of international opportunities that we're opening up right now. So we've got a very durable platform we've built this on.

And you kind of touched on the content changes when it comes to upper school and lower school. Yeah, great. Thanks for mentioning that.

So one of the things, I joke that, you know, year one here, it was like, we opened a restaurant, we had one menu item, it's meatloaf, come enjoy it. And so we had like one content, syndicated content package, so we might pick for classical, like, why do we teach, keep using example of why do we teach Latin? Well, if you got a parent in 11th grade, you're probably not waking up going, I don't know, why do we teach Latin? Like that was long ago, you're probably thinking about other things related to being an upper school parent. So you will choose on the app as a parent, do I want to hear the grammar school track, the upper school track, or a blend of both if you have children in both and now like the lower school, Dean or principal could share certain things in the upper school.

So it's which ultimately, by the way, the path we're on is hyper specialization, where my big hairy audacious goal is so that a parent can hear updates from their third grade teacher or their athletic director or whatever, it gets very specific to where you are in the life of the school. So that's coming in the future. But I think even right now it solves so many problems.

Yeah, just thinking about hearing from your head of school, your school leadership in their voice every single week connected on what's happening in the school life and how you can be involved in your children's life. It's just transformational. Yeah.

And I think, you know, again, we've had really positive feedback. And I think, you know, there's no, you know, full transparency. I think the only there's not even a negative other than schools have said, we love it, but we have a big staff, and we've got a whole communication team, we really want to be able to go there and basically make every segment something that we've put together.

And that is part of the future plans to have total customization. Well, exactly. I think the only pushback has been, hey, you know, we want upper school versus lower school, our school is very well versed in classical education.

Okay, great. Well, that's why this next year, we're adding that in. Or instead of instead of the Bible read, we want to do our catechism, like, great, we can do it's, you know, where they used to say any fish you wish, I mean, we're going that's where we're headed.

But anyway, we're, you know, again, to your point, really, I want to just, from my heart in this, it's, it's not about the technology. It's not about a platform. It's not about selling something.

It's purely I want to solve the problem of the parent and the school collaborating together, because I don't believe that we're going to be successful in this very, very important mission of

raising the next generation. If we're not on the same page, this is what we're trying to do through this delivery system called zipcast. Yeah, so there's so much to share with you about that.

If you want to learn more, you can just go to the description and the show notes of zipcast.media, our website, zipcast.media, you can watch a video about how it all works. And also on there is linked our school communication survey. So if you do have a second, if you're a school leader, and could go through and answer those 10 questions for us, that really, really helps us to know, what is working? What is your communication strategy? What's working? What's not working? We're going to share those results with you.

So you can see from hundreds of schools all across the country, what's working well and what's not. So yeah, that's really good as well. There's never enough time.

So this is why we do zipcast. It's hard because I have 90 seconds to say something. This is the long form version.

So yes, thank you. Thank you for all of you who've listened through this long form. Hopefully the laundry is now all folded up and everything is ready for the day.

But at any rate, if you're listening to your parent, please mention zipcast to your school leadership. And I'd love to have a personal call with them and answer questions. And Hannah, you're doing a great job.

You're part of the full time team here at zipcast helping make sure schools are equipped. So yeah, and if you ever have a question about it, you can just email me. Like seriously, you can just email me at hannah at zipcast.media. I have schools that do that all the time.

They have questions about sharing content and best strategies. Just just reach out. Let me just at the end say because I know resources are always limited both in terms of time of like, well, my staff have time to do it.

It's really pretty minimal time commitment. And cost wise. Yeah, there are schools that have zipcast for free.

How is that possible? Well, we can I can give you more information. We'll tell you how that works. There is a way to be free.

So yeah, to you. There's there's no strategies to do that strategy to make it free. We'll talk about it.

All right. Well, I know time is short. We're gonna zip away.

So, hey, more than anything, just thankful for the incredible work that we do, again, in this amazing collaborative between the parent and school and churches. This is what is going to change our culture and and really, I think, be a part of the revival that I think is happening of

people discovering Christ, by the way, just end on this positive note is back to some statistics. I think maybe most people have heard this, but Bible sales rose by 22 percent last year from just a year ago when the regular book sales are only up by one percent.

So there is something happening profound in terms of curiosity, looking for substance, looking for meaning. We're on the right path on the right journey. We should be able to communicate better as we go.

Absolutely. All right. Thank you all for listening.

Thank you. Well, you did it. You stayed to the very end of the podcast.

Thanks so much for listening to this conversation. And a special thanks to our sponsors who make this episode possible. Classical Academic Press, Wilson Hill Academy, Light Phone, and the Classic Learning Test.

Hey, I want to encourage you if you're out there, whatever podcast player you're on, leave us a five-star rating, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, whatever it may be. We'd love to hear from you as well. As always, Info at Base Camp Live, what's on your mind? Help us tell stories that may be reflective of what you've seen impacting in your personal life or as a teacher in your school of what classical Christian education is doing again around the world.

We appreciate you as a faithful listener. Hey, we're going to be back again next week for another episode. Please join us.

We wouldn't want you to miss.