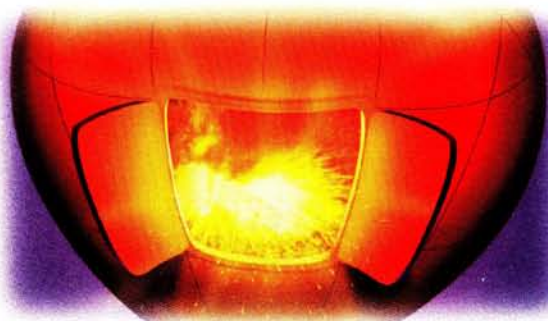


ENRICHMENT

Winter 1996

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A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

Ministry Matters

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL

DAWSON TROTMAN, founder of The Navigators, once said, "God gave us a lot of leading when He gave us a brain."

While reading W.A. Criswell's book, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*, recently I came across his advice, "The Dos for the Pastor." How true they are! Ministry is often just doing the right thing at the right time. Most of the time it is not complicated but is a matter of using the mind God gave us at birth and the mind of Christ He gave us at salvation.

Listen to the good advice of this life-long pastor:*

1. Make every effort to maintain close ties with your family. Spend quality time with them. Keep your wife and children as a first priority.
2. Make sure, in the first place, that you marry a godly, consecrated woman—one who will be a good pastor's wife.
3. Have special days and times to spend with your wife and children.
4. Take time to pray, to be alone with God. Keep your mornings for God. Tell the people the arrangement so other lesser things can be done at later hours. Take everything to God in prayer. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
5. Commit each day to the Lord. Take a spiritual inventory of yourself each day. Are you growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord?
6. Be a splendid example of Christian living for all to see. Contribute more than a tithe to the Lord.
7. Be scrupulous and ethical in all your business dealings. Keep good financial records. Pay bills promptly.
8. Be truthful and dependable.
9. Be punctual in all your engagements.
10. Always seek to keep a positive attitude. Never allow yourself to become a negative, defeatist person. Always look for the positive side of the problem.
11. Keep your mind open to new ideas, but be slow to follow cheap fads.
12. Show enthusiasm and alertness.
13. Keep well and strong physically. It makes the difference between victory and defeat in your ministry.
14. Have regular physical checkups.
15. Check to see that your breath is fresh. Halitosis on the preacher is offensive beyond description.
16. Take a little time off each week to recuperate and recharge your mental, emotional, and spiritual strength.
17. Dress appropriately all the time—on Sunday and during the week as well. Be clean, neat, immaculate, and in style. Church members want to be proud of the way their pastor looks.
18. Dress in fashion, not with wild and loud colors and styles.
19. When it is appropriate, dress in a casual way.
20. In being well-groomed, keep your shoes shined, your socks matched in color with your shoes, your shirt and all linens clean, your hair cut and combed, your fingernails cut and buffed, your car clean, and your study in order.
21. The best garment to put on every day is a wide, wonderful smile. The world needs it.
22. Balance your study with your pastoral responsibilities: especially take time for study.
23. Give yourself sufficient time for sermon preparation.
24. Strive to be a student all the days of your life.
25. Read the biographies of great men both in secular as well as ecclesiastical history.
26. Study the classics of literature, but above all study the Bible constantly. A way to do this is to be constantly preaching through a book of the Bible.
27. Have a reading plan. Become familiar with great literature, with the stories of great art and artists, and of music and musicians. As a result, sermons and addresses can be enriched and strengthened.

In this issue of *Enrichment*, we look at what many feel are the priorities of the minister's life. Above all, the minister should have priorities for the sake of the Kingdom and for the sake of the lost and dying world. ~

*W.A. Criswell, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 359.



Wayde I. Goodall is executive editor of *Enrichment* and coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment office in Springfield, Missouri.

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INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

Ask the Superintendent



I determined long ago when I was a D-CAP that I was not going to travel the state of Michigan winning everyone else's children to the Lord and lose my own family.

One of the great shortcomings in the ministry is that we are our own bosses—we don't punch a time clock and are not answerable to anybody directly. Many men fail to be disciplined in their devotion, study time, and time schedule. Jesus set the example by going aside to pray in the first hours of the day. I firmly believe the minister must be disciplined in this and get alone with the Lord for prayer and study.

SO HOW HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO BALANCE

YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE WITH YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?

TRASK: There needs to be a time for diversion. Either we come apart, or we'll fall apart. It must be balanced. It is out of balance when too much time is given to the personal side—to the gratification of self and the fulfillment of self. We need recreation and social interaction, but they must find their places. People's needs vary and must be balanced according to the personality.

For example, when we were pastors we set aside Friday as family day. We attended our sons' basketball games and track meets. Balance is the key so that you don't win the world and lose your own family. This is critical today.

In the past that was probably one of the weaknesses in the Fellowship. Men gave themselves so fully to the work of God—and that was commendable—but they failed to minister to their own families and lost them.

I determined long ago when I was a D-CAP

Enrichment *editors discuss priorities in ministry with General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask. These include priorities not only in ministry but the minister's role as husband and father, balancing one's personal life with ministry, integrity, family pressures, consistency, prayer, and influence.*

IN DEVELOPING A BALANCE BETWEEN YOUR MINISTRY AND PERSONAL LIFE, WHAT VALUABLE LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED IN YOUR YEARS OF MINISTRY?

THOMAS TRASK: When I first started out in ministry, a veteran minister gave me some marvelous words of counsel: "Ask God to put you on a schedule." What he meant by that is a daily schedule. I've done that for 38 years whereby the first hours of the day—and I've guarded this carefully—are spent in relationship through the study of the Word, meditation, prayer, and fellowship with the Lord. Everything else becomes secondary. That requires discipline.

that I was not going to travel the state of Michigan winning everyone else's children to the Lord and lose my own family. God has helped us. We have four beautiful children, and they are serving the Lord today and are in active ministry. That is the balance we have to find.

YOU OFTEN COMMENT TO YOUNG MINISTERS, "JUST DO THE RIGHT THING." WOULD YOU DEVELOP THAT?

TRASK: I believe God gives Spirit-filled men and women the knowledge to know what is right and to do the right thing—knowing what is right, how to deal with people, and integrity. If a man does not have integrity, he does not have much to offer anybody.

We have to start with integrity of self. How do I want to be treated? So I treat others as I want to be treated. How would the Lord Jesus treat them? I'm going to have to give an account to the Lord in how I treat them.

God's Word has laid out some basics in doing what you've called "the right thing." Thus we must not become only hearers of the Word but doers of the Word. As we read and study God's Word, we live in obedience to that Word.

God has given us a built-in radar system, and when we begin to step out of line that radar begins to signal. To ignore it is dangerous because we can become calloused—indifferent and hardened. However, we must be sensitized to the Holy Spirit's warning and live with the checks and balances [conviction]. If we do or say something out of line that displeases the Lord, His Spirit brings conviction to our hearts. We can pray, "Lord, I'm sorry for doing that. Help me not to do it again." When we live with this sensitivity, our actions, thoughts, and deeds all become governed by what the Spirit wants, not what we want.

THAT'S GREAT ADVICE. AS YOU THINK OF THE PASTOR WHERE THE CHURCH AVERAGES 100, ON WHAT PRIORITIES SHOULD THEY FOCUS?

TRASK: For God to bless, some basics must happen in the local church:

1. *Ample time must be given to the preaching of God's Word* so that when people come they are fed. If a pastor will do that, God will give him people who desire to be fed. That takes time.

For example, every Tuesday I prepared my Sunday morning message. Wednesday I prepared for my Wednesday night message. Thursday I prepared my Sunday night message. I went into Friday with a day of review and Saturday with preparation in my spirit and my heart, never allowing myself to come to the critical end of the week and panicking, "What am I going to preach?" Ample time has to be given to study and preaching the Word.

2. *Anything lasting in the local church is going to come out of prayer—prayer and fasting.* From the foundation of prayer the spirit of the church is created in which God can work.

In a church recently I picked up the bulletin and found a phenomenal menu of prayer opportunities. I turned to my wife and said, "No wonder revival is in this church." Attendance had grown from 60 to 650 in 6 years. The pastor told me later that their revival was birthed in prayer.

3. *The local church must be involved in evangelism.* God works by the principle of sowing and reaping—if you sow, you reap. Some tools of evangelism must be in place for the church to sow and reap. It may be radio, literature, or door-to-door witnessing.

While I pastored we went door to door every Monday night year-round. It was



Thomas E. Trask is the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

Work that is man-centered will collapse when he moves from the scene, but when it is centered on Jesus and is the work of the Spirit, it will continue to grow.



the principle that we were working. God began to send in people, for the church was involved in sowing.

4. *Any local church God is using today is involved in missions*, because missions is closest to God's heart. He is not willing that any should perish. The church was not created to be a museum but a hospital—a soul-saving station. Therefore, opportunity must be given for people to be saved at our altars in every service. We should not assume everyone is saved or no one is a backslider. Give invitations so they have opportunity to respond to the gospel. This is critical.

5. *Then there must be discipleship, the training arm of the church.* That's why I am a strong advocate of Sunday school or its equivalent. Jesus commanded, "Go and make disciples." As revival in the Assemblies of God and the spiritual climate continue to rise, a definite need for training, teaching, and discipleship within the local church is urgent.

If no one is being saved and no new ones are coming in, there is no need for discipleship. That's one of the things revival does—it brings new blood.

6. *Another critical area I see within the local church that needs priority is to involve laity.* God has placed His hand upon laity, and they want to be a part of what God is doing. The gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:14) are not just for the clergy. He divides "to every man severally as he wills." It's our privilege as ministers of the gospel to help laity find their places of ministry. Not everyone can sing in the choir, be an usher, or teach Sunday school. But there are places of ministry. He never meant for laity to sit, sour, and soak but to get involved.

ONE OF THE GREAT SORROWS IN THE CHURCH TODAY IS THE DYSFUNCTION IN PASTORS' HOMES. TIME RESTRAINTS, FINANCIAL PRESSURES, WORK SCHEDULES, AND PROBLEMS WITH CHILDREN ARE TAKING THEIR TOLL. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MINISTER'S HOME?

TRASK: It really comes back to priority. My priorities are in this order: First, my relation-

ship with the Lord; second, my relationship with my wife and family; then the work of the Lord. Many have turned those last two around, but that's improper—you can't be effective to the fullest measure in the ministry if the home is dysfunctional.

The apostle Paul taught that a deacon or bishop should first have his home in order, and that requires giving and setting aside time. God doesn't expect us to give priority to ministry at the expense of our mates and families. We have to keep running the check and balance on ourselves all the time.

The minister must be sensitive to his wife, his helpmate. She doesn't carry the same burden he does—understandably so. He needs to be the support base for her. This is not to negate women in ministry, for God also calls them; however, in the average pastor-family the man is the pastor.

As a pastor and even in my present office, I don't take the difficulties home. Shirley does not need that burden placed upon her. We have always refrained from discussing church problems in the presence of our children. We wanted them to have unclouded love and respect for everybody. When it is necessary to discuss a problem, we do so privately so the children have the best opinion and the best picture of the ministry, which is a marvelous calling. It has pressures and hurts, as every calling does, but it has joy. God has privileged us to see our children having calls to the ministry. They weren't turned off by it and were open to the call because they saw a positive side of the ministry.

AS A PASTOR, WHAT STRUGGLES AND CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE, AND HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH THEM?

TRASK: I'm high energy, and one of the great lessons I had to learn is that I thought I could make it happen by pure effort, self-effort—by pure work and energy. God had to teach me that it's not done by expecting Him to work with me, but I work with Him. That was one of the most valuable lessons I've learned.

The Scriptures say that those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise. One of the great detriments in the ministry today—and a tool the enemy uses—is when ministers compare themselves with their fellow ministers. God moves sovereignly in a

church, and things happen. The enemy gets on a pastor's case and says, "Look, why isn't this happening for you? What are you doing wrong?"

It isn't that he's doing anything wrong. God does not want us to compare ourselves among ourselves. Each is answerable to God. God freed me from that competitiveness. Frankly, that's why I'm not in favor of trying to list the top 100 churches in the Assemblies of God. It sends a wrong message. We're grateful for the large churches, but this Fellowship is made up, by and large, of churches with 100 and under. These pastors are faithful.

Once I turned this matter of the church's growth over to Him and said, "Lord, I'll do what I see in Your Word as far as my responsibilities are concerned," then it began to happen. It was no longer Thomas Trask driving it but God doing it. Thus He gets the glory.

The bottom line: What happens when you're gone? Work that is man-centered will collapse when he moves from the scene, but when it is centered on Jesus and is the work of the Spirit, it will continue to grow.

This was probably one of the greatest challenges in my ministry. I wanted to make it happen. I'm competitive by nature. However, in the work of the Kingdom, it has to be the work of the Spirit, not our works.

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO SURRENDER THE MINISTRY AND SAID, "I JUST CAN'T DO IT"? HOW DID YOU SURVIVE THOSE TIMES WHEN YOU FELT LIKE GIVING UP?

TRASK: That's a good question. Yes, many times I looked at the Sunday or Monday paper for employment in the early days of ministry when we were pioneering, struggling, and wanting. I had a jealousy for the kingdom of God. The work of the Kingdom deserves my best, and I want to see Jesus' work succeed. That drives me, and I have little tolerance for men of carelessness and "business as usual" mentality. The work of the Kingdom deserves more.

What brought me through those times was my relationship-the discipline of prayer and study every day and being in the presence of God-He renewed my strength, kept me focused. If I hadn't done that, I would have



been in business, for I had opportunities in the business world.

He kept me focused on the call He had given me. Thus it is absolutely critical for men to develop that relationship and have the undergirding of His strength. When we come to the end of ourselves and our own resources, His resources are there for us.

A SIGNIFICANTEVENT DURING THE WINTER IS OUR WEEK OF PRAYER. WE WANT TO PROMOTE THIS HEAVILY AND ENCOURAGE EVERY CHURCH'S PARTICIPATION. WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THAT?

TRASK: One of the reasons a fresh wind is blowing in the Assemblies of God is because of the emphasis on prayer-whether individually, corporately, or collectively. The more the church prays, the more we give God reason to work. I'm encouraged and would like to encourage and admonish every pastor, minister, evangelist, missionary, and layperson to become a part of Week of Prayer the first week of January (see pages 66 and 67).

My hope is that what is done during this week will not end there but will become the launching of a powerful prayer ministry in the church. God is birthing a hunger for prayer in people's hearts.

I would like to encourage every congregation and every individual in the congregation to become involved. As we pray, the local church will experience the supernatural. ~

***We're
grateful for
the large
churches,
but this
Fellowship
is made up,
by and large,
of churches
with 100
and under.***



Here
is the first
and most
essential
priority—tending
the fire on the
altar of our hearts.
It is the directive to
the sanctuary priests
that now speaks
powerfully to us:
“The fire on the altar must
be kept burning; it must
not go out” (Leviticus 6:12).
That is, the inner presence of God
must be perpetually nurtured.



A Commitment to Priority Living

BY RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS

"PASTOR, I think there may be a call for a vote of confidence at the membership meeting tomorrow night. If so, I don't think you'll make it. It seemed wise for me to give you some warning of that possibility."

The night that followed was sleepless and long. I felt alone, hurt, discouraged, and embarrassed.

In the morning, I asked my wife to read the appropriate section from the devotional book that lay on the lampstand. Of course, I expected to hear some special word of assurance that would lift my spirits. Instead, Elnora read these words from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3*).

It was a shocking word of admonition. I could not believe the Lord would allow such correction in the wake of the distressing news of the previous night. What about the people who even then might be plotting in their hearts to send me looking for another placebo to serve? "Lord, where is fairness in it all?"

I was greatly relieved when the membership meeting concluded without a vote of confidence on the pastor. Now, in retrospect, I realize the entire event was an occasion for a deep work of God's grace in my life. Interestingly, this year we celebrate 25 years of wonderful ministry in that very church.

This is the road we travel as pastors—sometimes smooth, frequently bumpy, and occasionally almost impossible.

I remember another moment. As a congrega-

tion we huddled at the graveside of a beautiful 16-year-old girl whose life had been taken in a terrible act of violence. She joined three other girls from our youth group who only months before had also been buried just a few feet away—one by cancer and two from an automobile accident. Our hearts were sad beyond description. How? Why? Our questions were unanswered, and our hearts flooded with sorrow.

Again, this is typical of the environment in which we do our work as pastors. I have compared our work often to an emotional roller coaster—from the ecstasy of having brought the message of hope to hurting people to the feelings of regret and shame that accompany failure—a wide swing of emotions that accompanies the task of ministry.

To survive in this work calls for a strict adherence to priority—the intentional planning of our lives to enable us consistently to give ourselves to effective ministry. I have yet to meet a pastor who has been successful in the Lord's work who has not had a commitment to priority living.

What are these priorities? What are the parameters that will provide guidance and focus? What are the principles to which we must fix ourselves in meeting the challenge of ministry?

FIRE ON THE ALTAR OF OUR HEARTS

Here is the first and most essential priority—tending the fire on the altar of our hearts. It is the directive to the sanctuary priests that now speaks powerfully to us: "The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out" (Leviticus 6:12). That is, the inner presence of God must be perpetually nurtured.



Richard L. Dresselhaus, D.Min., is pastor of First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

**Do not live
by default.
Don't allow
others to set
the agenda
for your life.**

A pastor who fails to care for his own family will soon lose the privilege of caring for the people of God.

Without this priority all pastoral work is doomed to failure.

Indeed, the inner flow of God's Spirit must be commensurate with the outward demands of ministry. Imbalance here is a sure path to aborted ministry and ruined influence. We cannot give out what we have not taken in. The reservoir from which we draw must be well supplied. It is impossible to impart life to others if we are inwardly barren.

How? Surveys show that the average American pastor spends less than 15 minutes per day in a devotional relationship with God. Rarely do I meet a pastor who is satisfied that his inner life is being sufficiently nurtured. Why? The answer is obvious. The press of ministry crowds out the time we need to be with God. Only one response to this neglect is appropriate—the intentional tending of the fire on the altar of our hearts. Each one must singularly make that determination.

DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRIT

THE BEATITUDES express most profoundly and practically the fundamental disciplines of the inner life. Here is a restatement of each Beatitude in the form of a personal discipline:

1. Intentionally admit your need for God (Matthew 5:3).
2. Be a person of brokenness before the Lord (Matthew 5:4).
3. Give up your quest for personal rights (Matthew 5:5).
4. Maintain a hunger and thirst for God (Matthew 5:6).
5. Practice an identity with people in need (Matthew 5:7).
6. Maintain a pure heart (Matthew 5:8).
7. Cultivate peace in all relationships (Matthew 5:9).
8. Take a positive view of criticism (Matthew 5:10).

While we are individually unique in calling and giftedness, we must take time to allow God's Spirit to indwell our hearts through His Word. There is no option. Difficult? Yes. Seemingly impossible? Sometimes. But this priority dare not be met with negligence.

If an influential member of your congregation requested your time, it would be granted. Why not do the same for God? Make an appointment with Him. Let it be a regular block of time intentionally set aside just to be with Him. This will be a meaningful supplement to your present daily devotional time.

THE DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRIT

While the Beatitudes (see sidebar) might at first glance seem to be polite platitudes for pious-minded people, they are in reality stern statements of discipline that dominate and control the inner life of every faithful servant of the Lord. These disciplines provide the criteria by which I measure my inner life. They must be priority.

THE BEST FROM AMONG THE GOOD

Choosing the best from among the good is the next priority. The options in pastoral work are myriad: service clubs, ministerial associations, continuing education, reading, traveling, outside ministry, talent development, recreation, family time, church administration—the list is almost endless. All are good.

We must choose, but where do we begin? First, ask this question: What can only I do? For example, if you are a senior pastor, there really is no one else who can cast vision and nurture the people of God. These are the kinds of tasks that cannot be delegated. Wise is the pastor who concentrates on these responsibilities and devotes the needed time and energy to bring them to completion.

Do not live by default. Don't allow others to set the agenda for your life. Be intentional about your choices. Evaluate every task as to its relative importance to the overall task of ministry.

I admit it. There are many good and nice things I would like to do, but established priorities have set parameters of limitation. For example, I have had to limit the time given to pastoral counseling. of course, counseling is good and needed—but in my situation, the

importance of other tasks compels me to place a limitation on this part of my pastoral work. Each pastor must choose wisely among all the options. If you don't, someone else will-much to the discredit of an otherwise effective ministry.

RELATIONSHIPS THAT AUTHENTICATE MINISTRY

Years ago an associate pastor, fresh out of seminary, made this brief but powerful declaration: "Ministry flows out of relationship." The hard truth is, without a relational base, effective ministry is impossible. Relational debris will taint any pastor's influence. If you cannot get along with people, you will not be given their attention or their support. Building strong relational bridges is absolutely essential-with no shortcuts.

It also reaches into the pastor's home. A pastor who fails to care for his own family will soon lose the privilege of caring for the people of God. Put God first, your family second, yourself third, and the work of God fourth. Misdirection will hurt everyone. If you put the church ahead of your family and yourself, you will soon find that you have destroyed the authority base for your ministry to others.

The most authenticating factor in a pastor's influence is his family. Take the time needed and expend the required energy to cultivate the kinds of relationships with your family that in turn will preach the most powerful sermons your people will ever hear.

You must build a relational base upon which fruitful ministry can rest, be it staff, the official board, the next-door neighbor, a cantankerous member, or a fellow pastor. Ministry flows out of relationship. This must be priority.

GOOD MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Pastors do not typically fail because they are insincere, ungifted, or inept at preaching. They fail because they fail to manage-their time, inner life, resources, thought life, emotions, the people they serve, or the church's finance.

The ticket to the pulpit is bought with management dollars. You fail to manage, and you soon fail to preach. We can all compile lists of pastors who tragically have become exam-

pies of this sad neglect.

Every task calls for a management system. A member makes a request as he passes you at the door following a service. Do you have a system to ensure you will remember that request? Consider the flow of the worship service-do you have a system to ensure that people involved know how their parts fit into the whole? In working with the official board, do you have a system to ensure that members are prepared to participate in board decisions?

A little forethought and planning will save time, earn respect from those with whom we work, build credibility, diminish conflict, facilitate work flow, and enhance the message we proclaim.

Check out your management systems. Be sure they are well placed and working effectively. This, too, is a high priority.

Yes, the task is great, the pitfalls many, the rewards wonderful, and nothing will assure success like a commitment to priority ~

**Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.*

If you put the church ahead of your family and yourself, you will soon find that you have destroyed the authority base for your ministry to others.



"SO PASTOR PHELPS, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE EXPERIENCING BURNOUT?"

Worship

the priority of

Pentecostal

WORSHIP = CONSCIOUSNESS + RESPONSE TO PRESENCE OF GOD

Leaders are
responsible

BY G. RAYMOND CARLSON

for creating
the right
attitudes
to inspire
anticipation
of the
Holy
Spirit's
moving
and an
appetite
for
spiritual
things.



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formerly served as
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general superintendent,
Springfield, Missouri.

Non-Pentecostals have questioned the form of worship in a Pentecostal meeting as much as the doctrinal distinctive. Historically the Movement has had an informal manner and freedom of expression in worship.

In perpetuating the Pentecostal revival we need to safeguard the factors that produce the Pentecostal blessing. This does not mean we make a case for that which is fanatical. The Pentecostal revival has never been a fanatic's revival; fanatics have tried to attach themselves to the revival. Physical reaction to the power of the Holy Spirit must pattern according to that which is choice and edifying; otherwise, it will offend true spiritual sensibilities. Paul, in his letters to the Corinthians, laid down corrective measures for demonstrations which are not of the Holy Spirit.

Worship is a consciousness of the presence of God and a response to that consciousness. It is the outreach of the deepest emotions of the soul in adoration, reverence, homage, exaltation, and praise to the Almighty.

Worship is not dependent upon environment and circumstance, but most people are not oblivious to environment. Therefore, leaders are responsible for creating the right attitudes to inspire anticipation of the Holy Spirit's moving and an appetite for spiritual things. Attitude, appetite, and anticipation create atmosphere.

The Pentecostal church is marked by a wonderful atmosphere of worship. Atmosphere is important. Sinner and saint alike can sense God's presence in a truly Pentecostal church. In such a meeting the Holy Spirit has unhampered opportunity. Herein lie the excitement and attraction of a Pentecostal meeting. This is the New Testament standard and is in accord with the divine plan.

attitude +
appetite =
anticipation

Atmosphere

This freedom also poses peril, for worship must truly be worship. True worship is not religious excitement, nor does it appeal to the flesh.

Worship services may take one or two undesirable directions—there may be formality with lack of spiritual liberty, or there may be lack of scriptural order and control. Spiritual leaders are responsible for bringing people into God's presence and making them realize "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Formality can develop in the ritual of the informal church. Neither Pentecostal routine nor ecclesiastical liturgy is true worship. When Pentecostal churches follow an order of service that degenerates into meaningless habit, they have nothing more than ritual.

The mind of God is the important matter in the service if we are to have a Pentecostal meeting. This Pentecostal climate hinges, to a greater or lesser degree, upon the leader. He must be in vital contact with God and maintain sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. When leading people in worship, he constantly needs to know the mind of the Spirit for the moment.

The Holy Spirit must be allowed to settle in conviction or blessing upon a congregation. The spirit of the day is to rush. People need God's therapeutic rest. Let us refuse to rush through the order of service; rather, may we bring men and women to deliberate and worshipful rest in the Lord. Guard the freedom of Pentecostal worship. Neither wildfire nor fleshly manifestations are to be condoned, but let us never be so painfully nice that we perish from propriety.

Paul outlined a beautiful worship pattern for the church: "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Furthermore, he said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). We are told to exhort one another and not to forsake "the assembling

liturgy

of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:2~

This is congregational worship based on scriptural instruction. All members of the whole body of believers share in worship as the Holy Spirit indwells them and they yield to Him. Then people who fill church pews are no longer spectators, wondering how they will be entertained.

God rejected King Saul in favor of David, a "man after his [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). Saul intruded into religious action without waiting for the prophet Samuel. He said, "I forced myself" (1 Samuel 13:12). The kingdom was given to David, a man who continually counseled his soul, "Wait thou upon God."

When we fail to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, we are prone to force ourselves. As a result, we have forced singing, forced praying, forced testimonies, forced giving, and forced preaching. How much better it is when the Holy Spirit comes. Then we have Holy Spirit singing, praying, giving, testimonies, and preaching (Romans 8:26,27; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 14:15; Ephesians 5:18-21; 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Jude 20). The gifts of the Holy Spirit will be in operation and controlled according to the scriptural pattern of 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14.

May Pentecostal people in Pentecostal churches pray that Pentecostal worship shall be strengthened. May the sound of song and praise and prayer ring forth from our assemblies. May we give ourselves to waiting upon God. May our altars be filled with seeking souls, and may they not be soon emptied. May the altar service have priority in our worship.

May the Holy Spirit quicken us with a healthy spiritual *appetite*, a keen *anticipation*, and a faith-producing *attitude*. Then we shall have a Pentecostal *atmosphere*, and when the spiritual atmosphere is right, the rain from heaven will fall. ~

Worship

When Pentecostal churches follow an order of services that degenerates into meaningless habit, they have nothing more than ritual.

GATHER TOGETHER (PSALM + DOCTRINE + TONGUE + REVELATION + INTERPRETATION) = EDIFICATION



Saying “YES” to the Needful Central Issues of Your Calling

BY DV HURST

"THERE ARE...So many kinds of voices..., and none of them is without signification" (1 Corinthians 14:10). Though Paul knew one would hear voices from all sides, he said, "This one thing I do... He decided what *not* to do, what to do, and when to do it.

Being able to say "No"-even to things that would be enjoyable, somewhat productive, or even helpful-is absolutely requisite to the busy pastor. True discipline starts with *no*.

The next word is *yes*. What shall I do? Setting priorities and following through in a disciplined way is the heart of discipleship and of growing, effective ministry.

Here are some priorities to which the minister should say an emphatic "Yes" and religiously follow:

CARING FOR THE BODY

In his oft-repeated way of making a point through contrast, Paul said, "Bodily exercise profiteth little [for time], but [exercise unto] godliness is profitable unto all things" (1 Timothy 4:8). Both points are true. He did not negate bodily exercise; he simply recognized the limits of its profitability. He knew it was temporal, yet he also knew the body is the temple for the inner man. He said, "I beat my body and make it my slave" (1 Corinthians 9:27, NIV).

Preserving the physical man, the temple, is a priority. The formula is found in an "E" and four "R's": *exercise* (walk, a lot and briskly), *restraint* (spelled "push away from the table"), *rest*, *relaxation*, and *recreation* (recreate). Through exercise, discipline in eating habits, adequate rest, breaks, minivacations,

and leaves of absence one can preserve the body. This, in turn, will sustain intense ministry. Avoiding burnout-physical and emotional-is a priority.

Play on purpose. The play will be different for each one, but it must occur. If one enjoys the play, he relaxes in it, is absorbed by it, and will then return to the task eager and refreshed.

Another point: Many years ago E.S. Williams cautioned young ministers against the abuse of the voice in the pulpit. Learn the proper use of voice-even taking basic voice lessons. "Pack the tones against the belt; let the diaphragm do the work, provide the power, not the throat," the teacher will tell you. Use the PA system to your advantage-to the preservation of your voice.

CARING FOR THE SPIRIT

In Galatians 6:8 Paul used contrast-"sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit." One leads to destruction, the other to profit. Sowing to one's own spirit holds priority. He further said, "I pray God your whole spirit...be preserved blameless" (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and "keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25).

Preserving one's own spirit in the midst of the battle is of paramount importance. Jesus came to care for the bruised reed, the wounded spirit. There is a balm in Gilead and healing for the deepest wounds. The spirit can and must be preserved well and strong, ready to support the minister in all labor and enable him to manifest the abundant grace of the Christian life. One can be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).



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The order of a minister's priorities should be "God, family, church." Often, however, it is "God, church, family.

Say "NO" to the inconsequential and "YES" to the needful, central issues and concerns of your calling. Commit. Concentrate. Complete. These words can change your ministry.

CARING FOR BUILDING THE FAMILY

The order of a minister's priorities should be "God, family, church." Often, however, it is "God, church, family."

Someone said, "The man in the home is the real man. The man in the pulpit is the professional man." The pulpit man and the real man should be the same. Modeling begins at home. If there is no difference between the pulpit man and the real man, the family will see his faith as genuine, believe in him, and follow him. His path will be straight and his footprints firm, easy tracks into which small and growing feet can step.



CARING FOR THE MIND

Reading habits, meditation, continuing education (formal and self-guided), a spirit of learning, and an inquiring mind are of top priority. The minister who feeds himself well will feed the flock of God well.

The real disciple is a lifelong learner. The one who would preach or teach must be in constant growth, having fresh thoughts, insight, understanding, and application. If the Word lives in him, he will inspire others to live in it.

The joy of learning and growing in understanding should be a minister's chief joy—a top priority.

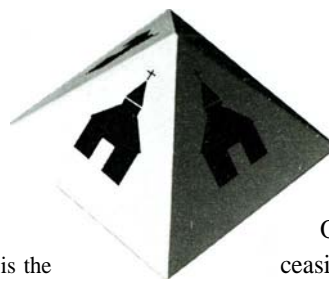
Attitudinal control is a part of caring for the mind. The minister often encounters negatives swirling around him. To handle them and remain positive and focused is the challenge. Attitudinal control through abiding faith and Spirit-given strength is a top priority.

PRESERVING FRESHNESS IN MINISTRY

The minister retains freshness from study, prayer, worship, and ministry to individuals—staying in touch with hurting, needy people while staying in touch with God.

While administration is a ministry, and some are gifted for this, the apostles said "No" to detailed administration (waiting on tables). Rather, they gave attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

J. Robert Ashcroft, known for his emphasis on the prayer life, said, "All of life is prayer. The



whole day—lived in devotion, obedience, worship—is prayer." One can "pray without ceasing," as Paul admonished the Thessalonians.

The minister who has just come from God's presence to the pulpit will shine—show forth the glory of God, manifest spiritual aliveness, and bless people into the ways of the Kingdom.

WORKING TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PREACHING/TEACHING

W.T. Gaston wrote, "All good preaching includes some teaching; all good teaching includes some preaching."

The art of preaching/teaching—effective communication—is worthy of never-ending study. The minister with a message, who knows how to get it across, not only asks, "What shall I say?" but "How shall I say it to help people grasp it? How can I plant it in their hearts?" This minister will constantly reevaluate his method along with the message, and he will grow in his ministry.

A fine speech professor used a line years ago which I never forgot: "True art conceals its artistry." The minister who only communicates that he is a great preacher misses the mark. The one who takes people past the art and solidly plants the message so that people leave thinking, talking, and acting upon what he said hits the mark.

What should we look for when we hear another person preach? Content, convictions, clarity, cohesion, continuity, and character that backs up the message.

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

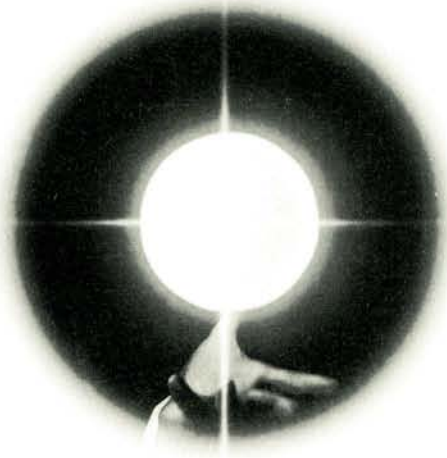
This long has been the mark of Pentecost. Ministers who were sensitive to the Spirit's move and could stand aside and let the Spirit flow saw Pentecostal church growth. We have seen God move by His Spirit and the miracle of unity occur in the Body, the miracle of love build the Body, and the Body edified in the Spirit. How it is needed today!

Are we afraid to let the Spirit move lest we not know what to do?

The minister must be a man of the Spirit.

This is his top priority. It is in Spirit-inspired worship that people meet God.

Out of a sense of need to help an associate, I once blurted out: "He needs to commit, concentrate, and complete." That's what setting priorities toward effectiveness and completion for the minister is all about. Say "No" to the inconsequential and "Yes" to the needful, central issues and concerns of your calling. Commit. Concentrate. Complete. These words can change your ministry. ~



The minister must be a man of the Spirit. This is his top priority.





Preaching That Anchors Itself

BY RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS

THERE IS TOO MUCH FLUFF IN OUR PULPITS—preaching that is void of power because it is not anchored solidly in biblical history.

We have all heard it. A few clever stories, a passing reference to biblical themes, a proof text or two, a little circular reasoning, and that is about it. Little wonder that we leave with a feeling that somehow we have been cheated. We had hoped to hear a thunderclap from Sinai, but instead we had to settle for a whimper from the top of a preacher's lazy mind.

Of course, we have all been there and, sadly, not just as listeners. But Stephen's account jolts us out of complacency

and challenges us to something better—preaching that is solidly anchored in biblical history.

Just imagine: The restive crowd was angry and hostile. They were after blood, and before long they got it. It was a moment crowded with greatest urgency. What did Stephen do? He delivered a sermon that contains a precise and detailed recitation of Israel's history from Abraham to his own day. Who should worry about history when people have rocks in their hands and provocation in their hearts?

If Stephen, in that crisis moment, appealed to Israel's history to provide credibility and authority, if a man only moments from martyrdom considered background essential to his appeal, how dare we rush to conclusions before the foundation has been solidly fixed in biblical history! Where

REFERENCES AND SUMMARY

ACTS 7:2-19, NIV

THE PATRIARCHS:

- Abraham "Leave your country ... go to the land I will show you
Your descendants will be strangers ... enslaved "
Isaac "Circumcised ... eight days after his birth. "
Jacob "Became the father of the twelve patriarchs. "
Joseph "He [God] gave Joseph wisdom ... made him ruler over
Egypt.... Another king ... dealt treacherously "

ACTS 7:20-38

MISSION OF MOSES:

- Early years "Educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.... "
Expulsion "Do you want to kill me ... ? He fled to Midian "
Call "I [angel] have ... seen the oppression I ... send you
back to Egypt. "
Miracles "He ... did wonders ... in Egypt.... "

ACTS 7:39-53

REJECTION OF THE FATHERS:

- "Our fathers refused to obey him "

MISUSE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD:

- "The Most High does not live in houses made by men. "

INDICTMENT:

- "You always resist the Holy Spirit Now you
have ... murdered him [Christ]. "

ACTS 7:54-60

RESPONSE OF THE CROWD:

- "They were furious "

RESPONSE OF STEPHEN:

- "I see heaven open Lord Jesus receive my spirit
Lord, do not hold this sin against them. "

APPLICABLE PRINCIPLES

God's revelation of truth has come through
the lives and testimonies of the patriarchs.

God's delivering power has been demon-
strated through the obedience of His servant.

God's efforts to draw His people to himself
have been persistently spurned.

God's redemptive grace always finds a way
to release its glory.

PREACHING OUTLINE

It rests on the faithful testimony of God's
people.

It is motivated by the power acts of God.

It draws its urgency from men's persistent
denial.

It finds its message rooted in hope.

in Biblical Theology

did we ever get the idea that what we think and say is so important that we can bypass the great story of God's dealings with His people and hurry on instead to say only what we have on our own minds?

Sometimes preachers are like race horses: They do a bee-line for the finish. The sense of urgency for decision pushes them so hard they find it almost impossible to pause long enough to tell the story of God's ways and dealings with His people. The rightful urgency of decision can mistakenly push us too quickly past the authenticating and validating content of Scripture. The altar response will ultimately be stronger and more enduring if the foundation is in place.

Again, Stephen, with his life on the line, took the time to trace the story from Abraham to Solomon. Only then did he say: "You stiff-necked people You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 7:51). He first told the story of the patriarchs, and then he stirred the accusers' consciences. The lesson is too compelling to ignore. Good preaching must be well anchored in Scripture.

Pastors have a golden opportunity here to help people become students of good preaching. In fact, by telling them what to look for in good preaching, they will hold you accountable to that very standard. This is a wise practice—to the benefit of all. It is wonderful when well-schooled parishioners become active participants in the preaching event.

You may wish to make this the particular challenge of this message: To help your people understand the importance of biblical history as the anchor for effective preaching. In the process they also will be challenged to discover in biblical history a solid foundation for their own lives. Stephen's preaching will have an irresistible impact upon them.

IT RESTS ON THE FAITHFUL TESTIMONY OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Here is your opportunity to demonstrate clearly the way God has chosen to reveal divine truth. He does it as big as life. He unfolds eternal truth through the experiences of His people—their mistakes, tragedies, hurts, brokenness, chal-

lenges, and victories. It is eternal truth revealed in the affairs of men.

We may wonder how it is that God's Word is so incredibly relevant to every generation. The answer is found right here.

Man's basic nature is consistent from one generation to the next. Therefore, God's dealings with His people in Abraham's day are consistent with the ways He deals with His people today. People are strikingly unoriginal. The patriarchs differ from us culturally, linguistically, and socially; but they are very much like us in the essence of who and what they are. Truth, therefore, revealed through them is easily transferable to us. The past merges with the present.

You also may wish to challenge your people to avoid the sometimes popular preaching of some who treat Scripture in a superficial way and do not really wrestle with its great themes and truths. People starve on that kind of preaching.

IT IS MOTIVATED BY THE POWER ACTS OF GOD.

Faith and expectancy are infused into preaching through recalling the power acts of God. Stephen punctuated his sermon with the stories of Israel's miraculous emancipation from Pharaoh's oppression. He also saw in Moses the release of God's power through his own acts of obedience. This recollection built courage and faith in his own heart. He could face the angry crowd and wear the very countenance of an angel—the potential power of historical awareness.

Building faith is never easy. Worshipers feel the toil of weekly labor. For many of them, life has taken its toll. The story of Stephen will enlarge their faith and strengthen their courage.

Your preaching will be with great power if you faithfully tell the story of the power acts of God.

IT DRAWS ITS URGENCY FROM MAN'S PERSISTENT DENIAL.

Why do we keep preaching the same basic message to the same audience? At what point do we say, "They have heard.

***We had hoped to
hear a thunderclap
from Sinai, but
instead we had to
settle for a whimper
from the top of a
preacher's lazy
mind.***

Why tell them again?"

No! Preaching is by design an act of repetition. It must be so. Man's heart is hard, his ears slow to hear, and his will bent against God. Only by the persistent, faithful, and empowered proclamation of God's Word can the unbelief and delusions of the human heart be exposed and authentic faith birthed.

This awareness impresses on the preacher the urgency of his task. Stephen related the sad story: "You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 7:51). It is the crying need of the crowd that drives the preacher faithfully to proclaim his message—be it Stephen or us.

How many times did you hear the gospel before you embraced its wonderful message? How many times since have you resisted the message of full surrender and opted for half-hearted obedience? Your own personal reflections will stir within you a sense of urgency as you confront your listeners with their tendency to resist the word of truth.

*Where did we ever get
the idea that what we
think and say is so
important that we can
bypass the great story
of God's dealings with
His people and hurry
on instead to say only
what we have on our
own minds?*

IT FINDS ITS MESSAGE ROOTED IN HOPE.

God's message is consistently and gloriously characterized by hope. Listen to the pronouncements of the prophets. While they denounced sin in the strongest terms, upbraided the disobedient for their hardness of heart, and called always for the deepest repentance and contrition of heart, they also consistently concluded with the message of hope.

Amazingly, Stephen's message of hope was dynamically lived out before his tormentors. What may not have been verbalized was now powerfully exhibited. And standing by was a young man named Saul. The impact on him would have been

irresistibly profound.

Powerful preaching will always point to hope. It is God's way. And your people will gladly receive it. ~

Richard L. Dresselhaus, D.Min., is pastor of First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.



Shepherds

THIS ARTICLE IS AN OVERVIEW of the New Testament concept of the spiritual shepherd as it relates to Jesus and leaders of the Church. Shepherds are common figures in Scripture, beginning with Abel (Genesis 4:2). It is not surprising, therefore, that the Old Testament often portrays God as a Shepherd (e.g., Psalms 23: 1; 80: 1; Isaiah 40: 11; Jeremiah 31: 10; Ezekiel 34: 11-13) and the leaders of His people as shepherds (Ezekiel 34). It is axiomatic that the primary function of the shepherd is to look after the welfare of the flock and to lead it.

JESUS AS THE CONSUMMATE SHEPHERD

In New Testament times, shepherds were not highly regarded. Therefore, it is surprising that the angelic announcement of Jesus' birth was made to lowly shepherds (Luke 2:8-11). But it was appropriate since the Messiah, the Son of David (the shepherd-king), was born in Bethlehem, the City of the David (see Ezekiel 34:23). Almost unnoticeable in the nativity accounts is a portrayal of Jesus as Shepherd. In Matthew's quotation from Micah 5, Jesus is called the one "who will

~:e~::~l~ *(poimaino)*

Israel" (2:6*).

At the first and second advent Jesus is portrayed as Shepherd. The same verb (*poimainiJ*) occurs three times in the Book of Revelation in relation to Him. Paradoxically, the Lamb "shall be their shepherd [literally, 'shall shepherd them'], and shall guide them to springs of the water of life" (7: 17). He will "rule [literally, 'shepherd'] all the nations with a rod of iron" (12:5; 19: 15). This last concept applies as well to overcomers (2:26,27).

Jesus portrayed himself as the Good Shepherd (*ho poimen ho kalas-John*

10:11,14) who gives His life for the sheep. In this connection He may also be called the Smitten Shepherd (Matthew 26:31; Cf., Zechariah 13:7). In a unique sense, of course, only Jesus gave His life for the sheep. Yet in a broader sense it suggests that any spiritual shepherd ought to be willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the flock.

BY

ANTHONY D. PALMA

Jesus is further called the Great --! (*megas*) Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20) and the One Shepherd (John 10:16; cf., Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24). Peter called him the Chief Shepherd (*archipoimen-I* Peter 5:4); one writer suggests the translation "Master-Shepherd."

An unusual combination of terms refers to Jesus as "the Shepherd and Guardian *rho poimen kai episkopos*" of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). The phrase could be translated Guardian-Shepherd. The word *episkopos* is often rendered bishop or overseer. J.N.D. Kelly, in his commentary on 1 Peter, suggests that the *episkopos* is "one who inspects, watches over, protects." This pair of terms has special significance when applied to leaders in the church. Both Paul and Peter emphasized the guarding/overseeing aspect of the ministry.

PAUL AND SHEPHERDS

In the list of leadership gifts which the ascended Christ gave to the Church, Paul spoke of "pastors and teachers [*taus poimenas kai didaskalous*]" (Ephesians 4:11). Scholars will continue to debate whether Paul was speaking of two distinct callings or whether he meant something like "teacher-pastors." Certainly one of the chief duties of a pastor is to nurture and feed the flock by teaching or expounding the Word of God. This is why a distinguishing professional qualification of an elder is that he be "able to teach [*didaktikos*]" (1 Timothy 3:2; 2

Timothy 2:24). A number of authorities render the Greek word as "skillful in teaching," "a skilled teacher," "apt at teaching," and "competent to teach."

Ephesians 4:11 is the only New Testament passage where such a person is designated by the Greek word for shepherd (*poimen*), though it is generally agreed that this designation is interchangeable with bishop/overseer (*episkopos*) and elder (*presbuteros*).

All three concepts are brought together in the account of Paul's address at Melitus to the Ephesian men. They are called elders (Acts 20:17). Paul told them that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers of the flock, which they were to shepherd (verse 28). It is also worth noting that in this verse Paul exhorted these men to "be on guard.. for all the flock." This reminds us of Peter's designation of Jesus as the Shepherd and Guardian/Bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2:25).

PETER AND SHEPHERDS

Jesus' interchange with Peter (recorded in John 21:15-17) is worthy of considerable study. However, I will deal only with the elements related directly to the topic. Jesus commanded Peter both to feed/tend (*bosko-verses* 15,17) and to shepherd (*poimaino-verse* 16) the flock. The objects of his care are called both the Lord's lambs (*arnia-verse* 15) and His sheep (*probata-verses* 16,17). In my judgment the variations in the verbs and the nouns are stylistic; I do not think Jesus meant for Peter or for us to determine some profound differences in each pair of words. The thrust of the message is clear: Peter's responsibility was to promote the welfare of all the Lord's flock.

Peter surely had this incident in mind when he exhorted "the elders among you" to "shepherd [*fpoimaino*] the flock of God," calling upon them to do it voluntarily with eagerness, not for sordid

gain and not "lording it over" the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3). Some of the best manuscripts include (in verse 2) the participle *episkopoun,tes* a verb form of *episkopos*, which may be translated "exercising the oversight" (NRSV), "serving as overseers" (NKJV,NIV). This may be contrasted with ungodly leaders who, according to Jude, are men "caring for [*fpoimaino*] themselves" (verse 12), who will come under divine judgment. In contrast,

Peter pointed to the "Chief Shepherd" who will reward His faithful under-shepherds (1 Peter 5:4). ~

**Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.*

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ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

PRIORITIES

FOR THE PARSONAGE

BY RICHARD D. DOBBINS

NO PROFESSIONAL person experiences more people-produced stress than the pastor. Therefore, staying spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy in the ministry is becoming more and more challenging. To meet it successfully the minister must have well-defined priorities and choose to be disciplined by them.

A review of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4 provides some broad principles for this task. Together they suggest the following general priorities for the minister:

1. personal commitment to Christ;
2. commitment to your spouse;
3. commitment to your children;
4. commitment to the body of Christ and the institutional church.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

Your relationship with God is the only one that goes with you from here to eternity. That's why He must be first in your life. Your personal commitment to Christ is also the most vital resource of your life. You will face no greater challenge to your spiritual health and wholeness than maintaining that commitment through the spiritual discipline of a daily devotional life. From working with hundreds of troubled ministry couples at Emerge, we have learned that the discipline of a regular personal devotional life is the weakest point in the ministry.

The enemy tries to get the minister to confuse his work for God with his walk with God. Because he reads the Bible for sermon material and prays for others in his work, the minister can easily deceive himself into believing that these times should be adequate to care for his personal spiritual health.

However, time spent studying the Bible for sermons and praying in one's role as a minister should not be considered part of his/her devotional life. In addition to the times which are part of your work life, you should have a daily devotional life.

There is no necessary correlation between a minister's work and his walk. You can be a success in your work and a failure in your walk. God is more concerned with your walk than He is with your work. Nevertheless, the tendency among ministers is to focus on their work and to neglect their walk.

What happens when the minister is overextended and stressed out? Too often the tired minister doesn't wait on the Lord for renewal and strength after a stressful day. All day he wrestles with sermon ideas, visiting parishioners who are ill or dying, tending to church finance, talking to disgruntled people, resolving personality clashes among board and

church committee members; then he goes home. It is easy to get hypnotized by television instead of spending time in prayer, reflection, or meditation. He rationalizes, "I don't have the energy to think right now. I'm tired. I need an escape." He falls asleep in his favorite chair with the remote control in his hand.

Television never rejuvenates. Only when we wait on the Lord is our strength renewed (Isaiah 40:31). Our relationship with God is the major energy-producing relationship of life. We can protect it and keep our prayer life fresh by involving a variety of forms of prayer.

In *petitionary prayer*, resist the temptation to focus on your needs. Instead, focus on those things Jesus addressed in His prayers so that when the Father listens to you praying, He hears an echo of what He hears when His Son prays. Study His prayers that are recorded in the New Testament and model your own petitionary prayers after them. This is praying "in the name of Jesus" at the highest level.

Have times of *intercessory prayer*. This form of prayer is especially appropriate when we don't know how to pray about something that troubles us. In intercessory prayer the Holy Spirit makes intercession through us according to God's will (Romans 8:27).

Have times of *unceasing prayer* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This is one of the most exciting parts of the prayer life—that informal all-day-long God consciousness that finds you thinking about the Lord and talking to Him from task to task throughout the day. It is openness to constant communication with God.

Also, there is *singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*. Did you ever try to communicate with God that way and stay depressed? Paul and Silas sang in spite of

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God with his
walk with
God.*

**Your
relationships-
with God,
your spouse,
your children,
your friends,
and all those
you touch in
the body of
Christ-are the
only fragments
of this life that
go with you
into eternity.**

their circumstances (Acts 16:16-25).

The more you look, the more ways you will find to communicate with God throughout the day. Prayer is so much more than just asking God to provide for your needs and wants—it's an attitude that needs to be a permanent part of your life.

Read the Bible devotionally every day apart from the time you spend preparing for various ministries of the Word. Discover the pleasure of hiding His Word in your heart—just for you. Maybe you'll want to share your insights later in a message, but regularly spend time seeking out what God would say just to you, just for you.

Keep your devotional Bible reading fresh. Study Bible families. Notice their character traits. Follow topical studies through Scripture. Do word studies from Hebrew and Greek. Try pursuing the great doctrines of Christianity through Scripture.

COMMITMENT TO YOUR MATE

The second priority of your life is your marriage. Your relationship with your mate is to be the longest-lasting relationship of your life.

Your relationships with God and your mate sustain both of you through the child-bearing, child-rearing, and child-launching years of life. Therefore, your marriage needs and deserves great care. In fact, your relationships with God and your spouse are the only two energy-producing relationships of your life. All others, including those with your children, are energy-demanding relationships.

Devote yourself to your spouse. Model healthy Christian marriage for your parishioners. Nothing will bring more credibility to your message than modeling an obviously thriving marriage.

If you're not having prayer together as a couple, find a convenient time to start. Make your daily prayer with your spouse a time of husband to wife because you love her and you're her spiritual leader, not one of pastor to parishioner.

If you have preschool or school-age children in the home, or if your wife works even part-time outside the home or both, be considerate of the demands on her time. Don't expect her to play the piano, lead the choir,

work in the nursery, and run the women's group. Remember that she's still your ministry partner in spirit, and when her other obligations diminish, she'll enjoy more involvement in public ministry. Until then, don't burden her with guilt because she can't be all things to all people.

Give your wife the freedom to keep your preschool children on whatever schedule works best for them, even if it means she can't be in every service during a revival. She will appreciate your consideration, and your children will see the church as a place where they go to learn about a God who loves them and is sensitive to their needs.

Your wife will still be your wife when you are too old to pastor, and you will be her husband when the children are no longer in the home. Therefore, make sure that only God comes before your wife in your priorities.

The enemy likes nothing better than warfare in the parsonage. With that he can paralyze whole congregations. Parsonage couples would be better off if they attached less stigma to getting help for their troubled marriages. Problems are much easier managed by seeking help for them when they are still small.

Take the time and invest the energy necessary to make yours a good marriage. Identify any strongholds of the enemy. Don't let him use the work of the church to lure you away from your wife and breed resentment in her. Remember, 6 months after you leave your present pastorate, few of the people there will even think of you. But your wife will still be your wife, and your children will still be your children. Healthy relationships with God, your mate, and your children will be your primary sources of strength through all the changes the future brings. Whatever it takes, shore them up now.

COMMITMENT TO YOUR CHILDREN

You don't have to be a perfect parent, just good enough. Paul admonished the Ephesians, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (6:4, NASB).

See that their spiritual, physical, emotional, and social needs (and a reasonable num-

ber of their wants) are met. But never let them create a wedge between you and your spouse.

As a representative of God to your children, have appropriate times of prayer with them. Be a shepherd, not lording it over them, but be an example (see 1 Peter 5:2,3). As a father, the pastor is to depend more on his affectionate management of his children than pulling rank over them as the preacher.

Institute meaningful religious rituals in your family life. Read the Christmas story from the Bible to your family sometime during the holidays. Consider serving Easter Com-munion to your family and find an appropriate time to read them the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Read a short passage from Psalms before Thanksgiving dinner.

Develop meaningful parting and reentry rituals. Let your children see that in your family, before members part for the day, you touch and perhaps kiss each other, and you say to each other, "I love you." Why? Because modeling is the most powerful form of teaching.

COMMITMENT TO THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

The good news of the gospel is that our future can always be different from and better than our past, regardless of how we've failed. That future is still affected by our past, but it can be better. Ask God to help you identify the areas of your personal and professional life that need to be strengthened and give you unique, creative ways to do those repairs. Trust Him to work restoratively in the hearts and lives of those you love.

Why is this so important? Your relationships-with God, your spouse, your children, your friends, and all those you touch in the body of Christ-are the only fragments of this life that go with you into eternity (Matthew 6:20).

In considering your commitment to the body of Christ through the institutional church, you need a clear understanding of the spiritual role you are to fill. People look to their minister as an authority figure-a representative of God. Thus their relationship with the minister is influenced by memories from their childhood. In becoming an appro-

priate authority figure in the church, think about the qualities that make a good earthly father. Then ask God to help you be that kind of spiritual father to your spiritual children.

Some people tend to make gods out of their ministers, but don't take it too seriously. Humble yourself by remembering the symbolism of the pulpit every time you step into it to deliver the Word of God. That assemblage of wood and decorative metals remind that the Scriptures need no man to uphold them; they stand on their own. Likewise, God's church can stand without anyone of us. It's God's church, not ours; it's His body, not ours.

One second after you die you'll still live on in the hearts of people in whom you've invested a part of yourself. Accept that right up front and prioritize your life according to Scripture.

Don't let the enemy use the urgency of energy-demanding tasks and relationships to deprive you of the time and energy you need to invest in the major energy-producing relationships of life.

When you make these priorities from His Word the governing factors of your life, you will have a healthier and more productive spiritual life, a healthier family life, and more Kingdom impact on your community as people seek for their own lives what you've obviously found in yours. ~



Richard D. Dobbins, Ph.D., is the founder/director of Emerge Ministries, Inc., Akron, Ohio, and the assistant superintendent of the Ohio District.

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And Your Daughters Shall Prophesy

BY PEGGY MUSGROVE

The Spirit's outpouring was to be universal, crossing gender and age barriers as well as the layers of socioeconomic status.

"SQUARE CIRCLES," "dry water," and "women ministers." What do these terms have in common? Some would conclude immediately that these are sets of mutually exclusive expressions.

Circles by definition are round and, therefore, cannot be square. The substantive characteristic of water is wetness; it cannot be dry. However, the propriety of the next term has been debated through church history. Some have taken the position that only men are to be ministers; therefore, the term "women ministers" is a contradiction the same as "square circles" or "dry water."

Others believe God's call is not gender-specific.

The Assemblies of God position as stated in *Minutes-The General Council of the Assemblies of God* (1993, page 156) is: "The Scriptures plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5)."

This article will review this position biblically, historically, and presently and note the relationship of women in ministry to revival in the church.

Joel first proclaimed it, and Peter reiterated it on the Day of Pentecost—women would be included in the outpouring of the Spirit in the last days. From our perspective on this side of Pentecost we can miss the impact of Joel's prophecy: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (Joel 2:28,29).

The Spirit's outpouring was to be universal, crossing gender and age barriers as well as the layers of socioeconomic status. All humanity would be eligible to receive the Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming the Word of God.

Did it happen as Joel and Peter predicted? The biblical record confirms the prophecy. Women as well as men were present at Pentecost and received that first infilling of the Spirit.

Later we meet Philip the evangelist's daughters, who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8,9). Writing to the Corinthians, Paul discussed the appropriate decorum for women who prophesy and pray publicly, not the right to do so (1 Corinthians 11:5). Similar evidence can be found of the Spirit's crossing other social barriers. The Spirit truly was poured out upon all flesh.

From this dynamic beginning we see women involved in various ministries in the Book of Acts. Dorcas was known for her good works. Mary opened her home for prayer. Priscilla became a skilled teacher of the Word. Ministry had both a spiritual and a practical side.

What happened to the involvement of women through church history? A few records are found of women who made significant contributions. Paula was one. She was a wealthy Roman woman contemporary of Jerome who used her resources for furthering the gospel. She started convents in which the hand-copying of the Scriptures was begun, thus preserving God's Word until the invention of the printing press. Paula often discussed with Jerome his translations of Scripture, advising and critiquing his work. In appreciation, Jerome dedicated many of

his translations to her and her daughter Eustochium.

Of women's ministry he wrote: "There are people who take offense at seeing your names at the beginning of my works. These people do not know that while Barak trembled, Deborah saved Israel; that Esther delivered from supreme peril the children of God. I passed over in silence Anna and Elizabeth and all other holy women of the gospel, but humble stars compared with the luminary, Mary. Is it not to women that our Lord appeared after His resurrection? Yes, and the men could then blush for not having sought what women had found."

During the Middle Ages only certain options were available to women. Arranged marriages or consignment to a convent were the usual choices. One remarkable woman who lived in this era resisted these choices to follow Christ in her own way. Known as Catherine of Siena, she lived a Christian life in the times of violence and chaos of the 14th century.

Caroline T. Marshall, in an article in *Christian History*, states: "Catherine believed it was her duty to reform the church; to evangelize; to comfort the sick, poor, and condemned. She was an activist in an age when a woman's religious vocation was supposed to be confined apart from the world. Warmed by divine love from her intimate experience of God, Catherine proclaimed a personal faith in Jesus Christ that touches contemporary Christians with its conviction and immediacy."

Catherine learned to write and recorded her theology in *The Dialogue*: "... soul rises up, restless with tremendous desire for God's honor and the salvation of souls. She has for some time exercised herself in virtue and has become accustomed to dwelling in the cell of self-knowledge in order to know better God's goodness toward her, since upon knowledge follows love. And loving, she seeks to pursue truth and clothe herself in it."

Catherine of Siena appears to have been one of those women upon whom the Spirit of God was outpoured as Joel prophesied.

In our own country in the 19th century, some women began to feel the stirring of God's Spirit to proclaim the gospel publicly. Antoinette Brown, a student at Oberlin

College in Ohio where Charles Finney taught theology, sought a degree in theology and was told she was upsetting the moral order of the universe. Finney, however, let her participate fully in class and lead class devotions. After much opposition, she became the first woman ordained by a recognized denomination in the United States.

Phoebe Palmer, a contemporary of Antoinette Brown, has been called the "Mother of the Holiness Movement." Palmer, also influenced by Finney, traveled extensively with her husband, Dr. Walter Palmer, conducting revivals. Nancy A. Hardesty writes in *Great Women of the Christian Faith*, "Her [Palmer's] defense of women's ministry was only the first of many in the holiness-Pentecostal tradition which led such churches to ordain women more than 50 years before more mainline denominations began to do so."

On this topic, Palmer wrote: "It is also a significant fact that to the degree denominations who have once favored the practice [of women in ministry] lose the freshness of their zeal...and as ancient Israel yield to a desire to be like surrounding communities, in a corresponding ratio are the labors of females discountenanced."

A.J. Gordon made a similar observation: "In every great spiritual awakening in the history of Protestantism, the impulse for women to pray and witness in the public assembly has been irrepressible." If the observations of Gordon and Palmer are correct, the spiritual temperature of the church is indicated by the involvement of women in ministry.

Taking these observations as a measurement, information from the Assemblies of God statistician should interest us. The most current statistics show approximately 15 percent of our ministers are women. This number has varied less than 2 percent for the past 18 years. The same statistics show the average age for male ordained ministers is 52.5, which is significantly lower than the average age of female ordained ministers, 66.4. Of these women, 64 percent are above age 50. If this

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trend continues, the percentage of female ministers may sharply decline in a very few years unless God permits these women to have unusual longevity.

Many women were present at the Assemblies of God founding meeting in 1914. Our early history includes women such as Alice Reynolds Flower, Carrie Judd Montgomery, Zelma Argue, Dollie Simms, and others who were involved in evangelism. Many churches were started by women who felt the call of God to be involved in active ministry. Sometimes we have assumed the reason women were involved in ministry was that men were not available. When men took leadership, women were not needed. Palmer and Gordon would assume, rather, that the presence or absence of women in ministry is a means of measuring spiritual intensity.

Our leadership has issued a call for revival and a time of renewal. How will we know when revival comes? The term is somewhat nebulous because revival cannot be defined in measurable terms. Some indicators, however, are certainly evident in terms of people coming to Christ and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Other indicators are a revitalization of the body of Christ and a renewed hunger for the Word and worship.

Could another indicator be a resurgence of women actively involved in proclamation ministry as the Spirit is outpoured as prophesied by Joel so that both "sons and daughters will prophesy"? I trust it will happen.

Seen any "square circles" lately? Or drunk any "dry water"? I doubt that you will. But my prayer is the revival we are seeking will thrust many women into active ministry so no one will ever assume again that "women ministers" is a contradiction of terms. ~

Peggy Musgrove is Women's Ministries secretary, Springfield, Missouri.

Sermon Study and Preparation

A NECESSARY PRIORITY

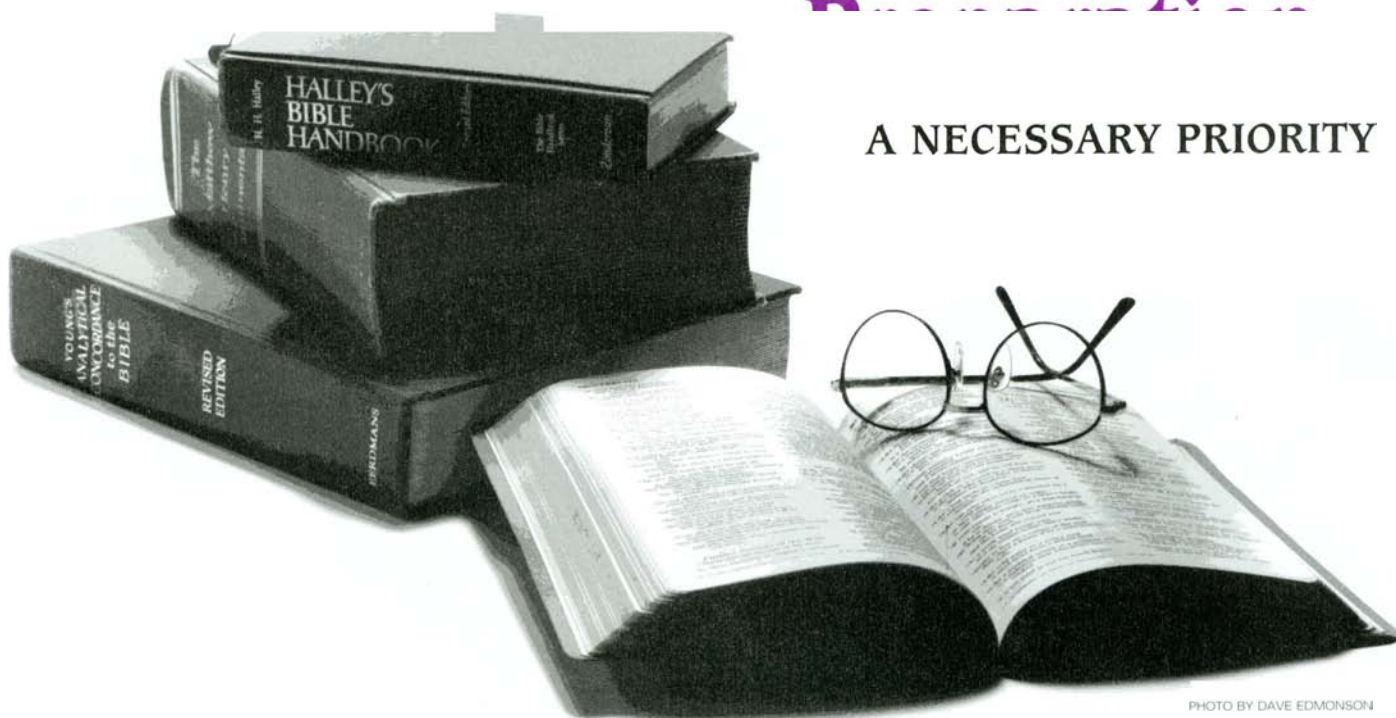


PHOTO BY DAVE EDMONSON

After the service had ended, and the pastor was at the door to greet his parishioners. One of them, an elderly woman who was noted for speaking her mind, said, "Pastor, I didn't appreciate your message this morning. First of all, you read your sermon. Second, you didn't read it well. And third, it wasn't worth reading!"

No preacher wants to hear that. But if the truth were known, many parishioners might like to say the same thing.

What is the key to preaching effective sermons that connect with the listener? Many factors are important when it comes to the preaching of God's Word. While prayer and personal piety are indispensable priorities in the preacher's life, one priority missing in preaching more than any other is preparation. Jay Adams writes:

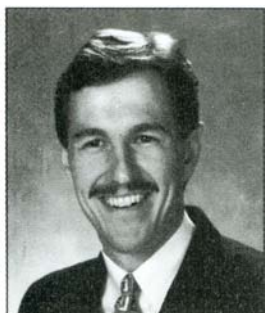
"I have had the opportunity to hear much preaching over the last few years—some very good, some mediocre, most very bad. What is the problem with preaching? ...I am con-

vinced that the basic reason for poor preaching is the failure to spend adequate time and energy in preparation. Many preachers—perhaps most simply—don't work long enough on their sermons."*

Fruitful preaching demands great effort. We have been entrusted with the message of heaven. The question is, how can we best prepare to present it? I do not write as one who has arrived, for the art of sermon preparation is a lifelong pursuit; yet I have found several things extremely helpful in personal study and preparation.

DEVELOPING A PREACHING PLAN

One of the most challenging tasks for the preacher is deciding what to preach. Too often precious time that could have been spent studying a passage is wasted in trying to think up the topic. The result is a message that is usually long on clichés and low on content. Thus it is important to ask God prayerfully to lead you in advance to what He



BY JOHN LINDELL

wants you to preach. The same Holy Spirit who speaks to your heart on Saturday can speak to your heart on Monday.

In fact, one of the best ways to develop a preaching plan is to become involved in preaching a series. I am presently involved in three series: the Ten Commandments on Sunday morning, the life of Abraham on Sunday evening, and the Book of Revelation on Wednesday evening.

Here are some of the advantages of such an arrangement:

1. It provides an opportunity to make sure the congregation is getting a balanced diet of God's Word.
2. It relieves the necessity to start from scratch each week in sermon preparation.
3. It helps the staff coordinate music and other parts of the church program.
4. By example it teaches the people the basic principles of how to study God's Word systematically for themselves.
5. It enables me to spend more time in actual sermon preparation, for I know the passage I will be preaching each week.
6. It frees me from the burden of constantly being creative or clever in my presentation and, instead, lets solid content carry the message.

Of course, having a plan does not mean there is no flexibility in preaching. A special event or a redirection from the Lord may supersede the series.

DECIDING THE PREACHER'S PRIORITIES

Adequate sermon preparation takes time—no shortcuts. Obviously, with maturity in ministry a person becomes more skilled in using various study helps that enable digging deeper in a shorter time. Even so, one still needs

to study diligently. I find that it takes a minimum of 6 to 8 hours' preparation for each message.

The preacher must decide priorities in ministry. The apostles said, "We will... give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4, NIV). Pastors have many things to do, but they must arrange them around the priorities of prayer and preparation for ministry. I use a system of planned neglect: I plan to neglect everything else until my study is done. I set aside Tuesday morning and Sunday afternoon to prepare for my Sunday evening message. I set aside Wednesday to prepare for the Wednesday evening message. And I set aside Friday morning, part of the afternoon, and all day Saturday if necessary to prepare for the Sunday morning message. During those times, I am only available for emergencies.

In my current pastorate I have secretaries and staff to help shield me from the details of church administration that would rob me of my study time. Many pastors do not have that luxury. However, even in the early years of my ministry and while planting a church, my commitment to studying the Word has never changed. I know the time spent preparing messages will result in the maturing and equipping of people to help share the load of ministry.

DISCERNING THE PASSAGE'S PURPOSE

It is not enough to spend time studying; one must know how to work in productive study of God's Word. Good study skills are the foundation upon which good messages are built. I follow this method in my study:

1. READ THE SCRIPTURES FIRST.

Because many studies involve books of

Good study skills are the foundation upon which good messages are built.

the New Testament, I always begin by reading the whole book. This helps me understand the flow and the theme of the book or a Sible character's life. To grasp all that is being said, it helps to read the book through several times.

Even if I am involved in a topical study, early in the week I try to read verses on that topic before I actually get into the preparation. Once I begin concentrating on the text, it dominates my thinking, my reading, and even influences my conversation. As the week advances, thoughts regarding the passage I will be preaching on begin to crystallize in my mind.

2. FIND THE THEME.

As I think about the Scriptures, I ask myself, "What is the primary meaning of the passage? What is God saying to me? And what is He saying to the church?" Everything else in the study time and the sermon should build toward these thoughts.

3. ORGANIZE THE PASSAGE.

After identifying the main point, I look for subpoints or principles that stand out in the passage. I jot down different thoughts or principles expressed in the passage and look for a common thread or theme as I write them.

REFERENCE RESOURCES

Here are some of the reference resources I use regularly:

Keil-Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, various dates.
John Phillips, *The Exploring Series*, Loizeaux Brothers, Inc. (originally Moody Press, 1980).
John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Moody Press.
Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Inter-Varsity Press, 1967.
Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Merrill C. Tenney, ed., 1976.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985.
The New International Commentary of the New Testament, Wm. B. Eerdmans.
B.H. Carroll, *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, Baker Book House.
Alexander Whyte, *Bible Characters from the Old Testament and the New Testament*, Zondervan, 1967.

4. EXAMINE RESOURCES THAT DEAL WITH THE SUBJECT OR TEXT.

Before creating a sermon outline, I use study tools that will help me focus my thoughts and work through any difficulties encountered in the text. At this point it is useful to see what other people have written or preached on the subject. If I find that someone has written something quotable, I write it down for future use in the sermon preparation process.

5. CREATE AN OUTLINE.

Rarely does an outline just fall together. Typically, I write down the various points of the passage and often restate them in several ways. This helps me focus my thoughts and gives the message a better flow.

People sometimes ask why I favor alliteration in my sermons or messages with specific points. This had not been my practice in the past. I noticed, however, that when people heard other preachers use that style, several things took place: (1) People automatically took notes on the sermon. (2) People were more attentive overall. (3) Though not able to recall each point of the message, people were able to remember the basic point of the sermon. Since implementing that device in preaching, I have noted the same results.

6. SELECT THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

After the outline has been created, add illustrations. When it comes to illustrations, we often think in terms of stories. Within our culture, however, illustrations can be found in a variety of places: Scripture, personal experience, newspapers and news magazines, cartoons, history, and inspirational or motivational books.

7. WRITE THE MESSAGE.

Some like to preach from an outline while others like to preach from a manuscript. The final style chosen is a matter of personal preference. but the fact that you spent time studying and searching out God's divine truth will not be lost on your congregation—they will see and sense the difference.

Studying God's Word and getting God's message is hard work. Preachers worry about having to compete with Madison Avenue and the multitude of media options that reach for the ears of our society. While we expend our energy seeking ways to get people's attention, the attention span will be short-lived if, when they do listen, we have nothing to say. We must be prepared.

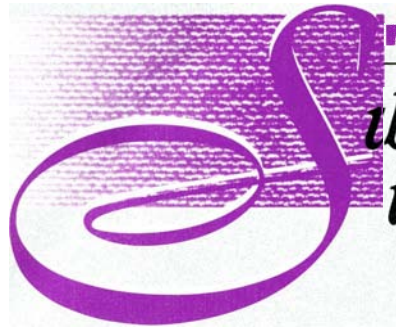
The message has come to us in the form of 66 books which-when accurately interpreted, carefully studied, and powerfully

preached-will be used by the Holy Spirit to meet needs, change lives, and build the Kingdom. ~

**Jay Adams, "Editorial: Good Preaching Is Hard Work," The Journal of Pastoral Practice, 4, NO.2 (1980): 1.*

John Lindell is senior pastor of James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

***The same
Holy Spirit
who speaks
to your heart
on Saturday
can speak to
your heart
on Monday.***



Subtle Termites in Ministerial Marriages

BY WAYDE GOODALL

We are not responsible for people's behavior; we are only responsible to do our best with the gifts God has given us.

AFTER OVER 20 YEARS in full-time ministry, I often think about the many things I did not learn in Bible college concerning ministry. I appreciate the education I received in one of our fine schools, and the Christian impact it had on my life will last a lifetime.

Here I am referring to the issues we can't find in a textbook—the big and little surprises that hit us in the unique occupation called the ministry.

One such issue is marriage. Statistics for ministers getting divorced is less than secular divorce statistics; however, one of the reasons for this is not necessarily better marriages for those in the ministry, but some stay married because they fear losing their occupation or other repercussions. In other words, "We had better stay married lest we starve because of no job." Needless to say, people who are married for this reason do not have happy home lives.

We in the ministry ought to have great marriages. If we do not, then for the sake of each other, the Lord's will, and the church, we should find a way to fix our marriages. It should be top priority.

Subtle termites try to eat away at the marriage. Some are common to the preacher's home and will destroy the strength of the marriage if we let them. I'll list a few of the most common ones:

1. THE CHURCH BECOMES THE CENTRAL FOCUS (SOMETIMES THE ONLY FOCUS).

Most ministers work very hard at what they do. They are on call 24 hours a day and try to be prepared to meet the needs

of the people they serve. However, if the church becomes the central focus of all we do, our lives get out of balance, and we create problems in our families and personal lives. The challenge is to control our time. If we don't, someone else will. Our order of priority should be:

1. our relationship with God,
2. our relationship with our family, and
3. the ministry to which God has called us.

2. THE TERMITE OF UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

Early in my ministry I thought I needed to do everything that was asked of me, whether I had the ability or not. I thought I had to save every marriage, take everyone's depression away, heal every illness, and fix every problem. These desires were good, but I soon found that only God could do all I was requiring of myself.

We are not responsible for people's behavior; we are only responsible to do our best with the gifts God has given us. Unrealistic expectations will eat away at any marriage.

3. THE TERMITE OF CRITICISMS FROM CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS.

We all face criticism from time to time. The key is not to let it get to us or to our relationships with our spouses. When criticized we can only respond in two ways. If our critics are correct, we need to repent, ask forgiveness, and do the right thing. If they are wrong, then we must keep their

comments out of our spirits and attitudes and keep pressing on in the work God has called us to. Nothing is worth letting it injure our Christian calling or marriage.

4. THE TERMITE OF BUYING EXCLUSIVELY FROM CHURCH MERCHANTS.

We must use caution in our expectations that just because we are in the ministry we deserve discounts from those we serve. On the other hand, be aware that just because there is a church merchant who sells a product we desire, that does not mean we will get the best price or service from him. Sometimes people take advantage of ministers because of their occupation; other times ministers take advantage of people because they think

they deserve it. In all dealings we need to set an above-reproach example.

5. THE TERMITE OF LATE-NIGHT MEETINGS.

It doesn't take long to realize that late-night meetings can cause problems in the minister's family life. We must learn to block family nights off on our schedules—a night for spouse dating, children's school and sporting events, recreation, activities with close friends, and personal projects.

6. THE TERMITE OF UNRESOLVED STRESS.

Stress that we cannot manage will eventually affect the marriage. We must learn proper ways to deal with the unique stresses in the ministry. Observe seasoned

*Our
possessions
are not on
earth;
besides our
salvation,
our families
are the most
precious
possessions
we have.*



The Preacher's Wife

*There is one person in our church
Who knows our preacher's life,
Who wept and smiled and prayed
with him.*

And that's the preacher's wife.

*The crowd has seen him in his strength,
When wielding God's sharp sword.
As underneath God's banner folds
He faced the devil's horde.*

*But deep within her heart she knows
That scarce an hour before
She helped him pray the glory down
Behind the closet door.*

*She's heard him groaning in his soul,
When bitter raged the strife,
As, hand in hand, she knelt with him—
For she's the preacher's wife!*

*You tell your tales if prophets brave
Who marched across the world
And changed the course of history
By burning words they hurled.*

*And I will tell you back if each
Some woman lived her life;
Who wept with him and smiled
with him—
She was the preacher's wife!*

-Author unknown



ministers who have found good ways to handle stress. It is statistically true that ministers who come from ministers' families handle ministerial stress better because of the examples their parents gave them.

7. THE TERMITE OF ECONOMIC RESTRICTIONS.

Approximately two-thirds of Assemblies of God pastors have churches with fewer than 100. Many of them have economic restrictions. Some have secular jobs to make ends meet.

Economic restrictions can injure

our families if not carefully guarded. No doubt, the Lord wants the needs of our families to be taken care of—not all the wants but the needs. The head of the house has a responsibility to provide for the family; however, the call to ministry includes sacrifice on our part for some of the things we want. Our possessions are not on earth; besides our salvation, our families are the most precious possessions we have.

8. WOMEN'S IMAGE OF THE PASTOR.

It is not unusual for women in the

congregation to admire—or more than admire—the pastor. We must be cautious about this issue and listen to our spouses who may be more sensitive to someone who has improper feelings. (See sidebar.)

9. THE TERMITE OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

If ministers are not careful, discouragement can be a crippling problem to ministry and marriage. Learn how to deal with this common companion of ministry. Here are some suggestions.

- Expect to have dark days. Moses, David, and Paul did.

FOLLOWING ARE SOME COMMONSENSE GUIDELINES ON HOW TO PROTECT YOUR MINISTRY AND MARRIAGE:

- Do not counsel someone of the opposite sex without another person present, preferably your spouse. Keep the office door open. Use same-sex people to counsel.
- Never go anywhere alone with an unrelated member of the opposite sex. An accusation is sometimes as dangerous as the truth. Both can be deadly to your ministry.
- Don't allow lingering eye contact. Bonding begins here.
- Never touch a person of the opposite sex if you are alone. Avoid a lingering touch in public.
- Don't meet a person of the opposite sex outside regular business hours when unaccompanied. Don't visit a home alone.
- Never disclose private details about your life or marriage.
- Don't keep appreciation notes from the opposite sex to read when life gets tough. Have your spouse write a few, so your thoughts go to them for comfort, not another.
- When a person of the opposite sex flirts with you, stop her immediately. Don't flirt with danger because you enjoy her admiration.
- Establish an accountability group of two or three peers. Share honestly any questionable behavior and take their counsel.
- Talk to your spouse intimately several times a week.
- Maintain an active physical relationship with your spouse (1 Corinthians 7).



WHEN PASTOR ELMO SLOCOMB FINALLY DECIDED TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH HIS SON YOU COULD TELL IT HAD BEEN A WHILE SINCE THE TWO HAD PLAYED.

- Make no important decisions during this time.
 - Talk things over with a good friend.
 - Pray for strength and grace.
 - Take a good hike.
- ~ Be patient with yourself, for "this, too, will pass."
- . Be aware of self-pity.
- Be alert of taking it out on others.

10.THE TERMITE OF TRIALS.

Life is full of trials. Not only do ministers deal with their own trials but those of the people they serve. This constant wave of negative news can get to ministers, and they in turn often take it home. Ministers must learn to find ways not to let trials bring constant bad pressure on the marriage.

Marriage is a precious gift from

God and should be protected and guarded with all the strength we can find. Don't let the termites get to you. ~

Wayde Goodall, D. Min., is executive editor of Enrichment and coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment office.

INTERVIEW WITH GLEN COLE

MINISTRY — In Pursuit of Excellence



You cannot minister out of the abundance of someone else's life or ministry.

Enrichment executive editor
Wayde Goodall talks with Glen Cole—former pastor of Capital Christian Center, Sacramento, California, former nonresident executive presbyter, and one of the most successful pastors in the Assemblies of God—concerning his experience and what he has learned about the importance of priorities in the ministry.

PASTOR COLE, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE MINISTRY?

GLEN COLE: I began right out of Bible college—January 1956. Even before that, while completing studies at Central Bible College (CBC) my wife and I pastored a small church 10 miles from Springfield. I also had the opportunity to travel with the school quartet, Revivaltime choir, and the CBC orchestra. This takes me back to 1951 following graduation from high school.

IN WHAT ROLE HAS YOUR MINISTRY CENTERED?

COLE: I began in 1956 as an associate pastor and served two churches in that capacity. I have pastored four churches during these 39 years.

YOU MUST HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT PRIORITIES DURING THIS TIME. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT LESSONS?

COLE: First of all, the minister himself sets the agenda. That agenda can be very frustrating if the individual has not evaluated where his gifts function best. For example, some youth pastors do not succeed because they do not possess a gift for ministry with youth. God does not work like the military, putting a typist in the motor pool, etc. He loves to place us where our gifts function best as He builds His kingdom; thus placement is important to God.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE WRONG PLACE?

COLE: Get out. Very few people succeed at things they do not enjoy. The youth pastor mentioned above may be destined to fill a pulpit right away or even be a church administrator. God knows. Seek His best and it will be made known. Don't try to force the round peg into a square hole.

AFTER YOU HAVE DISCOVERED YOUR COMFORT/ABILITY ZONE IN MINISTRY, WHAT COMES NEXT IN PRIORITIES?

COLE: *Commitment—commitment* to that ministry. Nothing is as frustrating to church members and church leaders as the feeling that the minister is going to jump ship at the next good opportunity.

I have a brother who served over 30 years as a missionary to Paraguay. He lived with a tribe across the Asuncion River for 12 years before he saw his first convert. That is commitment. It needs to be very high on our priority list.

Next, the desire for *excellence*. That

covers many things. Your personal life in order, your corporate life in order—your private life and your public life. How much ministry has been wasted because sloppy living and sloppy work ethics became so visible. It is very difficult being a success in ministry if you say something in public and your family laughs about it all the way home in the car. Why would they laugh? Because you talk it but don't walk it.

I have sat in too many credentials committee meetings not to believe this is a very important part of priorities. Determine, by the grace of God, to be diligent in the calling to ministry. Excellence in family relationships, excellence in community relationships, excellence in the role of a minister of God to the world.

WHAT ABOUT SOME OF THE DAILY ROUTINE IN SETTING MINISTRY PRIORITIES?

COLE: That could vary from person to person and from place to place. However, some basics should be mentioned:

- Diligence in preparation—know where you're going and be sure to get there before service time, the board meeting, or whatever it is you have to do.
- Diligence in establishing a life of devotion—you cannot minister out of the abundance of someone else's life or ministry. It must come from yours. A congregation can spot an empty vessel a football field of pews away.
- Diligence in integrity—pay your bills; be on time; do what you say you will do; don't just say things to impress people; be happy with the wife of your youth; be honest with yourself and with your heart, for out

It must come from yours. A congregation can spot an empty vessel a football field of pews away.

of it flow the issues of life.

. Diligence in fulfilling the role of ministry-caring for the flock of God, conducting weddings and funerals, being there when needed, and maintaining a happy and joyous walk with God and with His people.

IS THERE ONE WORD THAT SUMS UP ALL OF THIS?

COLE: Yes, the word is *motive*. Always examine your motives. Ask, 'I\re my motives selfish, or am I really seeking to do God's will?"

If the latter is true, your priorities

will basically remain correct. There must be a willingness to flow with the purposes of God for His church. A rigid spirit will run into great difficulty. The wind of the Spirit must blow into our spirits, examining our motives; then we can move forward with power and authority.

WHAT MINISTRY PRIORITIES HAVE YOU SET AFTER ALMOST 40 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH?

COLE: Proclamation and administration. Those are my two priorities at this

stage in my life. I must concentrate on keeping them at the highest level possible. With that desire comes constant evaluation. I should probably emphasize that evaluation is always a factor in successful ministry. Don't sit down and rest in your achievements. Press on. Climb another mountain. Cross another river. It can always be done better.

What a privilege to be a minister! ~



Legal Implications of Child Abuse

BACKGROUND-AN EPIDEMIC

Hundreds of churches have been sued in recent years as a result of the sexual molestation of minors by church workers.

Unfortunately, many church leaders continue to ignore this problem and resist implementing a preventive-maintenance program. Too often the

thinking is, *No child has ever been molested in our church, so worry?* This is a dangerous response to what one church insurance executive has called an epidemic. Doing nothing to respond to this significant risk may subject a church to punitive damages (which ordinarily are not covered by a church's liability insurance policy) and can expose board members to personal liability.

Incidents of molestation can occur in any church. Most churches are perfectly willing to hire, without any screening, anyone who expresses an interest in working in a volunteer capacity with children or youth. Churches are by nature trusting and unsuspecting institutions, and these very qualities have made them susceptible to incidents of child molestation.

A single incident of child molestation can devastate a church. The membership is outraged, parents question whether their own children have been victimized, the viability of the church's youth programs is jeopardized, and church leaders are blamed for allowing the incident to happen. Such incidents often result in massive media attention, sometimes on a national scale. Local residents associate the church with the incident of molestation. But far more tragic is the emotional trauma to the victim and the victim's family and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces.

But there is good news! *Church leaders can*

take relatively simple yet effective steps to reduce significantly the likelihood of such an incident occurring. This article is designed to alert church leaders to the seriousness of this risk but, more importantly, to help them implement a preventive-maintenance program that will reduce the risk of such incidents occurring.

As you implement a preventive-maintenance program, remember that the main objective is to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who are entrusted to your church. In seeking to accomplish this objective, you will be accomplishing another very important objective-reducing legal risk.

THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

Most of the lawsuits filed against churches for acts of child molestation have alleged that the church was legally accountable either on the basis of "negligent hiring" or "negligent supervision." The term *negligence* generally refers to conduct that creates an unreasonable risk of foreseeable harm to others. It connotes carelessness, heedlessness, inattention, or inadvertence. It is important to recognize that churches are not guarantors of the safety and well-being of children. They are not absolutely liable of every injury that occurs on their premises or in the course of their activities. Generally, they are responsible only for those injuries that result from their negligence.

Negligent hiring simply means that the church failed to act responsibly and with due care in the selection of workers (both volunteer and compensated) for positions involving the supervision or custody of minors. Victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants.

BY RICHARD R. HAMMAR

As noted above, most churches are willing to hire just about anyone who expresses an interest in working in a volunteer capacity with the youth in the church (e.g., boys or girls programs, Sunday school, children's choir, nursery, teenagers, camp). Even applicants for compensated positions are not extensively screened.

Note that a church may exercise sufficient care in the hiring of an individual but still be legally accountable for acts of molestation on the basis of *negligent supervision*. Negligent supervision means that a church did not exercise sufficient care in supervising a worker. Clearly, both theories of liability are important.

ESTABLISHING A PREVENTIVE-MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Church leaders can take several steps to screen out potential child molesters from church activities. Consider the following:

Step 1: The 6-month rule.

Churches can significantly reduce the risk of incidents of sexual molestation by adopting a policy restricting eligibility for any position involving the custody or supervision of minors to those persons *who have been members in good standing of the church for a minimum period of time (e.g., 6 months)*. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children.

Step 2: Screening forms.

Churches can significantly reduce their risk of legal liability for negligent selection (and thereby the likelihood that an incident of abuse or molestation will occur) by having every applicant for youth work (volunteer or compensated) complete a screening application. This procedure should be viewed by church leaders as essential. At a minimum, the application should ask for the applicant's name, address, a full explanation of any prior criminal convictions, the area of youth work the applicant is interested in, any training or education in youth-related work, a description of church membership over the past 5 years, a description of church volunteer work over the past 5 years, a description of any youth work (at churches or any other organi-

zation) over the past 5 years, and the names and addresses of two references.

KEY POINT.

A new federal law (the National Child Protection Act of 1993) permits states to designate organizations that will be required to obtain an FBI nationwide criminal records check on those child-care workers designated by state law. Many states probably will designate churches, meaning that churches can quickly check on the suitability of some prospective youth workers by asking a state agency to conduct a criminal records check using the nationwide FBI criminal records system. It is essential for churches to implement a responsible screening program for all youth workers whether or not they are able to request nationwide criminal records checks under the new law. The main reason is that the new law will not cover all church youth workers.

Churches should keep the following additional considerations in mind when implementing a screening procedure:

- If an applicant is unknown to you, confirm his or her identity by requiring photographic identification (such as a state driver's license). Child molesters often use pseudonyms.

- The screening procedure should apply to all workers—both compensated and volunteer. Acts of molestation have been committed by both kinds of workers.

- The services of a local attorney should be solicited in drafting an appropriate screening form to ensure compliance with state law. It is also advisable that such forms be shared with a church's insurance company for its comments. It is also desirable to share them with a local office of your state agency that investigates reports of child abuse.

- Be sure you are aware of any additional legal requirements that apply in your state. For example, a number of states have passed laws requiring church-operated *child-care facilities* to check with the state before hiring any applicant for employment to ensure that each applicant does not have a criminal record involving child abuse or molestation. Again, you will need to check with a local attorney for guidance.

*Churches are
by nature
trusting and
unsuspecting
institutions, and
these very
qualities have
made them
susceptible to
incidents
of child
molestation.*

Step 3: Make a record of contacts with references and prior churches.

Having an individual complete a screening application form *is in itself not enough to protect a church and its members*. Significant protection only occurs if the church takes the following additional steps:

- Contact each reference listed on the application and make a written record of each contact. Show the date and method of the contact, the person making the contact as well as the person contacted, and a summary of the reference's remarks. Such forms, when completed, should be kept with an applicant's original application.
- Contact each church in which the applicant has indicated prior experience in working with youth. Provide a written record of all the information contained in the preceding paragraph.

Step 4: Adopting a child abuse policy.

Consider adopting a child-abuse policy that (1) quotes verbatim the provisions of state law that define child abuse, identify those persons under a legal obligation to report known or reasonably suspected cases of abuse, and indicate the penalties for failure to report; (2) lists the most common signs and symptoms of child abuse (your local child-abuse agency can assist you in preparing such a list); and (3) mandates all church employees and workers (compensated and volunteer) to report immediately known or reasonably suspected cases of child abuse.

Step 5: The appropriate response if an incident of molestation occurs.

If an incident occurs, the church should immediately react with concern and compassion, making such services (including counseling) available as are appropriate under the circumstances. Too often a church reacts to such an allegation by shunning the victim and his or her family-viewing them as

potential adversaries in a court of law. This only aggravates the pain and confusion experienced by the victim and his or her family and increases significantly the likelihood of a civil lawsuit against the church.

Step 6: Education.

Another important step in reducing the risk of sexual molestation claims is to provide your staff with training periodically. An excellent idea is to have an employee of your local child welfare agency address your workers once every year about child molestation and abuse. Further, it is important to provide resource material to your workers so they appreciate and fully support the preventive measures you are implementing. One way to do this is to make copies of this article available to your workers.

KEY POINT.

Immediately report to your church insurance company all known or reasonably suspected cases of child molestation that occur on church property or during church activities. Insurance policies require the insured to notify the insurance company promptly of potential claims, and in

addition your insurance company often will have helpful suggestions regarding the proper handling of such occurrences.

KEY POINT.

It is imperative to discuss known or reasonably suspected cases of molestation or abuse with a local attorney who is familiar with your state laws regarding reporting obligations. An attorney should also be able to provide you with helpful guidance in dealing responsibly with the molester, the victim, the victim's family, and the media.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Every state has a child-abuse reporting law that requires mandatory reporters to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of child abuse to a designated state agency. Here are some factors to consider in deciding whether to report a particular incident of suspected abuse to the state:

- Are you a mandatory or merely a permissive reporter under state law? Mandatory reporters (as defined by state law) face criminal penalties for

not reporting known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse. permissive reporters are permitted to report, but they are not legally required to do so.

- What is the definition of child abuse in my state? Surprisingly, some states define abuse very narrowly to include only abuse inflicted by a parent or caretaker. In most states abuse is defined to include both sexual and physical abuse.

- Does the clergy-penitent privilege apply? In a few states, clergy who learn of child abuse during a confidential counseling session are not required to report the information to the state.

- Consider discussing the case anonymously with a representative of the state agency that receives reports of abuse. These representatives often are more than willing to discuss particular cases and evaluate whether a report should be filed. Of course, if you are advised that a report need not be filed, be sure to obtain the representative's name and make a record of the call.

If you have any doubts concerning your duty to report a particular incident to the state, an attorney should be consulted. It is also desirable to inform your insurance agent.

CONCLUSIONS

It is essential for church leaders to take affirmative steps to reduce the risk of child molestation. The good news is that churches can substantially reduce their risk of legal liability by implementing the kinds of safeguards summarized in this article. We encourage you to review this material and consult with a local attorney, your insurance company, and your local child welfare agency as you implement your own policy.

It is very important that a church's commitment to reducing the risk of child molestation be sustained over time. In many churches there is a high turnover in the church leadership and volunteer staff. This can result in a reduced commitment to enforcing a preventive-maintenance program. This tendency must be guarded against zealously. ~

Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA, Springfield, Missouri, has served as legal counsel to The General Council of the Assemblies of God since 1978.

FURTHER READING

- *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church* (Christian Ministry Resources)

This is an invaluable kit, prepared by Richard Hammar and Dr. James Cobble, that contains materials to help your church respond to the risk of child abuse. The kit includes a 24-minute video, a 60-minute audiocassette, a resource book, and a training manual. The video was designed to be viewed by church leaders and staff. It demonstrates the importance of this issue and illustrates ways to reduce your risk. The resource book contains helpful information and several forms. These materials have been reviewed by hundreds of church and denominational leaders, attorneys, and insurance executives and have been used by more than 60,000 churches.

Price: \$49.95. To order, contact Christian Ministry Resources, 617 Greenbrook Parkway, Matthews, NC 28105, or phone 1-704-841-8066.

- *Church Law & Tax Report* (Christian Ministry Resources)

This bimonthly newsletter, written by Richard Hammar, apprises churches and clergy of current legal and tax issues affecting them. Each issue contains one or more feature articles as well as a survey of recent developments and a tax calendar summarizing significant tax dates during the next 2-month period. All reported court decisions pertaining to the liability of churches and church workers for sexual abuse and molestation are reviewed, along with all other legal and tax developments of interest to church leaders and their advisers.

Price: \$39 annually. To subscribe, contact Christian Ministry Resources, 617 Greenbrook Parkway, Matthews, NC 28105, or phone 1-704-841-8066.

- The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA) publishes materials that deal with various aspects of child abuse and molestation. The NCPCA catalog is available free upon request from NCPCA, Publications Department, P.O. Box 94283, Chicago, IL 60690 (telephone 312-663-3520).



Panhandler ^{TURNUED} POSTMAN

**"AND I HAVE SENT HIM BACK
TO YOU IN PERSON, THAT IS, SENDING
MY VERY HEART" (PHILEMON 12*).**

THE PRIORITY OF MENTORING

THE BOOK OF PHILEMON shows up around November 3 in the "through the Bible in a year" reading program. It's lost like a small ruby at the bottom of a treasure chest—a tiny reflection of redemption, a short story that reveals a long process.

It may read quickly, but don't let that deceive you. Obeying it may cost a few years.

- It's a story of fame embracing shame.
- A loser being loved by a winner.
- A giver confounding a taker.
- A handoff instead of a handout.
- The useless becoming useful.
- A panhandler turned postman.

A successful retiree is about to lift his number one driver on the 18th tee at Pebble Beach, but during his backstroke he is suddenly interrupted by a panhandler wanting a handout.

What would you do if you were the retiree, a man who had spent years building a career and helping hundreds of others find success as well? His career had cost him physical pain and enormous personal sacrifice.

However, that was then, and this is now. These are his golden years of retirement, a time to take it easy, leave the labor to others, and not be bothered, right?

What if the apostle Paul, a successful retiree, hadn't taken time to help a wayward runaway find his way? An important piece of Scripture may never have materialized.

Paul deserved a little ease in his aging life. The last thing he needed was a project, especially one that had nothing to do with his incarceration in Caesar's prison. Instead of spending his golden years trying to avoid the rough, however, he chose to discover a diamond in the rough named Onesimus.

Secure in heaven's Hall of Fame, Paul had nothing to prove. He could have sipped tea in Caesar's court without damaging his legacy. He didn't need to do this act of kindness. This was not a crowd but a con-a man, not a multitude.

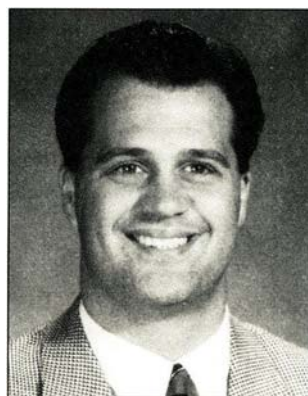
Nevertheless, Paul proved once again that it was the Light, not the limelight, that stole his heart as he was en route to Damascus. He saw in Onesimus what we usually avoid 10 times a day—a difficult assignment from heaven. He had nothing to prove other than his love for the ministry.

He stopped. He acknowledged. He listened. He loved. He cared. He descended. He imparted. He defended. He trusted. He released.

He begat a son (Philemon 10).

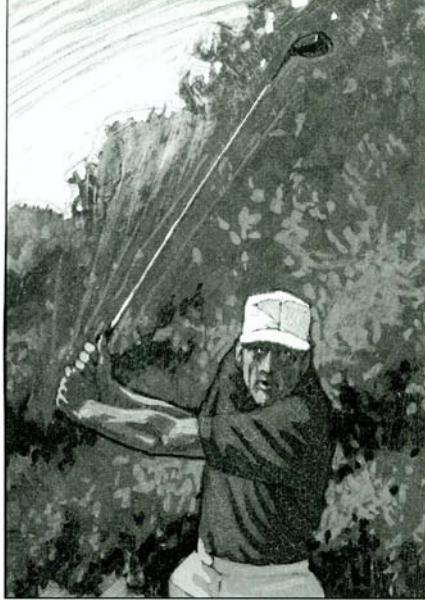
The relationship between Paul and Onesimus represents everything we should strive for in Kingdom leadership—an older leader investing in the life of a young potential leader.

Onesimus started out rough. However, Paul built enough concrete into him that Onesimus, the former thief, would one day be



BY SCOTT HAGAN

The relationship between Paul and Onesimus represents everything we should strive for in Kingdom leadership—an older leader investing in the life of a young potential leader.



entrusted with a vital assignment for Christendom.

In view of his age and imprisonment, Paul knew he would be unable to accomplish much without help. Jesus himself had needed another Kingdom carrier when He stopped Paul on the Damascus Road. He did not indict the abilities of Peter and John by enlisting Paul; rather, He acknowledged the greatness of the task.

The same can be said of Moses. In the twilight of his ministry he obviously had lost his crowds. Those who had related to him as deliverer were replaced by a crowd who had no purpose and direction. The leader who once liberated the Israelites from oppression could no longer lead them across a river.

To this day, however, Moses is regarded as one of the world's greatest leaders, not because he could keep a crowd but because he produced a successful "son." Without a Joshua to assume the mantle, Moses' legacy of greatness would have died along with the crowds in the wilderness.

God always needs others, no matter how great the individual's work might be. And raising up another leader became the consuming task and fulfillment for Paul. While under difficult circumstances, Paul rejected thoughts of ease and spiritual retirement and transformed a useless slave into a vital messenger.

He knew his years of labor would be lost if another were not there to fill his place. Therefore, Paul made a place in his life for the process.

Why did Paul consider his work with Onesimus a ministry fulfillment, not a sacrifice?

He never forgot his own beginnings on the Damascus Road-when someone had to hold his hand and walk slowly. "Leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus" (Acts 9:8). It took another to help keep this handicapped Pharisee from falling all over his pompous self in the dark as he stumbled toward greatness.

Paul saw in Onesimus a little of his own past and decided to impart a little of his own future.

He focused on endings instead of beginnings. Onesimus had an awful beginning, and his life was only getting worse. He floated like an aimless cork on life's ocean-no career, no character, nothing to offer anyone. He was a flop.

Paul did not base Onesimus' potential on pedigree. If his offer to help had hinged on a clean background check, he would have thrown Onesimus out on his ear after 10 minutes. Rather, Paul saw his potential. He could look at a prostitute and see a church secretary, a drug pusher and see a head usher for Sunday morning worship, a deaf-mute and see a worship leader, a leper and see a door greeter, and a blind Bartimeus and see a bus captain.

Potential! Potential! Potential!

Paul had a passion for people's potential. He had learned it from Jesus and the early apostles, and in his old age it was still alive.

He must have also reflected on an old relationship gone sour in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13; 15:37-40) when he discarded John Mark. Later he heard of his progress under Barnabas, "son of encouragement."

Maybe I was a little harsh on the boy and gave up on him too quickly in my zeal for ministry results, Paul may

have thought. He certainly wasn't going to make the same mistake with Onesimus, a young possibility for God.

Thus Paul took his current assignment personally. He assumed Onesimus' debts and appealed to Philemon to receive him as he would his own flesh-and-blood son.

But this did not happen before Onesimus experienced transformation. Paul did not cast out a spirit of immaturity from Onesimus like a demon; rather, he took the long route of investment, realizing that equipping begins with embracing. This involved building in Onesimus his own heart of trustworthiness, faithfulness, prayer life, and integrity. When Onesimus was spiritually developed, Paul confidently gave him a parchment, not only to read but to carry.

With the letter to the Colossians under his arm and Tychicus by his side, this former thief-who had abandoned his earthly master-set out to preserve a piece of eternity for the heavenly Master. Then again, think of his spiritual father-a murderer turned missionary.

It must have been in the spiritual genes. Paul never indicted, ignored, neglected, demeaned, demanded, nor forgot his spiritual son, Onesimus-panhandler turned postman. ~

**Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.*

Scott Hagan is pastor of The Harvest Church Assembly of God, Laguna Creek, California.



Enlarging the Pro-Life Front

BY RICHARD EXLEY

*Not
infrequently
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conclude that
if we can't fix
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why should
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anything?*

Dramatically the camera zooms in on the inert body of a young man lying in a hospital-type bed. Slowly the picture fades to be replaced by the anguished features of his grieving mother. With remarkable control she relates the tragic account of her son's auto accident at age 17. He is not brain dead, she tells us, nor is he on any life-support system other than a feeding tube, but for the past 17 years he has been in a comatose state. She readily admits that he is not dying, nor is he in any imminent danger of dying; yet she and his father have decided the time has come to disconnect his feeding tube and let nature take its course. In a matter of days he will starve to death, but she does not tell us this.

Although my wife and I are both adamantly pro-life, we empathize with those grieving parents-especially with the young man in his comatose state. Somehow, death seems almost merciful in those circumstances.

Thinking about it now, some weeks removed from that emotionally charged program, I realize this is just one of many ethical dilemmas facing believers in the nineties. Others include, but are not limited to, fetal research, therapeutic abortions (Le., when the baby is severely deformed or the mother's life is at stake), assisted suicide, and AIDS.

Unfortunately, the church has been of little help in providing a scripturally sound and ethically valid pro-life apology. Our pulpits have been strangely silent on these issues. With rare exception, most pastors find it easier to ignore these matters. As a consequence, many believers are sympathetic toward passive euthanasia and/or abortion, not from conviction but ignorance.

To help congregations resolve these ethical dilemmas, we must develop a biblical view of life as well as death. In addition, we must formulate a workable pro-life ethic which will enable us to provide scriptural alterna-

tives to the unscriptural solutions being proposed by society.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF LIFE

Human life is not just another life form in the long ecological train, nor are we simply another species in the animal kingdom. Rather, mankind is unique from every other form of life on the earth because we are created in the image of God. The Bible declares, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being" (Genesis 1:27; 2:7*).

According to the Psalmist, God made human beings "a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas" (Psalm 8:5-7).

Human life is not merely the product of physical reproduction, as some contend. Rather, it is a procreative act involving not only a man and a woman but God. "For you [God] created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13,16).

To Jeremiah God said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart" (Jeremiah 1:5).

From these and countless other verses of Scripture one can only conclude that all human life is sacred and should be treated accordingly.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF DEATH

As in the case with life, America's attitude toward death reflects a distinctly secular

view which fails to take into account the truth of Scripture. When ministers fail to address this issue, believers find themselves conforming to this secular view and its accompanying ethics.

According to the Word of God, death is not the ultimate escape but the ultimate enemy. Paul declared, "For he Uesus] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:25,26).

Death is not the end of our human existence. "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Apart from salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, death is simply the doorway to eternal suffering. "If

anyone's name was

not found writ-

ten in the

book of life,

he was

thrown

into the

lake of

fire.

They will

be tor-

mented

day and

night for

ever and

ever"

(Revelation

20:15,10).

In the light of

Scripture, there is

nothing merciful about

euthanasia or physician-assisted

suicides. Whether it is Dr. Death hooking

up a patient to his suicide contraption, a

medical intern injecting 20 milligrams of

morphine into a young woman suffering with

terminal cancer, an anguished husband smothering his suffering wife to put her out of her misery, or grieving parents deciding to disconnect their comatose son's feeding tube, death is not the answer. To send a patient or a loved one into eternity without God is the ultimate act of cruelty.

In truth, regardless of their rhetoric to the contrary, proponents of euthanasia-passive or active-have little concern for the patient. Their concerns focus on the suffering family-their ongoing emotional trauma, physical exhaustion, and mental anguish, not to mention the financial burden. They argue from a purely economical perspective, citing the exorbitant medical expenses which threaten to bankrupt taxpayers and insurance companies alike.

If attention is turned on the patients, little thought is given to making their

continuing lives as comfortable and meaningful as possible.

Rather, much ado is made of putting them out of their misery. "It's unfortunate, "

writes Joni Eareckson

Tada, "that so much attention and so many

resources

in our

society are funneled into legalizing euthanasia while the hospice movement is struggling to stay alive Our society, especially the spiritual community,

Never...has the church espoused a theology of convenience which makes certain members of society...disposable.

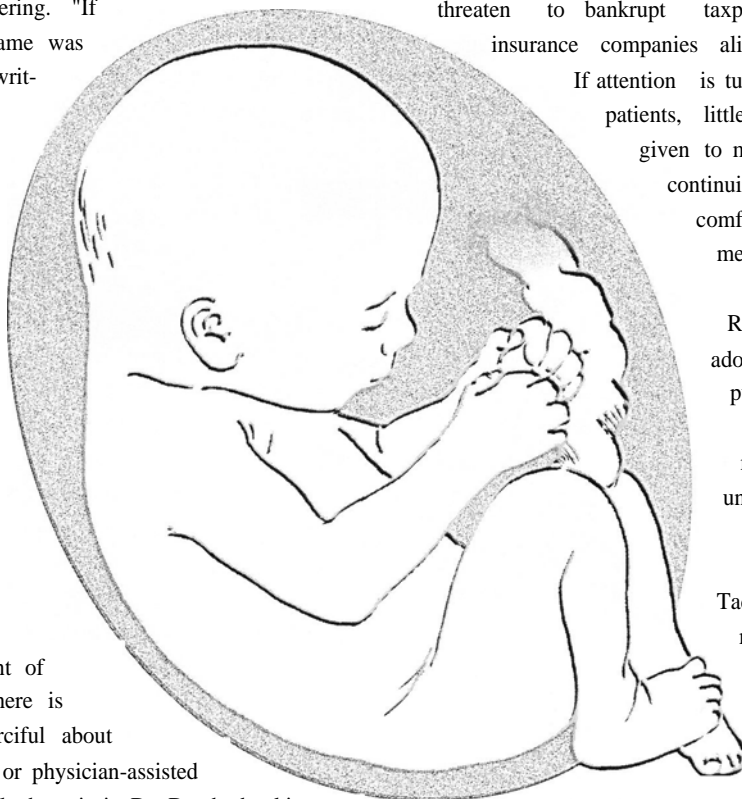


ILLUSTRATION
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cannot cringe at the misery that needs mercy or shun the burden that requires bearing. We must be the Lord's hands and heart to those who hurt."¹

DEVELOP A WORKABLE PRO-LIFE ETHIC

Historically the church has been the pacesetter in the pro-life arena whether we are talking about caring for the needy, providing for widows, or looking after the fatherless. In addition, many of the greatest universities and hospitals in our nation were founded by the church. Never, it should be noted, has the church espoused a theology of convenience which makes certain members of society (Le., children in the womb, the severely handicapped, the aged or the infirm) disposable.

While it is absolutely mandatory that the church speak out against the inhuman philosophies and practices of secular society, we must not stop there. As Christians we have a God-given responsibility to provide workable alternatives.

One of the ways we did this at Christian Chapel in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was to establish a crisis pregnancy ministry. Our program involves families within our church who open their homes to unmarried women who are

pregnant. Each young woman becomes a member of the host family and lives with them for the duration of her pregnancy and up to 6 weeks following the birth of her baby. Physicians within our fellowship provide medical care and deliver the baby at no cost to the expectant mother if she is unable to pay.

Over the past 12 years Christian Chapel has helped over 100 young women from 15 states and one foreign country. Often these troubled young women find both healing and salvation as a result of the loving concern of Christian Chapel. We also formed an adoption agency, and many a childless couple has been able to adopt a beautiful baby who, except for our intervention, might have died at the hands of an abortionist.

Obviously no single congregation is in a position to develop a comprehensive pro-life ministry which addresses all of society's needs. What congregation has the resources to provide a hospice for AIDS patients, a crisis pregnancy ministry for unwed mothers, a shelter for the homeless, not to mention a live-in residence for the severely handicapped. Not infrequently we are tempted to conclude that if we can't fix everything, why should we try to fix anything?

Norman Cousins refutes such misguided reasoning when he writes, "Certainly it is true that behind every human being who cries out for help there may be a million or more equally entitled to attention. But this is the poorest of all reasons for not helping the person whose cries you hear. Reach out and take hold of the one who happens to be nearest. If you are never able to help or save another, at least you will have saved one."²

**Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.*

Richard Exley is an Assemblies of God minister, author, radio host, conference and retreat speaker, pro-life apologist, and former pastor. He lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Editor's Note: January 21, 1996, is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. As a pastor your influence is far-reaching. We encourage you to be involved in the pro-life cause on this special day. H.B. London, of Focus on the Family, suggests the following ways to become involved: (1) Alert congregation to the national crisis regarding sanctity of human life from conception to the grave. (2) Invite a professional counselor/caregiver to characterize the opposition and needs as they exist

on the front lines. (3) Challenge the congregation to take action—individually or collectively. (4) Take advantage of books and other resources.

ENDNOTES:

¹Joni Eareckson Tada, *When Is It Right To Die?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 166-167.

²Norman Cousins, *Human Options*, quoted in *Disciplines for the Inner Life* (Waco: Word, 1985), 310.

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES COLSON

Perils & Issues Facing the Church



Remind myself,
it's not success;
it's faithfulness.

culture increasingly muddled in moral debate presents major challenges to the Christian community. Enrichment managing editor Rick Knott recently visited Charles Colson, founder/chairman of Prison Fellowship Ministries, in his Reston, Virginia, Office. Enrichment was interested in Colson's thoughts on several key issues facing the church and evangelical leaders: the future of the church, intellectual and cultural illiteracy among evan-

PHOTOS BY JOHN T

gelicals, religious apartheid, Christians in politics, the pro-life agenda, and others.

In Colson's compelling and perceptive way, he calls the church to develop a persuasive cultural apologetic, a defense for what we believe, so when the secular world is forced to face the question, "Is there truth and is it knowable?" we will have an answer for the faith that is in us. Until we do that, Colson says, the church will continue to be shoved to the side.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN AMERICAN LIFE AND THE VIEW INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS HAVE OF THE CHURCH?

CHARLES COLSON: I wrote a book, *The Body*, on that subject and have given a lot of time and thought to the role of the church in American life and in the eyes of the Christian. The greatest single scandal in evangelical assemblies, and I can really only speak for that, is the low regard individual Christians have for the church.

I do not believe one can experience conversion or the fullness of the Christian life apart from the church. The lowest state to which the church is going—the disregard of the church, the view of the church from the consumer perspective, the idea that we go to church for what we can get out of it—is scandalous.

The church's job is to equip the saints for works of service in the world. Lone rangerism of Christianity today ("I'll drop into this church or go where I'm made to feel good") is missing the whole point of the church, which is the fullness of the Christian life.

IN *THE BODY*, YOU SAID, "WHEN COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS GENERATIONS OF BELIEVERS, WE SEEM AMONG THE MOST THOROUGHLY AT PEACE WITH OUR CULTURE, THE LEAST ADEPT AT TRANSFORMING SOCIETY, AND THE MOST DESPERATE FOR A MEANINGFUL FAITH." HOW, THEN, CAN PASTORS BE SPIRITUAL CHANGE AGENTS TO THIS GENERATION OF BELIEVERS?

COLSON: A pastor must have incredible patience, perseverance, and courage—real guts—because he will be offending a good part of his congregation much of the time. However, he must teach the people that the

job of the church is not to make them happy but to make them holy. There's a whole different role in the way he has to look at them and the way they have to look at him in the sense of accountability—the *koinonia* that has to be bred into the way of thinking about their church experience. That will separate the chaff and the wheat quickly, but pastors have to do that or lose their integrity.

There has never been a more inculturated church. All the standards we measure the church by are the same standard the world uses. I remind myself, it's not success; it's faithfulness. Thus a pastor has a difficult job—he must live with the people week after week. At the same time there's the growing, deepening inculturation of the church, a growing restlessness for genuine spirituality. People are saying something ain't right. That's good.

Seventy-six percent of the American people say we have a spiritual problem in our country. That's great, because now they understand the root of the problem is not that we haven't passed enough laws; rather, the root of the problem is in terms of our social value system.

The issue is not, "By whom are we governed?" but "How then shall we live?" If people are asking that question, the pastor has a good chance to answer it and lead them in that direction. Edmund Burke, a great patron saint and political poet, said, "What matters is not so much the laws as the manners of the people." Manners—the habits of the people—are bred in family and church. Therefore, it isn't an issue of laws but of habits and manners.

HOW CAN THE CHURCH POSITION ITSELF FOR THE NEXT GENERATION?

COLSON: The church has a real problem, and I'm not sure I can advise a pastor how to deal with it. I'd like to see the church practice preaching truth—both the epistemological question of "Is there truth and is it knowable?" and the revelation of truth in Scripture. God is truth and is to be worshiped, not because it's convenient, makes us feel good, or is therapeutic.

At the same time we are in a totally consumer- and market-oriented economy. People look at a church and try to make a decision



He [the pastor] must teach the people that the job of the church is not to make them happy but to make them holy.

The most powerful apologetic is the life lived in Christ—we care for widows and orphans, hug people dying with AIDS, hate the sin but love the sinner, feed the hungry, clothe the naked—do those things Jesus commanded us to do.



on the basis of all these other factors. If I were a pastor, I would have a difficult time. I might end up with a small church because I don't think I could play the market-studies game. On the other hand, if you don't play the market-studies game, you won't get people in. If you don't get the people in, you won't be able to disciple them. So it's a very difficult question to answer. Pastors have to walk a very fine line.

My pastor and I have had some long talks about this. He's a bright young guy—a wonderful preacher who puts a lot of focus on sermon content. Then he focuses on church activities and teaches people that coming into the community of the saints for the purpose of being equipped is a real commitment of fellowship and involvement. They are not only to come, sit, and listen but get involved.

Thus a patient educational process is necessary to make people understand the true nature of the church. How to do that is a tough question, for the church competes for people's time, and they ask, "Is it convenient?"

ARE THERE SIGNS THAT EVANGELICALS LACK INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL LITERACY? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEY? AND HOW DOES THIS WEAKEN THEIR ABILITY TO PRESENT THE GOSPEL EFFECTIVELY?

COLSON: Read Mark Noll's book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Basically, he said evangelicals have tended to think more in terms of exegesis, doctrine, and

hermeneutics; whereas, orthodox Jews, for example, have thought more in terms of the relationship of their faith to the broader issues of life.

Evangelicals have looked inward and never outward beyond their own little comfortable, parochial environment. After 400 years of Protestantism, we have defined ourselves by what we are against, not what we stand for. I am a Baptist because I believe in adult baptism, individual conversion, soul freedom, the sole authority of Scripture, and the ecclesiology of the local church. I don't have to be against signs and wonders or baptismal regeneration to prove my own belief system. Evangelicals, however, don't think that way. They think we're going to reflight the past. That has caused us to have an intellectual paralysis and cultural blindness.

IN AMERICA THERE IS INCREASING HOSTILITY OF SECULAR CONCERNS TOWARD RELIGIOUS CONCERNS. HOW CAN THE CHURCH BE EFFECTIVE IN A CULTURE INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO CHRISTIANITY?

COLSON: The key to that is a persuasive cultural apologetic: "Prepared always to give a reason for the hope that is within you but with gentleness and reverence." This is a reason defense, an apology, a defense for what we believe.

The only way we're going to bridge this gulf, which is getting wider and deeper between the two Americas, is to be able to articulate intelligently what we believe about our worldview. Show the other side their worldview is either irrational or incapable of producing a moral order. When we talk to secular people and show them why that's so, they'll see it. But we don't do this. We build our own comfortable cocoons; therefore, our America is shrinking and the other America is getting bigger.

The problem is that the world doesn't know what the question is, and we don't know how to give them the answer.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN SOCIAL ISSUES?

COLSON: According to Wesley, there is no holiness apart from social holiness. Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision, said the Christian heart has to be touched by the

things that touch God's heart. If we're going to be faithful to Christ, we are going to live out the gospel wherever we are called-inner cities, prisons, the homeless-and make the greatest and most powerful witness for the Kingdom.

William Wilburforce is my hero. He said, "God has laid before me two great objectives: the abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of man." God changed England through him.

One of the reasons I've argued against Christian political alignment is that it tends to fit us into the agenda of the political party. We don't really fit any political party's agenda. On many issues we find ourselves passionate as it comes to social justice. No one should be able to stereotype us. If we allow ourselves to be stereotyped by the world, we're inculturated.

YOU HAVE SAID THAT ONE OF THE GREATEST NEEDS IN THE CHURCH TODAY IS THE SOUP KITCHEN. WILL YOU ELABORATE ON THIS?

COLSON: I'm glad you asked that question, because sometimes in discussing apologetics people think only in terms of propositional arguments, which have limitations.

The most powerful apologetic is the life lived in Christ-we care for widows and orphans, hug people who are dying with AIDS, hate the sin but love the sinner, feed the hungry, clothe the naked-do those things Jesus commanded us to do. The world sees our love in two ways: by our love for the world with the soup kitchen and our love for one another. Therefore, an apologetic is both propositional and demonstrative-people seeing the reality of Christ in our lives. That's

The greatest single scandal in evangelical assemblies, and I can really only speak for that, is the low regard individual Christians have for the church.



"When I get my head wet I just go berserk, I tell ya!"

hard in a very self-centered, self-absorbed culture.

IN WESTERN CULTURE IT SEEMS THAT LIFE HAS NOW BECOME THE QUESTION, AND THE ANSWER IS DETERMINED BY WEIGHING THE QUALITY OF LIFE WITH ECONOMIC AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS. HOW CAN THE CHURCH ELEVATE THE VALUE OF LIFE IN A CULTURE SEEMINGLY SET ON DEVALUING IT?

COLSON: The problem is that the value system of the secular worldview is fundamentally pragmatic: "What works is good." It is also radically individualistic: your task is to find, and my task is to teach you the process by which you can find your own values. This type of process will never elevate the dignity of anything.

The thing that made Jefferson such a towering figure in history is what he wrote in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident." That is, they are true because they are true, not because someone says they are true. The secular world, however, doesn't believe anything is true unless someone says it is true; then they are basically positive of it.

Until we can show how that particular worldview system fails to produce either a rational or a moral order, they can never see the dignity of life. We can't elevate the dignity of life when life is merely a preference, and living or dying becomes a matter of choice. If choice is the ultimate virtue of life, then we can never elevate anything beyond choice. We make all our own choices.

Therefore, until we can battle the existence of absolute truth and make an apologetic for that, we can never restore dignity to life or elevate anyone's view of any particular thing. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are... endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable [sic] rights... life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

How can we say what liberty is? Liberty, as the Supreme Court has said in *Casty v. Planned Parenthood*, is basically what one defines for oneself.

ARE THERE STEPS THE CHURCH CAN TAKE TO BECOME MORE SAVVY IN PROMOTING THE PRO-LIFE AGENDA?

COLSON: The pro-life agenda has no mean-

ing apart from its being rooted in absolute truth, in self-evident truths—truths that are true because they're true, not because somebody says they are true. Until we can do that, we will continue to lose. Right now, we're in a vulnerable position. The pro-life issue, from a political standpoint, will continually be pushed to the side. We argue that life is sacred, created in the image of God, is an inalienable right that flows as a result of our being created in God's image. That no longer has any meaning, so we get marginalized, increasingly shoved to the side.

That process will continue until we go to the root question: "Is there truth, and is it knowable?" The problem is that no one in secular life knows enough to ask that question. They don't know the question. It's like the bumper sticker that says, "Jesus is the answer." The world asks, "What's the question?" Before we can fight the right-to-life battle we must challenge people to know what the question is—force them to face the question—and then be prepared to answer that question.

IS THERE HOPE FOR OUR CITIES? AND WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE TO TURN THEM AROUND AND GIVE THEM A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHO CHRIST IS?

COLSON: Our cities are virtually lost. Fifty-six percent of the black population between the ages of 19 and 31 in the city of Baltimore are in jail or on probation awaiting trial. Two or three generations of babies are having babies. We lose what our republican fathers called the community in memory; that is, the ability to transmit values from one generation to the next. If you have a two-generational break, the grandparents can still pass it on to the grandchildren, but it is almost impossible for the great-grandparents to pass values to the great-grandchildren.

The inner-city culture has almost been destroyed, largely by white fraternalism. Nothing will change it short of a real spiritual awakening from within. East London in the late 19th century was in a similar condition as American inner cities are today. William Booth came along. And unless we have a Booth or a John Wesley, it's not going to change.



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WHAT ARE THE DILEMMAS CHRISTIANS FACE WHEN THEY SERVE IN POLITICS?

COLSON: Plato said, "Only he who does not seek power is fit to hold it." The first dilemma the Christian faces when he is involved in politics is the realization that he serves another King. It is unacceptable to say that something is personally offensive, but "it is my duty to carry out the law." We can't do that. The Christian is going to be tortured by conflicting loyalties when in public office, but he stays in public office. That is a source of continuous tension—to oppose personally but to favor publicly.

The second thing is that everything about politics builds up the person. And everything about the Christian life is, "Have this mind which was in Christ Jesus, who did not regard equality with God something to be grasped but poured himself out." The Christian is an anti-celebrity; the politician feeds on celebrity—another tension.

The third thing is the expedient argument—"I have to do this so I can stay in office; because if I don't stay in office, I can't

have any influence." Christians have repeatedly rationalized themselves right out of their faith. (I'm having dinner with a few young congressmen this week who have determined not to do that, and they want to talk to me about how to avoid it.) Politics is probably the hardest profession or vocation a Christian can choose.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT THE NATURE OF GOD IN WORKING WITH PRISON INMATES AND SEEING THEIR LIVES CHANGED?

COLSON: First of all, I've witnessed the power of God's grace. He takes someone who killed his father or one who killed innocent people in a drunken drug-inspired orgy and makes incredible disciples who are sold out to Jesus and study the Scriptures.

I've seen God's sovereignty, reality, and humor as He confounds the wisdom of man. God uses prisons to train people for future roles of leadership or martyrdom. It has been exciting. (;I

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THE TABLE IS NOT OPTIONAL-WE ARE TO "DO THIS" UNTIL HE COMES.

BY HOWARD CUMMINGS

WANTING TO BE HELPFUL, the deacon in my new pastorate told me, "Our previous pastor just announced at the end of his sermon, 'Communion will now be served-anyone who must leave may be dismissed at this time.'"

I wanted to be cooperative, so on that first Communion Sunday I dutifully made the announcement.

Half the congregation exited the sanctuary! I never made that announcement again. Within the next month, I preached a message on the importance of Holy Communion.

Communion was never meant to be an addendum to a service nor a preliminary to the main event to be observed perfunctorily. When the bread and the cup are shared among God's people, it is the main event.

Most of us in pastoral leadership know the theology of Communion. We can readily recite our doctrinal position-this ordinance of our Fellowship where in sharing the bread and the fruit of the vine we symbolize our sharing of the divine nature. It is a look back to Calvary and a look ahead to His coming.

However, there is a crying need to make the Communion service meaningful, instructional, and attractive. The table is not optional-we are to "do this" until He comes. An edict from the pulpit will never get this across, but

positive action on our part will.

To make the service meaningful we must lead with a blend of the dignity and warmth, which the table would suggest.

On our regular Communion Sunday we flow out of a beautiful time of anointed congregational worship into the sharing of the table. Our Communion elders file in and fill the front row. I go to the table which has been prepared by a team of volunteers, who consider this their ministry unto the Lord.

A microphone in the center provides

a place for the reading of Scripture. New members, who are to be received on this Communion Sunday, are invited to join me as my personal guests at the table.

The congregation rises and sings as the elders extend the right hand of fellowship to the new members.

The congregation is seated. While the choir ministers an anthem of praise, the elders serve the bread and the cup.

The choir is served as I bring an exhortation on the scriptural theme of the day. We prayerfully eat and drink

VARIETY OF THEMES

The Psalmist said, "My heart is overflowing with a good theme" (Psalm 45:1, NKJV). We have found that a wide range of biblical themes for Communion maintains interest. Here are a few:

- Submission (Matthew 26:39)
- Sacrifice, self-surrender (Romans 6:13; 12:1,2)
- Forgiveness (Psalm 103:3; Matthew 6:14)
- **Reconciliation** (Matthew 5:23,24; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21)
- Body of Christ (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)
- Spiritual fruit—use a different slice each month (Galatians 5:22,23)
- The Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)
- The Blood (1 Peter 1:13-25)
- Missions/evangelism (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8)

(We have used drama to demonstrate reaching the unreached. As the pastor asks, "Has everyone been served?" a series of costumed people move us emotionally with, "No, I have not yet been served the Bread of Life.")

- Eschatological themes—Second Coming, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 19:5-9)
- Divine healing (Isaiah 53:5; James 5:13-16)
- Friendship (Psalm 133; 1 John 1:7)
- Loyalty (1 Peter 2:17)
- Holiness of God (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 15:4)
- Sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3-12; 5:23)

together. We sing a worship chorus as the congregation stands in continued worship. We may pray for the sick or share a testimony. Without interruption the service continues with the reading of Scripture and receiving the tithes and offerings.

The Communion service prepares people for the message of the day. The wise pastor understands that Communion is instructional. The Lord's Supper is more than an object lesson, to be sure, but as a teaching tool it's one of the greatest. Here are a few ways I have used the table to teach:

JUNIOR DOCTRINE:

As a fitting climax to the teaching of Bible doctrines to fifth-grade children, have the pastor share Communion with the class. This laboratory experience provides a memory for life.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

Use junior deacons and a simplified order of service as the pastor shares a memorable time with the children in their own service.

WEDDING COMMUNION:

A Communion service should never be just a ritualistic part of a wedding ceremony; the bread and the cup should be reserved only for the bride and groom who are known to be consistent Christians. Within this context, it will not only be a beautiful part of the ceremony but teach lessons on the Cross and the Church to every wedding guest. I often bring a brief devotional on the parallel between a husband and wife and Christ and His church, the bride of ~

Christ (Ephesians 5:21-33). The sacredness of Communion as well as the sanctity of the marriage vows are emphasized dramatically as the groom, in the first official act as spiritual leader of his household, serves his bride the cup.

FAMILY COMMUNION:

Each Thanksgiving Eve we observe a wonderful tradition. A Pilgrims choir of preschoolers sings the introduction to an instructional evening. Six or eight elementary children who can read are selected ahead of time to be pastor's

Communion guests. All the other elementary children sit with their parents or a supervising adult for this service. My guests have been assigned Scriptures to read or brief definitions of truth to share. The children learn as they teach.

After the emblems are served, I pause for the parents to instruct the children on the deep significance of the Lord's Supper. They are encouraged to pray with their children and to settle any question about their experience with the Lord. However, I encourage them not to worry about the "let a man



“Now, Reverend Walden, do you still want to do away with Sunday night services?”

examine himself" part as to whether the child is ready to partake. Instead, I emphasize that Communion should be a learning experience, not a restrictive exercise. Jesus said that children ought to be encouraged to come freely into His presence (Matthew 19: 14).

We've discovered seasonal observances provide a wide variety of opportunities which can serve to make the sacrament attractive to people-one that they will want to come to and not be dismissed from.

SEASONAL OBSERVANCES:

Christmas is a Communion natural. On the last Sunday evening before the holiday, we have Christmas candlelight Communion also for the entire family (except for preschoolers, whose care is provided). The miracle of the Incarnation and the Word made flesh come to life in the beauty of the season.

We also minister to our people as individuals and family units in our annual Christmas Eve family Communion. Members of the pastoral staff join me in a continuous flow of first-come, first-served families and individuals. We serve the emblems as people kneel in turn at the altar, and we pray with each individual. This service continues 3 or 4 hours. Many miracles occur.

Ministry and Communion to shut-ins should continue throughout the year, but a very special time is the Christmas shut-in Communion. I spend the greater part of the 2 days before Christmas visiting a prearranged list of members and friends who cannot come to the public services. A fresh rose for the ladies and a gift for the gentlemen augment their pastor's personal attention. Ministers may want to purchase a portable Communion set (available from the Gospel Publishing House).

The Holy Week and Easter provide excellent opportunities to share the Lord's Supper. A Maundy Thursday or Good Friday Communion service is

always in order. In recent years we have led a breaking of the bread at the foot of the cross.

Our largest outreach is the living cross celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday morning. Easter night we bring our congregation back for the Communion service. Tables are set up throughout the gymnasium where the living cross is still beautifully decorated. People receive their individual cup and a piece of bread at the

table. After partaking of the emblems, believers share their testimonies at open microphones. We conclude with a ministry of healing.

You can make the service of Holy Communion meaningful, instructional, and attractive. "This do..." and your people will look forward to each observance until He comes. (;I

Howard Cummings is pastor of First Assembly of God, Aurora, Colorado.

And They Continued in PRAYER

A GROWING PRAYER MOVEMENT is taking place within this Fellowship. However, it is not confined to the Assemblies of God—a divine awakening for the need of prayer is happening in many denominations.

Prayer is being offered in many settings: prayer cells, care and prayer groups, all-night prayer meetings, early morning prayer meetings, business and women's prayer groups, citywide prayer meetings, and churches are coming together to fast and pray. This, of course, can be attributed to a fresh wind of the Spirit blowing upon the church today.

God has always responded to people who will pray. Whether it is individually or corporately, the church moves on its knees. It is not the well-oiled machinery that gives the life of the Spirit to the church, but intercessory, prevailing prayer moves God's hand.

One of the dangers and temptations: When God begins to send an awakening or revival, the church stops or lets up on praying. We never experience many victories, I'm convinced, because we stop short in praying through to victory or to completion.

Another danger we must be aware of is not to get so caught up on the thrill of victory that we lose focus upon that which wrought the awakening in the first place. The enemy will do his best to sidetrack or derail the church from the purposes God ordained for His people.

The Early Church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Prayer was the priority within the life of the Early Church. It would have been easy for them to stop praying-caught up in the excitement of the manifestations of the Spirit and great numbers the Lord was adding to

the church. The advancement of the gospel was taking place with such rapid success, it would have been known in our day as a phenomenon. However, the church stayed focused. I believe this was a priority in the daily life of the believer as well as the church.

The leadership of the church gave themselves "continually to prayer" (Acts 6:4). We dare not, at any time, retreat from continual praying, whether it be in the heat of the battle or in the joy of the heavens giving forth rain.

May we take lessons from the farmer. He prepares the ground each spring, cultivates, plants, fertilizes, and irrigates some crops. But it requires God's sunshine and watering to make the crops grow. When the farmer has been faithful to do the essentials, he is blessed with a crop at the time of harvest. However, the next spring he must do the same things again. We must not grow "weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

A continual offering up of prayer causes God's blessing to be continually outpoured upon His church. Prayer is the preparation of the soil of the heart, both for the church and individually, for seasons of refreshing to come from the Lord.

I would like to admonish the pastors and laity of this Fellowship to continue in prayer. Provide settings and forums that give people opportunities to join together in waiting upon the Lord with prayer and supplication. God promises, if we pray, He will hear and answer prayer.

I am encouraged today that a powerful move of prayer is taking place across the Assemblies of God, and it's resulting in a divine visitation from heaven. (;I



BY THOMAS E. TRASK



The Worst & Best Ways

With half of all marriages ending in divorce, millions of young couples have decided to begin a trial marriage in which they live with each other to test whether the relationship works. In fact, cohabitation is now the dominant way seriously dating Americans decide whether to marry.

It is the worst possible preparation for marriage. Yet the Census Bureau reported in March 1970 that 523,000 unmarried couples were living together. In March 1993 the figure had shot up to 3.5 million couples—a sevenfold increase.

The University of Wisconsin conducted a National Survey of Families and Households in 1989

and came to similar conclusions. After interviewing 14,000 people in 100-minute personal interviews, reconstructing their sexual and marital history, the study found: "The

age is well over 50 percent today, a decade later.

What was morally reprehensible for centuries and derided as "shacking up" as recently as 1970 is now the accepted norm.

What is the consequence of widespread cohabitation?

The result is disaster. In fact, cohabitation is a double cancer of marriage. The survey reports that "about 40 percent of cohabiting unions in the United States break up without the couples getting married." Average duration: 1.3 years. Afterward they suffer from what might be called "premarital divorce."

Yet they rarely learn their lessons. In the next relationship, rather than wait until both are committed to marriage, people live with someone else. With what result? Cohabitation has become a substitute for marriage. It is thus a cancer at the front end of marriage. People who would have found marriage partners in an earlier generation are ending up in their thirties and forties having never married. Between 1970 and 1993 the number of never-married Americans doubled from 21 million singles to 42.6 million.

BY
MICHAEL J. MCMANUS

proportion of first marriages that were preceded by cohabitation increased from 8 percent in the late 1960s to 49 percent among those in 1985-86," according to Dr. Larry Bumpass, the survey's director. That percent-

Population grew only 20 percent. The number of never-married men age 35 to 39 soared fivefold from 557,000 in 1970 to 2.86 million in 1991.

Cohabitation is also a cancer at the center

To Prepare for Marriage

of marriage. The survey reports: "Marriages that are preceded by living together have 50 percent higher disruption (divorce or separation) rates than marriages without premartial cohabitation." Instead of a 50 percent risk of failure, those who live together first have a 75 percent risk of divorce.

RARELY PREACHED

Further, 1.2 million cohabiting couples have children, making it a major engine of illegitimacy. Another million kids a year see their parents divorce. Two million children every year are the victims of their parents' selfishness.

In *The American Enterprise* Karl Zinsmeister wrote: "There is a mountain of scientific evidence showing that when families disintegrate, children often end up with intellectual, physical, and emotional scars that persist for life. We talk about the drug crisis, the education crisis, and the problem of teen pregnancy and juvenile crime. But all these ills trace back predominantly to the source: broken families."

The little city of Holland, Michigan, has

Yet when I spoke to a group of pastors recently in Ohio, I asked if they had ever preached a whole sermon on cohabitation. None had. "Have any of you preached a whole sermon on divorce?" Again, none had done so. "Then you are part of the problem," I asserted. Scripture is clear on these matters. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they were to "flee fornication." And Malachi said the blessings of some priests will be cursed by God. Why?

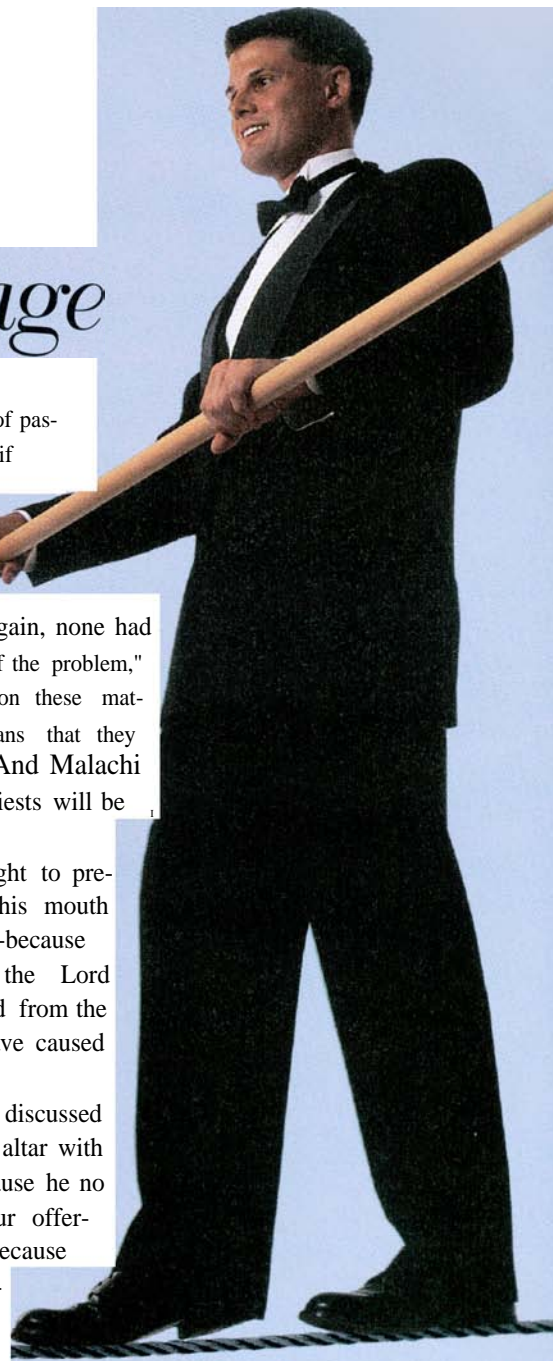
"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble" (2:7,8*).

A few verses later Malachi discussed divorce: "You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings. You ask, 'Why?' It is because the Lord is acting as the wit-

ness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the Lord made them one? ... And why one? Because he was

seen a 400 percent increase of crime caused by children in only 5 years. An elementary principal there said, "These children leave empty homes and return to empty homes. There are no adults to love them."

Too many churches are preparing couples for weddings rather than for lifelong marriages.



What was morally reprehensible for centuries—and derided as “shacking up” as recently as 1970—is now the accepted norm.

seeking godly offspring 'I hate divorce,' says the Lord God of Israel'" (2:13-16).

Those who divorce will feel that their prayers are not answered. And they will create ungodly offspring.

THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR LIFELONG MARRIAGE

If cohabitation is the wrong way to prepare for a lifelong marriage, what is the right way? About 200,000 engaged couples are fortunate enough to be in churches that know how to help people achieve two great goals: (1) Avoid a bad marriage before it begins. (2) Obtain marriage insurance as an engaged couple.

First, these churches administer a premarital inventory or a questionnaire for seriously dating couples and for the engaged. One of the best is called PREPARE (Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation). It consists of 125 statements to which both the man and the woman independently mark whether they agree or disagree.

The results are sent to PREPARE/ENRICH where they are tabulated by computer. What emerges is a remarkably accurate X ray of the couple's strengths and weaknesses which are euphemistically called "growth areas." It can predict with about 80 percent accuracy which couples will divorce

and which couples will have a happy marriage.

Of the 100,000 couples who participate each year, 10,000 actually break their engagements because their scores are so bad.

Good! Better a broken engagement than a broken marriage. Those who break their engagements have scores that are equal to those who marry and later divorce.

Thus PREPARE helps 10,000 couples a year avoid a bad marriage before it begins! Another 5,000 couples postpone their weddings until they work through the surfacing problems. However, for most of the 90 percent who go on to get married the premarital inventory not only puts a spotlight on conflicts the couple has to resolve but identifies how each partner contributes to the problem.

A premarital inventory can also be a bridge by which a younger generation taps the wisdom of an older generation. In my church² my wife Harriet and I have trained 28 mentor couples, who have been married between two and five decades, to administer PREPARE. That is enough volunteers to assure every young couple personal attention. (Incidentally, we encourage seriously dating couples to attend our "Preparing for Marriage" workshop so they can use PREPARE in deciding whether to become engaged.) Each couple meets in the home of a mentor couple at least four times: once to get acquainted and take the inventory, at least twice to go over the results, and once 6 months to a year after the wedding.

One of PREPARE's goals is to teach how to resolve conflicts by using "Ten Steps for Resolving Conflicts." In one case a young man told me these steps helped him and his fiancée over their conflict. They are like a ladder which we used to climb over the brick wall, he said. "We can now look

To use PREPARE, pastors must attend a 5-hour training session run by PREPARE/ENRICH counselors with deep experience in using the instrument. There are 26,000 trained clergy and counselors in every city of the country. For a list of those with this experience in your area or for a schedule of training sessions that are held regularly in most states, write: PREPARE/ENRICH, Box 190, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440-0190, or call (612) 331-1731. One part of the training is that the pastor must take a marital inventory called ENRICH. Therefore, I recommend that pastors take their spouses

to the training event so that they get an X ray of their own strengths and weaknesses as a couple and an agenda of issues to work on to improve their own marriages.

Finally, once a pastor has had some experience with administering PREPARE, he can ask for a set of materials to be used in training mentor couples who can lighten his burden by administering PREPARE in their homes, as Harriet and I and 28 other couples in our church are now doing.

The kit costs \$30, \$25 of which is for the ENRICH inventory that they will take, and \$5 is for the materials

used to train couples in how to read the inventory.

In my view it is a mistake for clergy to do this whole task by themselves. It is better for a young couple to be able to sit down with an older, solidly married couple who can be more probing, transparent, and encouraging than a pastor can be. Every church has such couples who would love this ministry, but they have never been asked. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said the job of the pastor is to "equip the saints for the work of ministry." What more important ministry is there than marriage saving!

- In March 1993, 3.5 million unmarried couples were living together—a seven-fold increase since March 1970.
- The proportion of first marriages that were preceded by cohabitation increased from 8 percent in the late 1960s to 49 percent in 1985-86.
- About 40 percent of cohabiting unions in the United States break up without the couples getting married'---'average. duration: 1.3 years.
- Between 1970 and 1993 the number of never-married Americans doubled from 21 million singles to 42.6 million.
- 1.2 million cohabiting couples have children.
- The number of never-married men age 35 to 39 soared fivefold from 557,000 in 1970 to 2.86 million in 1991;
- Marriages that are preceded by living together have 50 percent higher disruption (divorce or separation) rates than marriages without premarital cohabitation.

at other walls and know we can climb the 10-step ladder to overcome them."

OTHER ELEMENTS OF MARRIAGE INSURANCE

While the three most important elements of deciding whether to marry someone are (1) taking a premarital inventory, (2) working with an older, solidly married couple to talk through the issues, and (3) test how well you work as a couple (using the "Ten Steps"), anyone who really wants marriage insurance should consider additional steps. Each will increase the odds of a lifelong marriage. To summarize them:

1. *Chastity*: If an unmarried couple is living together, my church will not marry them until they move apart and live separately for some months. We also ask even the engaged to consider signing a covenant to limit their sexual contact to no more than French kissing. In Chapter 5 of my book, *Marriage Savers*, I provide evidence that those who marry as virgins have much lower divorce rates than those who are sexually active. "Eros pushes out God," I argue. "If you want God as a third partner of your marriage, you have to play by His rules."
2. *Lectures*: A body of substantive information needs to be covered which we do in a series of eight lectures: male-female differences in communication, sex within marriage, resolving financial differences, conflict resolution, scriptural wisdom in building a lasting marriage. We ask knowledgeable lay leaders to give a weekly lecture.
3. *Workbook*: H. Norman Wright has written an excellent workbook, *Before You Say "I Do,"* which requires couples to look up verses of Scripture on the various issues of marriage. It also requires them to develop a joint budget.
4. *Engaged Encounter*: This is the name of a weekend retreat which is the best single step a young couple can take to improve their communication skills. Married couples share intimate details of their marriage and

then ask the engaged to write in a workbook answers to tough questions like, "What things do I talk to others more easily than I do with you?" "What are the things that make me angry with you?" "What doubts do I have in marrying you?" After writing an answer to each question, the couples exchange notebooks and talk about their answers.

A FINAL WORD

Too many churches are preparing couples for weddings rather than for lifelong marriages. Three-fourths of all couples who marry in America do so in a church. Yet more than 50 percent are ending in divorce or separation. Clearly, most churches are only blessing machines or wedding factories.

However, they can be marriage savers, places where young people can really get a start on building a lifelong marriage.³

What God has joined together, let the church help hold together. (G)

'Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.



Michael J. McManus is a syndicated newspaper columnist writing on issues of ethics and religion, a radio commentator on family related news, and former Time magazine correspondent. He and his wife Harriet live in Bethesda, Maryland. (For a review of his book, Marriage Savers, see page 131.)

ENDNOTES:

1Another inventory, FOCCUS, which is widely used by Catholics, has similar results. A tenth cancel wedding plans, and another 5 to 7 percent postpone the wedding until the differences are resolved.

2Fourth Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, Maryland.

3See Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of my book, *Marriage Savers: How To Help Your Friends and Family Avoid Divorce*, (Zondervan, 1995).

The Man of God at Home— The Minister as Husband and Father

BY MEL SURFACE

HOSTILE FORCES are tearing at the fabric of home and family even in the parsonage. Too many ministers' mates are enduring, not enjoying, the calling. Too many ministers' children are wounded, resentful, even rebellious. And too often their major complaint is an unmindful spouse and parent.

Call a halt. Don't sacrifice your home for career, for church approval, or even for souls. Can God favor a man who would win the world but lose his wife?

Help your spouse experience with you the pleasures and rewards of God's work. Cultivate an "our ministry" perspective. Help your children to count it a privilege to be a Pentecostal preacher's kid. (I tell my son, "Don't pick on other children just because they're not. They can't help it.")

Show by your attitude and actions the high

calling of the ministry—that you really believe God's work and God's people are wonderful. Any exceptions are just that, exceptions; even then, most likely they are good people thinking wrong.

What should you do? First, pattern what you preach. Applying God's principles starts at home.

Make marriage success your personal priority. A successful marriage will: (1) Please God and model the Bible pattern. (2) Please and fulfill each partner. (3) Let your children know they are loved and show them how to love. Teach them to know they are special to God and how to trust, love, and serve Him. (They may not, but they always will be under powerful influence.)

Set your priorities and stand by them. As a man of God, your order of commitment must be your personal relationship with Him, with your spouse, with your children, with the church, and then with others.

These are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are interdependent, but when choices must be made this is the necessary order.

Establish this understanding in pulpit committee interviews, in board meetings, in preaching, and in daily practice. Express it to your family and don't disappoint them.

Most churches will endorse your commitment. Effective ministry to their families depends on it.

Next, with your mate accept full responsibility for your home. Together choose the foundation and materials; then build. Don't be so spiritual that you fail to touch base.

Fold your wings and do the dishes. Hang up your halo and change some diapers. Balance the



A Tribute to a Preacher's Wife

checkbook, help decide about school clothes, and keep your wife informed about family finance. Or, if she is the better manager, let her pay the bills and keep you informed.

Remember, your Lord washed feet. He came to serve and to give. He said the greatest serves all, and He set love's standard of serving and sacrificing for the home (Ephesians 5:25-33).

Be a minister to your own. Share your personal walk with the Lord with your mate, then with your children. Contribute to each other's spiritual growth.

Take practical steps to pass along your faith. Have regular family devotions—specific times when you read the Bible and pray together.

Teach and expect your children to do right because it is right, no matter what others do or think or don't do or think. Being the preacher's son or daughter is beside the point.

Refuse to require more of your children than you do of others, of yourself, or of all the children in the church. And allow your mate the same considerations as any church member, including the right of refusal.

She will love you and love God's work more if she is not pushed to exhaustion. Let her

To my darling wife:

The pastor writes hundreds of letters each year—letters of consolation, thanks, appreciation, business, finance, attendance, and information. Among those he writes are CA (Christ's Ambassadors) letters—national, district, and local—personal letters, and seasonal letters—Christmas, Easter, Speed-the-Light, Memorial Day, New Year's, etc.

But seldom, if ever, does he take time to write a letter of appreciation to the one who means the most to him—his wife. While he may try to justify himself for failing to do so, I am sure the best reasons are unjustifiable. Therefore, he is taking this opportunity to express his deepest love and appreciation to the one who means more to him (personally) and his ministry than anyone else in the world.

This pastor is fully aware that day after day his wife pushes aside her own mountain of work to devote her time and energy to the ever-demanding needs of the work of the Lord (Sunday school, CAs [youth], WMCs [now Women's Ministries], VBS, showers, sick people, discouraged folk, socials, Missionettes, Cradle Roll, visitation, and a million other things). While this goes on day after day, week after week, and month after month, perhaps she is inclined to think nobody even notices or appreciates these daily sacrifices which many take for granted. But she is wrong. The Lord and her husband see the unselfish, untiring work of the pastor's wife. Undoubtedly his deep love for her is even made keener by observing her unselfish life.

There are days when the preacher can detect a slight note of discouragement and possibly a sign of "oh what's the use" in his wife's behavior. However, this is always short-lived, for it only takes a telephone call, a visit from a parishioner, or one who is in need. Then she forgets all about herself and her personal feelings and once again throws herself into the never-ending tasks that are the lot of a preacher's wife.

Each day ends with this faithful helpmate of mine thinking, Perhaps tomorrow I can get my own work accomplished, but that coveted tomorrow never comes. Each new day brings more and bigger problems that nobody can handle as effectively as the preacher's wife.

What an ungrateful husband who never takes time to show his love and gratitude for so wonderful a wife! So I say to myself, "I'll go to town and buy her something very special." Then I say, "No, she isn't doing her ministry for material reward, and this (her) kind of love and devotion can't be bought with money or merchandise." So I felt impressed to try to convey the inner feelings of my heart on paper, although at my best it is so inadequate. When public recognition and thanks are expressed for the ministry, it seems unfair that they are usually directed to the pastor. People seem to forget that another person is equally responsible.

Thus, without any fancy paper and ribbon, please accept the greatest gift I can give to a wonderful, sweet wife—all my love forever.

Your preacher husband,

Art

P.S. An incorruptible crown that doesn't fade awaits those who are faithful. I know one faithful preacher's wife who may not receive much honor and glory here but who has an eternal reward awaiting her.

Editor's Note: Our thanks to Audrey Clay, widow of Pastor Art Clay, who recently shared a letter she received from her husband March 11, 1959. It speaks volumes for pastors' wives everywhere. Pastor, isn't there a letter you're forgetting to write?

follow her heart; then stand with her in her choices.

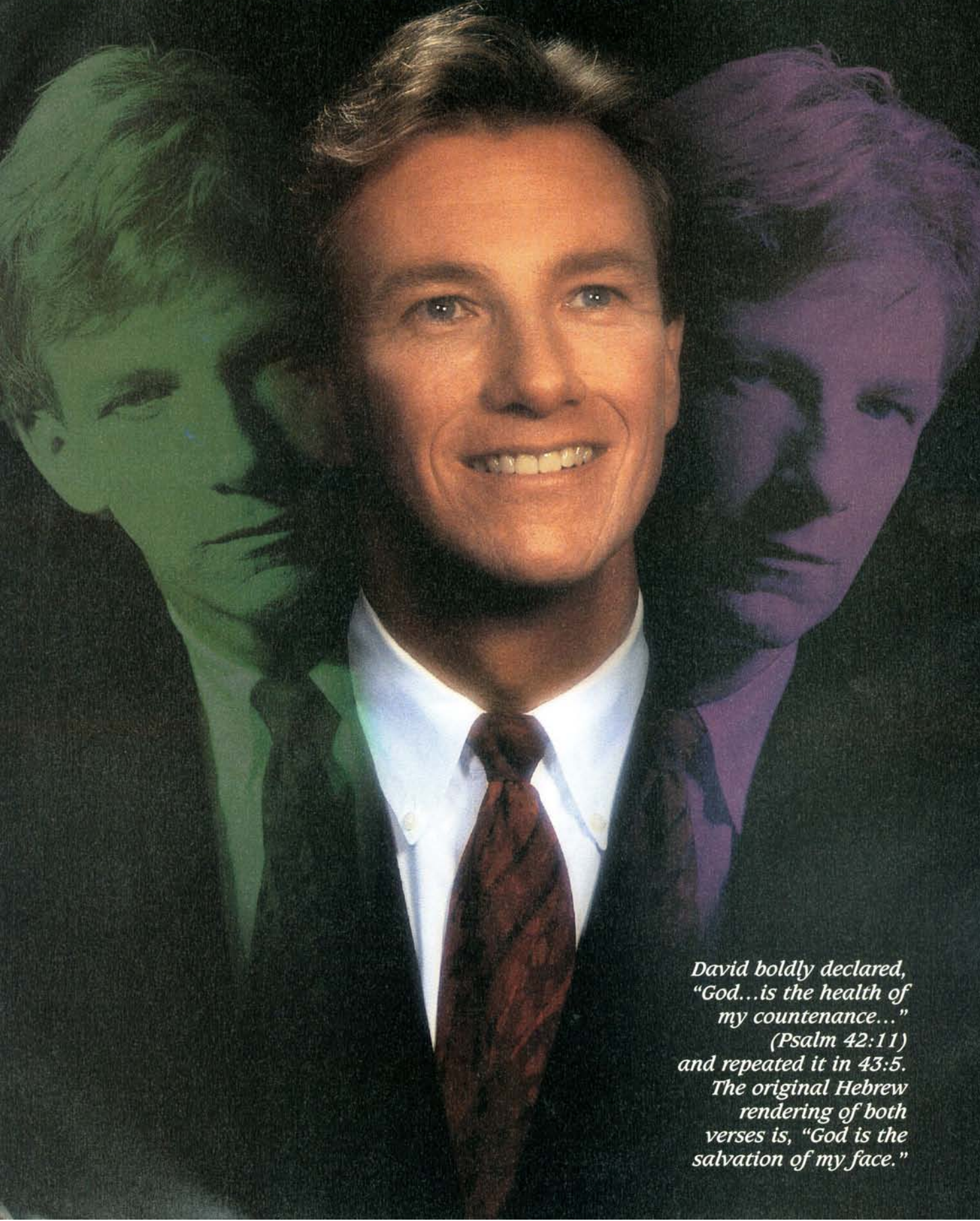
Take seriously your role as priest, provider, protector, and pattern for your household. Keep it your most important task.

Family life is a priceless and exciting adventure. It is close and sometimes hostile, but it is loving. **E**

Mel Surface is the Christian education director for the North Texas District, Waxahachie, Texas.

Fold your wings and do the dishes. Hang up your halo and change some diapers.

The Salvation of Your Face



*David boldly declared,
"God...is the health of
my countenance..."
(Psalm 42:11)
and repeated it in 43:5.
The original Hebrew
rendering of both
verses is, "God is the
salvation of my face."*

One's face is a billboard that advertises what's going on in the heart. The inner joy or turmoil is reflected in the countenance-facial expression, body language, tone of voice.

Recently I walked along 52nd Street and was totally absorbed with church business and probably slouched. I passed a crack house where a woman sat on the stoop. High on crack, she smiled from ear to ear as she watched me approach and said, "Mister, it can't be that bad."

I was flabbergasted! I thought, *Here is a woman high on crack, smiling and looking good. And I, a man if God, am slouched over as if all hope is gone.* What a rebuke it was to me!

I thank God for His great salvation, but many of us need to get our faces saved—a Holy Ghost face-lift—because our faces are giving the wrong message to the world.

It doesn't matter what kind of face-lift we get, our countenance will still reflect what is going on inside the heart. The face is the index of the soul.

Nothing hardens a face as much as sin and worry. ~ wicked man hardeneth his face" (Proverbs 21:29). In New York City we see faces aged and hardened by sin and looking 20 to 30 years older than their actual ages. Sin ages people fast.

On the other hand, I see miraculous changes in the faces of the men and women who come to our Timothy and Hannah Houses. They enter our programs with dreadful, fallen countenances; and within days, as Jesus heals the inner person, they begin to shine and look as if they've had face-lifts—Holy Ghost surgery!

Why such a change of countenance?

~ man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed" (Ecclesiastes 8:1). I take "wisdom" in this verse to mean Jesus Christ. Indeed, the very presence of Christ in the heart has a direct impact on the face, affecting our walk, our talk, and the very tones of our voices.

Worry can also harden a person's face as much as gross sin can. Christians aren't supposed to worry, for our Lord is fully aware of our needs and problems. Yet many of us worry.

When we cast all our cares upon Him, trust fully in His Word, rest in His love, and allow Jesus to be Lord of all, our appearance should undergo a deep change. A quiet calm should begin to radiate from our countenances.

Hannah (1 Samuel 1:18) and Stephen (Acts 6:15;7:54) are two examples of countenance changes given in the Scriptures.

SAD, DOWNCAST, DESPONDENT, WRINKLED COUNTENANCES ARE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

We have a duty to let our countenances speak of God's faithfulness, but our facial features and body language often say just the opposite.

Perhaps you have a troubled look. It may be because of family problems—your marriage, children, finance. Every day these problems hit you in the face and hang over you like a dark cloud.

What you are going through is not new. Someone else has been exactly where you are. (Read Psalm 77:1-10.) When the Psalmist said, "This is my infirmity," he meant literally, "This is what I have to endure." He was beyond all comfort. He eventually came out of his trouble with his happy countenance restored. Why? Because he "cried unto God with [his] voice...in the day of [his] trouble" (verses 1,2).

Many Christians believe in Jesus and take Him at His Word, but they continue suffering because they won't take their problems to Him. Many homes are miserable because one spouse is wrapped up in his own problems or his children's, and he forgets the needs of his spouse.

Such people come to their wits' end and wind up divorced or having a nervous breakdown. Their faces are etched with lines of sadness, and worry has devastating effects on their children and grandchildren.

If this describes you, get alone with the Lord and cry out to Him. Tell Him all your problems—everything about you. Tell Him you're at the end of your rope, that you can't take it anymore, that you're ready to lay it all on His shoulder. Have it out with God.

It is amazing that so many people who say they're in love with Jesus come to a hard place and yet won't turn to Him. Why don't



BY DAVID WILKERSON

We have a duty to let our countenances speak of God's faithfulness, but our facial features and body language often say just the opposite.

we shut ourselves in with Him and pour out our hearts?

The best time to learn to run to Jesus is when you're in great need. David said that was his secret of deliverance in time of trouble (Psalm 143:9). As you do, you'll see a miracle: Your load will be lifted. Your heart will change. You will experience a whole new realm of victory-and you'll get a face-lift in the process.

CONSIDER THE "NO-NAME INFIRMITY."

An unexplainable spiritual depression comes upon the holiest of God's servants at one time or another. The Psalmist said: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? O my God, my soul is cast down within me" (Psalm 42:5,6).

We never learn what the Psalmist's infirmity was. No doubt, he tried to figure it out himself, crying out to God.

Have you ever experienced this kind of unexplainable melancholy-unexpected, unnamed spiritual blues? You're doing fine one day, but you wake up with a disturbance deep in your soul and can't put your finger on it-an unnamed infirmity. You feel worthless, like you're not accomplishing much, and you don't feel like praying.

I have been through this, and it affected my face. My countenance was sad, and the feeling hung on for days. Finally I prayed, "Lord, what's going on? Why do I feel this way? I know You love me, but I feel like a total failure!" All day my eyes welled up with tears. With the Psalmist I prayed, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you disturbed? Why the inner mourning?"

This affliction is widespread among men and women in ministry-a no-name infirmity. I believe it is behind many "2-year teachers" and "4-year preachers"-ministers who remain in a church for a certain period, become restless, and leave. Or, sometimes they stay but feel compelled to make some-

thing happen in the congregation. A strange restlessness overtakes them. During such times pastors often decide to launch into huge church building projects.

Is your life on hold? Are you cast down, troubled at heart, with all kinds of sad and confusing thoughts-all unexplainable? Do your prayers go

The Spirit allows this no-name infirmity to plague our lives until we say, "I can't figure this thing out. Lord, I'm calling out to You. I can't do anything without You. Holy Spirit, take over!"

unanswered? Do your dreams not come to fruition? Do you feel it is affecting your countenance-your face?

Good news: This is an infirmity of the righteous. It strikes only those who hunger after Jesus. We are not to be afraid of such an infirmity, for the Holy Spirit has a part in it.

Now in my sixties, I have experienced enough of life to know that a time comes when this happens to every Christian. We mustn't try to figure it out because we can't. The Psalmist never received answers to his why questions, and no book, counselor, or psychologist can tell you why an unnamed infirmity has come upon you.

This strange infirmity, I believe, is the sighing of the Holy Spirit within us to let us know how it feels to be without God-to be on our own, without comfort, hope, or guidance. He allows us to experience just a taste of such an awful, horrible condition.

Our bodies are His temple, and He has been sent to prepare us as a chaste

bride of Christ. How important it is for us to cry out to God for daily strength and power over every besetting sin. We simply cannot stand in these times unless we are intimate with the Lord, trust Him fully, and constantly flee into His presence.

The Holy Spirit also knows the mind of God and the way out of every problem. He has the power to deliver us from burdens and difficulties. And from His holy sanctuary in our hearts, He breathes His influence on all our emotions-wooing, pleading, encouraging, comforting, convicting, guiding, teaching, reproving, manifesting the reality of Christ.

When we neglect this wonderful gift, the evidence is in our faces - our heavy, drooping countenances.

MANY NEGLECT TO SEEK GOD.

Many of us read the Bible with boredom, opening God's Word only because we know we should. Its message doesn't register with us and brings no quickening life. We pray less and less and no longer look forward to shutting ourselves in with the Lord.

Beloved, the gift of the Holy Spirit within provides us with all the power, resources, hope, grace, and peace we will ever need. Yet we subject Him to the awful abuse of neglect. It is absolute abuse against the Spirit to carry unnecessary burdens-to walk before a wicked world fretting and looking downcast as if God were dead.

That is why the Holy Spirit sighs and groans in our spirits with unutterable groanings. Why does He sigh? It is because we stay up all night talking to friends, reading how-to books, and trying to find some answers instead of running to Him. Meanwhile we neglect His presence, but He sits in the very sanctuary of our hearts and offers us everything we need.

When the Holy Ghost sighed in my life, I used to examine myself and ask, "Lord, what did I do wrong? Is there some hidden sin in me?" I sought answers by reading books and doing

word studies-trying desperately to discover why I was going through an unnamed infirmity.

Sometimes this overwhelming spirit still comes over me, but now I know what it's all about and am not afraid of it anymore. I know it has nothing to do with being in sin. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit at work in me, sighing so I will run back into Jesus' arms.

The Spirit allows this no-name infirmity to plague our lives until we say, "I can't figure this thing out. Lord, I'm calling out to You. I can't do anything without You. Holy Spirit, take over!"

Simply put, what we experience in this infirmity is a loneliness for Jesus, not a depression. It's a yearning to enjoy our Savior's presence. That's what the sighing and groaning are all about.

When we don't have His presence, it shows on our faces. The Psalmist wrote, "They continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" (Psalm 42:3).

Evidently he was so downcast it was reflected in his face and body language. People said to him, "You're supposed to be a person of faith. So where is your God?"

Beloved, if your face reflects that, then the world has every right to ask you the same question.

HOW GOD BROUGHT ME OUT OF MY INFIRMITY.

While going through just such a time of heavy sighing and groaning recently God sent me a special word from heaven: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

It is one thing to quote this verse and another to believe it. The Lord reminded me He cares about me and what I'm going through. He is touched by my infirmities. I cried, "Lord, You do care for me! You love me and watch over me continuously! ..

Suddenly the Holy Spirit whispered to my soul, "That's the secret. It is why

the Father has sent Me-to help convince you of this Word. Believe that no matter what you're going through or what your burden is, He cares. God is not mad at you and is not hiding. His heart is moved toward you, for He cares about everything that affects you. Will you believe it, David, and cast all your cares on Him?"

If you truly believe God loves you, you can lay all your cares on Him and walk in glorious freedom. Your face will be lifted. Now, as I walk the cold, uncaring streets of New York City, I lay all my cares on the Lord and am reminded, "My Heavenly Father watches over me, loves me, and cares."

The next time I see that crack-addicted woman on 52nd Street, I can say, "You're right-it really isn't that bad at all. It's good!" Hallelujah! (;I

Abridged from Times Square Church Pulpit Series, April 3, 1995.

David Wilkerson is pastor of Times Square Church, Manhattan, New York.



Strengthening the Ministry of Pastoral Care

PENTECOSTAL PASTORS have always been concerned about evangelism. In fact, the history of classical Pentecostalism is marked by its emphasis on saving souls. Pastors of growing Pentecostal congregations today, however, are discovering a need to balance this emphasis on evangelism with corresponding emphasis on pastoral care.

It is easy to notice the availability of pastors' schools and seminars which emphasize topics such as church growth and evangelism, but educational opportunities designed for Pentecostal pastors to improve their pastoral care and counseling skills are few and far between.

DEFINITIONS

Caregiving is one of the basic functions of a pastor. Like homiletics (preaching) and catechetics (teaching), poimenics (shepherding, caring) is a vital duty of the minister of the gospel. As such, pastoral care refers to the broad activities of a pastor in his relationships with those under his care. Pastoral care in this sense can occur at the altar, on the street corner, in the hospital room, at the funeral, and in many other situations. Pastoral care is the business of being in relationships and bearing "one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

Theologians say that pastoral care involves healing, guiding, sustaining, and reconciling. Pastoral care has also been defined as involving listening, understanding, and comforting. This view is based on Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 1:3,4.

NOT FOR PREACHERS ONLY

Pastoral care specialists point out that biblically and historically, pastoral care has not been a monopoly of the clergy. They contend that the New Testament portrays the *ecclesia* as a caring community. It is reasonable to

assume that the ministry of caring in the Early Church was carried out by the body of Christ as a whole, especially through individuals who had a gift of expressing care (see Acts 6).

Equipping the saints for the work of the ministry is the ordained ministry (Ephesians 4:12). Using trained saints in the ministry of caregiving can help pastors and their congregations. No pastor alone can meet all the needs of a congregation, even in a smaller congregation.

BY THOMSON K. MATHEW

WHAT ABOUT COUNSELING?

Should counseling be a part of pastoral care? The answer is both "Yes" and "No." Pastoral care can and does often involve counseling, but counseling does not have to be a part of caregiving, especially when it is done by people with limited training. However, all caregivers need certain basic relational skills that are essential in counseling. In congregations with trained caregivers, a referral system can be built in for the purpose of providing follow-up counseling for people who may need it.

NEED FOR A MODEL

Because of their lack of openness to the work of the Holy Spirit, many models of pastoral care available today are not acceptable to Pentecostals, who need a distinctively pneumatological model of pastoral care. Such a model should integrate the labor of love of the caregiver with the work of the Holy Spirit, and it should be usable for ordained and nonordained ministers of caregiving.

During my tenure as a chaplain at the former City of Faith Medical and Research Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, I developed a preliminary model of pneumatic pastoral care. In this model, which is briefly outlined below, pastoral care is defined as a "ministry between miracles."

*Pentecostal
pastoral care
involves
enabling
believers to
continue to
live life to
the fullest
while divine
intervention is
anticipated in
prayer.*

PASTORAL CARE AS MINISTRY BETWEEN MIRACLES

This four-step model of pastoral care is based on Jesus' ministry as it is revealed in the Gospels, particularly the Gospel of John. This Gospel shows that Jesus' ministry between miracles had four discernible characteristics. A pastoral-care ministry based on these characteristics of Jesus' ministry between miracles should be acceptable to Pentecostal pastors.

Step 1: Enabling to listen

Between miracles Jesus enabled individuals to listen to the voice of His Father. Pastoral care can be a ministry of enabling persons to hear God's voice. The charismatic gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge can operate in this ministry of enabling others to listen to God's voice. In the ministry

of pastoral care the focus is not on speaking but on listening. The caregiver can listen to another's concerns, discern God's voice for that person, and then as the Spirit leads enable the person to hear the inner voice of the Spirit. This can be the first step of a Pentecostal model of pastoral care.

Step 2: Enabling to learn

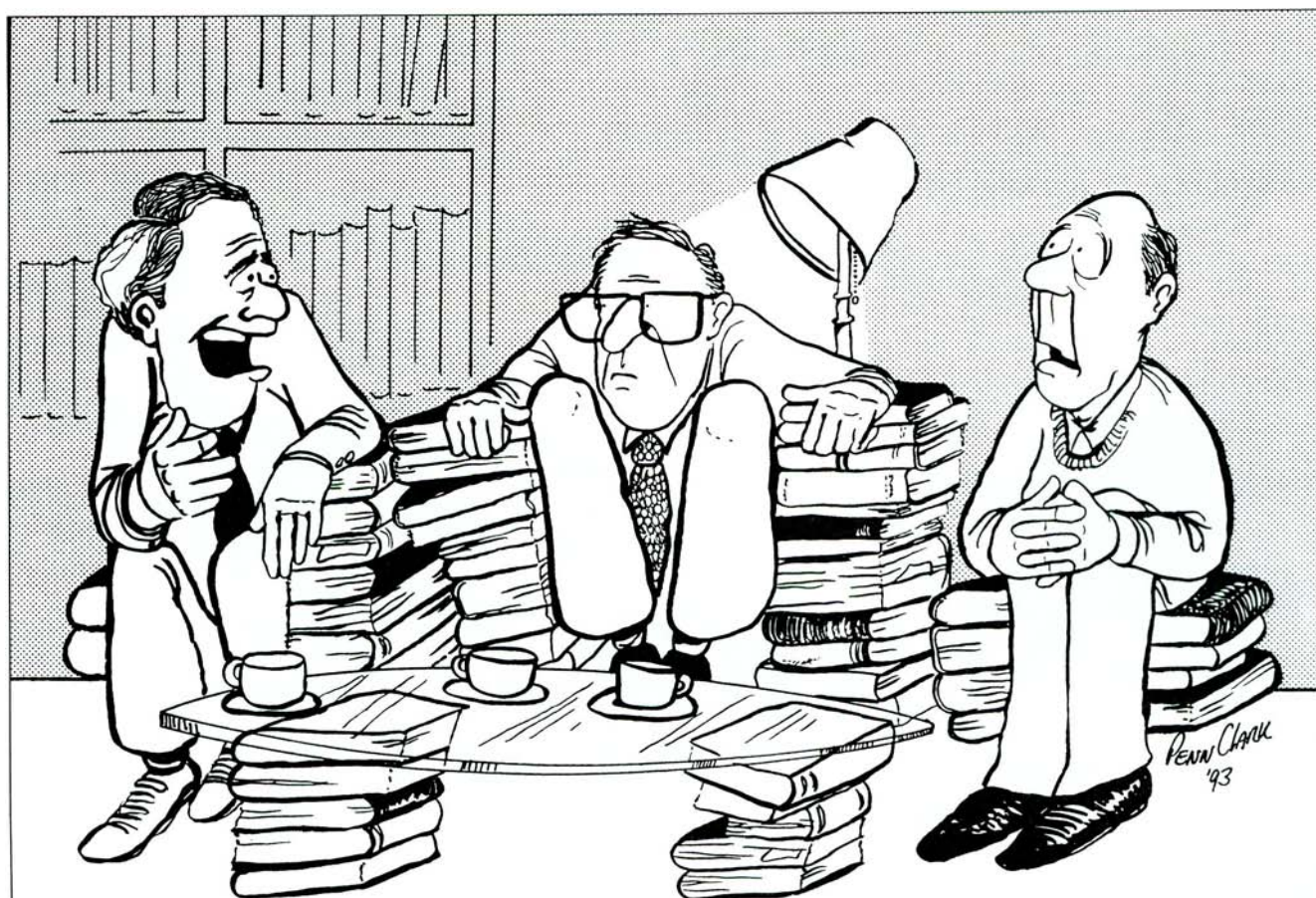
It is interesting to note that the feeding of the 5,000 in the Gospel of John followed a long discourse on the Bread of Life that came down from heaven. Jesus' ministry between miracles included teaching. This didactic ministry of enabling others to learn the will of God can be another stage of Pentecostal pastoral care. This view of pastoral care can turn the entire Christian education ministry of the local church into a caregiving ministry.

Step 3: Enabling to live

A healthy theology enables people not to postpone their lives while they wait for miracles. Jesus' earthly life began and ended with miracles. Between these miracles He lived life in its fullest potential. Many believers seem to postpone their lives as they wait for miracles. Pentecostal pastoral care involves enabling believers to continue to live life to the fullest while divine intervention is anticipated in prayer. This step is based on biblical principles of abundant and victorious living in the here and now.

Step 4: Enabling loyalty to Christ

The crowd that gathered at the miracle of bread multiplication disappeared at the end of John 6. Only the Twelve remained. Jesus asked if they also would like to leave. Peter spoke up: "Lord, to whom shall we



"IT WAS A NOVEL COMPROMISE IN THE CONSTANT STRUGGLE BETWEEN BUYING BOOKS OR HOUSE HOLD NECESSITIES."

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go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68, NIV). The disciples chose to remain loyal to Jesus in the absence of bread.

The delay of miracles can be a time of temptation to be disloyal to Christ. Pentecostal pastoral care involves helping persons in crises to remain loyal to Jesus. It helps people to continue to believe, pray for, and expect miracles, while remind-

ing them that eternal life is more important than temporary healing. As one remains loyal to Christ, He intervenes in His own way and in His own time.

FEEDBACK FROM THE FIELD

This model of pastoral care has been shared with selected groups of seminarians and full-gospel pastors who

have applied it in ministry context ranging from local churches to the Armed Forces. Reports from the field have been very encouraging. Through this model of pastoral care, persons are receiving ministry between miracles without losing hope or the opportunity to see God move. It embraces the natural and the supernatural. Persons in crisis do not have to choose between ministry and miracles. Pentecostal caregivers can offer both.

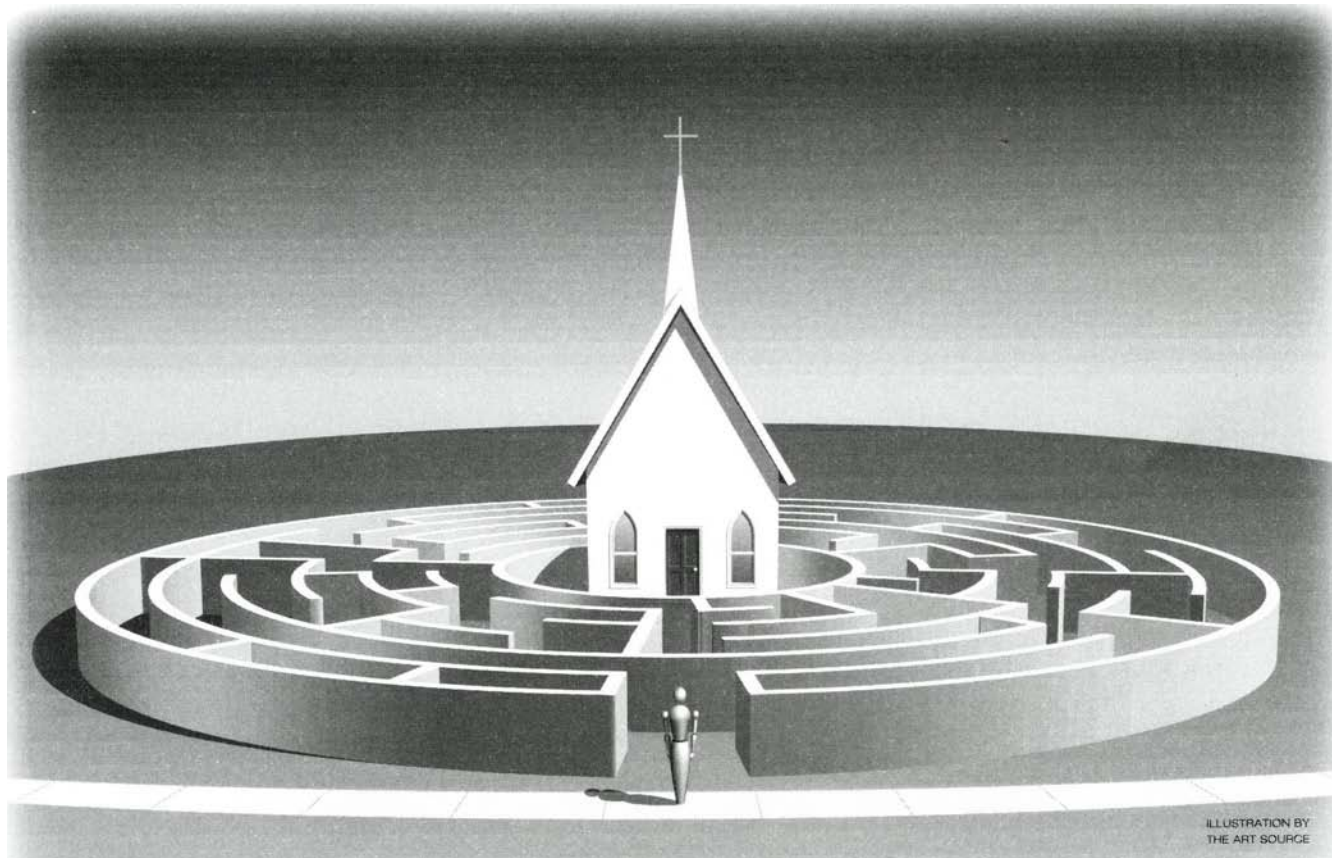
CONCLUSION

Pentecostal congregations need to strengthen their pastoral-care ministries. Pastoral care needs to be seen as a way to church growth, not as a substitute for it. Programs to prepare pastors to equip the saints for the work of caregiving ministry need to be made available. Application of a Pentecostal model of pastoral care, such as the one given above, has the potential of revolutionizing a congregation. Through modeling and training, congregations can be transformed into caring, healing communities. In today's fragmented society such communities of faith will become bright and sure signs of the kingdom of God! (;I

**Scripture quotations are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.*

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THE PASTOR



and the Priority of Public Relations

BY JULEEN TURNAGE

Communication is at the heart—a priority—of Christianity. From the days of its Founder until now, the faith has been full of communication imperatives: Go! Tell! Preach! Make disciples! That's still our mandate and what Christian public relations is all about.

Christian experience is first inward, then outward. What the Lord does in and for us is too good to keep to ourselves. The possibilities of change, personal transformation, daily relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ are meant to be shared. A solid public relations program helps a church do that effectively. In fact, if the Christian communicator is to be effective, he or she *must* understand public relations and make it a priority.

PUBLIC RELATIONS—WHAT IS IT?

In its truest sense, public relations is the sum of all efforts to make ourselves understood. Many factors impact our understanding of the church. These range from pastor and staff reputations to congregational involvement in local issues. While communication is at the heart of any public relations program, no amount of communication can substitute for good behavior. At best, public relations is a reflection of what we are.

The image with which your church must live is constantly being formed and shaped—for good or bad—by news stories, leader statements, facility appearance, advertising, rumors, and everything else that gives your church or its people contact with the general public. Christian responsibility demands planning and effort to project a true, good

image of the church and to communicate your mission and message positively and effectively.

Jesus was the greatest Communicator who ever lived. His message, deeds, and methods consistently showed people the Father-with no dichotomy between what He said and what He did. That's foundational today in proclaiming the gospel to a lost world. Unless our lives and deeds support our words, the world will not believe our message.

Public relations is often defined as a combination of publicity, promotion, activities, and relationships intended to obtain and maintain a climate in which an individual or organization can best prosper. While a pastor may not list public relations with other ministries of the church, each church has public relations-whether you plan it or not, you relate to the public.

HOW TO GET STARTED

An effective public relations program should be a priority. It begins with an honest inventory of your church and its ministries and the needs of the community. Honest evaluation of your image or reputation in the community may be painful, but it is vital. Insights can be gained through visits with new members or with recent visitors who have not returned to your church. New members can tell why they stayed while others may provide clues as to why they didn't.

Members of the congregation will be able to share with you the image of the church held by their friends, neighbors, or business contacts. Any effort to view your church and each area of its ministries through the eyes of outsiders will provide interesting discoveries.

View the church through the perspective of your neighbors, senior adults, business people, young people, single adults, and others to diagnose weaknesses and identify strengths. Then move to build your strong points and correct the weak ones. Where negative opinion is honest, move to correct the causes. Where it is in error, counteract it with truth and positive projections.

Once you have done research to determine how others view your church, you should likewise determine the needs in the community. What ministries could the church provide that would meet genuine community needs? Is anyone else providing these ministries?

Efforts to build a good public relations program will focus on three areas: your people, your property, and your programs.

YOUR PEOPLE

Begin public relations development efforts by generating enthusiasm among members. The community will think no more of you than you think of yourselves. People need to realize they are the church and that their attitudes and behavior reflect not only on your congregation but also on the Kingdom. A small congregation does not reflect a small

mission. Every church has a Great Commission, and nothing is more important than the task of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. The community needs your church, but before you can convince them of this, you must convince yourselves.

The self-evaluation you did at the beginning may provide assistance in confronting problems of wrong attitudes in the church. For instance, realizing the community is watching and sees the church as disgruntled, divided, or depressed may move the congregation to repent.

Perhaps your congregation's attitude is not the problem so much as its motivation. Clear communication of the church's purpose, goals, and progress provides powerful motivation for the congregation to minister to others. In addition to sermons and pulpit announcements, personal letters, form letters, bulletins, newsletters, and magazines are effective means of sharing information and motivating the congregation to be involved in the ministry.

In the spiritually healthy church, goals and programs are already in process to help build God's kingdom. Thus the starting point for a solid public relations program is the people's commitment to the mission of your church. Every Christian public relations program must begin with a ministry motive, and only people-not programs-can minister to other people. Once the congregation catches the vision of what it can do individually and corporately to minister, developing a positive public relations program is easy.

YOUR PROPERTY

The church's property is an important part of the image your community has of you. Your church is judged by what people see. First, and sometimes lasting, impressions are formed by the appearance of property and facilities.

A church may be judged by an unmowed lawn or an unrepaired window. Some potential members will never make it past a dilapidated sign. Untrimmed hedges and muddy parking lots hardly speak of a positive center of activity. Neat, clean, well-kept property and facilities will help convey an image of vitality, diligence, progress, and priority.

YOUR PROGRAMS

Each ministry of the church should exist insofar as it meets the needs of people-church buildings to serve people and programs to meet people's needs. Your programs may differ from the church in the next community or a pastor friend in the next state, for your church and community have different needs.

Welcoming visitors should be another priority in the church's public relations program. Recent surveys indicate that over 85 percent of the people who come to church for the first time come through the personal invitation of a friend or acquaintance. Just as there's no substitute for the personal invitation in getting people to your church, so there

is no substitute for the personal touch once they are there.

One of our larger churches surveyed its visitors and found the first 12 minutes inside the church determined whether a visitor would return. They found it was the little things that made the difference—walking with the visitors to their Sunday school classes, making sure they knew where the church nursery/child-care area was, and having a member sit with them and introduce them to others in the congregation. Visitor packets or printed materials are good and needed, but they can never replace a personal contact.

Once the church has developed programs to meet community needs, you're ready to tell the community about them. This telling involves working with a variety of media—those controlled by the church (e.g., newsletters, Sunday bulletin, letters, booklets, bulletin boards, reports, and posters) and those not controlled by the church (e.g., city newspapers, radio, television, and magazines). With so many media available today, you must decide which medium will be most effective to reach the intended audience.

Basic to choosing the appropriate media is knowing the audience you wish to reach—church members only, businessmen in the community, newcomers, senior adults, college youth? Different media reach different audiences.

To reach the broadest possible audience, use the news media, which includes newspapers, radio, and television. They reach those inside and outside the church. Churches and religious organizations often seek free publicity from these media. The media are not in the business to give publicity. What you call publicity, they call news; and news is based on facts of interest to readers and viewers.

If you give news editors or managers significant, interesting facts, they will give you coverage. Getting church news used by the media is no accident. Neither does it get used by making the media work for it and go after it. Your success in dealing with the media will hinge on how well you understand and accommodate the mechanics of news gathering.

Learn the deadlines of the news media and adhere to them religiously. To understand the media, know their driving forces. Some of these are:

1. OBJECTIVITY

Try to be objective about your story. Don't give the media flowery, overenthusiastic accounts of what your church is

doing. Rather, give them the straight facts of the story in an objective format, and they will respect you and your ministry.

2. TIMELINESS

Don't send the media a story on something that happened last month or last week. That's not news. Know their deadlines and furnish them with current information about your church.

3. UNUSUAL

News is that which is unusual, not routine. What angle makes your story different and worth using?

4. INTERESTING

The media are concerned with people, not programs or concepts. People make news. Events which arouse emotions such as happiness, surprise, sympathy, admiration, or pity make good stories. Ask yourself if you would be interested in reading this story if it weren't about your church. If you can honestly say "Yes," then others will also be interested in the story.

5. SPECIFIC

Generalizations are not news. The media need hard data—numbers, full names, accurate titles, and correct spelling and addresses. Double check every news release for accuracy.

There is no substitute for a personal acquaintance with the editors and news directors of your local media. Know them and let them know you. Make an appointment for a specific amount of time (10 to 15 minutes) and get acquainted.

In recent years there has been a growing disdain and mistrust of the media from all segments of society, including the church. Though there may be a justification for this, Christians must remember that men and women in the media also need the good news of Jesus Christ. We can hardly witness to them if we are constantly in an adversarial relationship.

Most members of the press are neither hostile nor incompetent. They are people trying to do a job in a professional way. The relationship you develop with the media (just as relationships with other publics) will influence their estimation of your church and, more importantly, of the Lord you represent.

Our job is still to take the message of Jesus and His love to the whole world. Giving priority to an effective public relations program will help you do this. Seek God's direction for your communication program. He wants you to succeed. After all, the church and work are His. (;I

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Equipping for Effective Evangelism

THE CHURCH WILL FOSSILIZE if it does not evangelize and grow. The 21st-century church has no other options.

Our nation has progressed from an industrialized society to the information age global community-technologically sophisticated and computerized.

To attract both the saved and the unsaved to a local church crusade today requires more than a poster, prayer, pulpit, program, preacher, and place to meet. It is crucial for the Pentecostal church to consider up-to-date techniques and leadership styles that are designed to win the lost to Christ.

The following principles are intended to assist each pastor and congregation toward evangelism and revival in the local church.

PLAN TO BE PRODUCTIVE

Someone said, "If we fail to plan, we are planning to fail." Every goal requires a plan. Preparation comes before proclamation. The primary reason for advance planning is to coordinate the work of many people to ensure a successful crusade.

We are told that 90 percent of an iceberg is submerged below the surface of the water, and only 10 percent appears above the waterline. The larger the 90 percent portion, the larger the more visible 10 percent area will be. The more foundational work done before a crusade, the more visible will be the results of the event.

Do not allow tradition to be the main force behind an upcoming crusade. Just because the local church has *always* had a spring crusade does not mean that a couple with young children will come every night. Therefore, schedule around conflicting events in your town or city. Avoiding unnecessary competition is an additional plus to having a successful evangelistic event.

Warren Wiersbe said, "Creativity is like giv-

ing birth to barbed wire." It is hard work. Planning for productivity will require discipline and determination to win the lost and revive the saints.

PREPARE WITH PURPOSE

What is the purpose of the future crusade? Is it evangelism? revival? The purpose determines priorities, and priorities determine procedures. The ultimate purpose for ministry is to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20). Our goal is not decisions but disciples. It takes disciples to make more disciples.

What percentage of your time will be given to the creative stage in preparation for the crusade? How much of your time will be spent with key spiritual leaders in the church for the purpose of coordinating the crusade? In the natural realm, a farmer spends 80 to 90 percent of his time preparing for the harvest. Only 10 percent is actually spent in harvesting. Quality sowing time will produce reaping results in the local church.

What procedures need to be practiced to attract lost people to the crusade? What will activate the whole congregation to be involved in the evangelistic event or revival crusade? After reflecting on the purpose of the crusade, write a statement designed to focus on the vision, mission goals, and roles of the planned crusade. Incorporate in a few paragraphs the priorities and procedures required for effective evangelism to be actualized in the church.

PROMOTE FOR PARTICIPATION

Do more than merely inform the congregation of an upcoming evangelistic event: Instruct them regarding their participation in the crusade.

One of the greatest challenges for today's busy pastor is to find quality time to equip

BY pMMY DAVIS

Some possibilities for
ORGANIZING PEOPLE TO PRAY
 are:

1. Sunday school teachers turn their classes into prayer meetings on the opening day of the crusade.
2. Arrange for church leaders to have church members in their same ZIP Code in their homes for prayer.
3. Have various groups of people pray for specific needs for salvation, healing, Holy Spirit baptism, etc., before the crusade.
4. Develop a 24-hour prayer chain for the entire week before the crusade and involve as many as possible from the congregation.

congregations for effective evangelism. One proven suggestion is to promote participation based on the Pareto Principle: Some 80 percent of desired results will flow from approximately 20 percent of the activities in life.

To leverage time better, devote more time to activities that are important but not necessarily urgent. God's will is for local congregations to be involved in the evangelism and disciple-making process. When the local church learns how to say "No" to the unimportant things of life, then it will be able to say "Yes" to the things important to God.

Dr. Sterling Huston, director of the North American Crusades for the Billy Graham Association, wrote: "Management experts tell us that involvement plus participation equals commitment. Involvement in the process and participation in the decisions yield commitment toward the goals of any project.

"The larger the number of people involved in some meaningful role in the preparations," he continued, "the larger the number of people who will be influenced by these involved people. Each Christian has a web of relationships about his life involving family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances where he works, shops, or goes to school."

Thus it is extremely important that specific plans be made to organize for recruitment within the local church to assure maximum involvement in the evangelistic event. Effective evangelism is the result of organizing people and executing procedures based on the priorities of the Bible.

There are several foundational approaches to promote participation in an effective evangelistic event.

1. DISCOVERY

Discover who the key spiritual leaders are in the church. Think beyond titles or staff positions and ask yourself who the main, positive, spiritual influences are in the church. True effectiveness flows through people. Arrange an opportunity for the pastor and these spiritual leaders to discuss the importance of evangelism and the upcoming crusade. Also, submit the mission statement for the crusade for further evaluation and clarification. Several meetings may be required to develop a cohesiveness among these leaders.

2. DELEGATION

After key spiritual leaders have become committed to the crusade, delegate responsibilities for the planned outreach. The pastor and crusade committee should seek to involve as many people as possible to meaningful roles in advance. Capable people must be selected who will commit themselves to a specific task equal to their talents.

Clearly define each task. Responsible individuals should be over music, counselors, finance, advertising, children's ministry, nursery, ushers, prayer, discipleship, prospective converts, etc. The pastor will ultimately do more for the success of the crusade by doing less. His influence will be multiplied through these credible spiritual leaders.

3. DEVELOPMENT

All persons recruited for involvement in an evangelistic event should be trained for specific tasks. It is unfair to assume people know how to do what they have never been trained to do. As they are trained, they will have a higher confidence in themselves and a deeper commitment to the crusade.

4. DEADLINES

When a specific task is assigned, specify when it must be completed. Deadlines force local church leaders to evaluate the progress of preparations for the event continuously.

Included in these deadlines should be goals for every area of the crusade. They should be both realistic and faith-oriented-large enough to stretch faith in God and small enough for the congregation to buy into the planned crusade. Major goals should be set regarding prayer partners, advertising, attendance, finance, counselors, special music, etc. The salvation of souls and the reviving of the saints are too important not to exercise faith and vision in the promotion of the upcoming crusade.

PRAY FOR POWER

The tragedy of the 20th-century church is not unanswered prayer but unoffered prayer. Although people, procedures, and programs

are important in preparing for evangelism, prayer is the greatest of all priorities. We cannot organize prayer, but we can organize opportunities for prayer. The leadership in particular and the church in general must be the pacesetters for prayer.

Prayer is foundational to success in crusade evangelism, will release God's power, and motivate church members to be involved in other areas of the crusade. Have church members pray for specific unsaved people in the community. Pray as though the outcome of the crusade depended on God and plan, prepare, and promote as though the results depended on you.

PROVIDE FOR PRESERVATION

The final invitation of the crusade is not the conclusion of the event. It is only the beginning of the discipleship process of the new converts. Every believer needs to be involved in preparation for the actual crusade, and each must be involved in disciple making.

These guidelines, ideas, and principles

should be viewed as opportunities to enhance the disciple-making process in the church. They are not ends in themselves but exits to new and more creative approaches toward the destination of effective evangelism.

CONCLUSION

The heart of America has a vacuum that only Jesus Christ can fill. Yet people are ready for the gospel. It is time for the late 20th-century church to become like the first-century church in evangelism with all the ministry gifts functioning together. Pastors and evangelists alike must plan to be productive, prepare with purpose, promote for participation, pray for power, and provide for preservation. (;I

Jimmy Davis is the Assemblies of God evangelists field representative, Springfield, Missouri.

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS FOR PEOPLE

INVOLVEMENT BEFORE & DURING THE CRUSADE

- When should Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, and men's and women's directors begin promoting the future evangelistic event?
- Who-retired persons and others-has surplus time?
- Who would be willing to extend a personal invitation to church members and adherents by telephone?
- Who was saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit, or healed in a past crusade?
- Is it possible to have a children's crusade in conjunction with the revival or evangelistic event?
- Can the ushers be rotated nightly to involve more participants in the crusade?
- Can the choir sing each evening?
- Is it possible to have ensembles and other specials throughout the crusade?
- Who is unable to drive during the evening hours due to physical limitations or lacks transportation?
- Can transportation be arranged for these individuals?
- How many nursery and altar workers will be needed during the crusade?
- How can most church members be trained to invite their families and friends to the crusade?
- Should there be a different emphasis each night?
- How many sermons should the pastor preach on evangelism, discipleship, and revival before the crusade?
- Will the evangelist have adequate time on the opening day of the crusade to promote the outreach further, preach the gospel, and conduct an altar service?

THE LAUGHING REVIVAL



BY GEORGE O. WOOD

Recently a manifestation of laughing has become commonplace in many charismatic meetings and has been named the laughing revival. Is it from God? We must look to His Word for the answer.

The New Testament has much to say about joy. Jesus has come that our joy might be full. The promise of an abundant life presupposes despair and depression will not have the upper hand in the believer's life. Resurrection morning, meeting with the risen Christ, and the 120 on the Day of Pentecost were accompanied by boundless joy. Through times of great persecution, the Early Church exuberated joy. And joy remains as a quality in the fruit of the Spirit.

Is this biblically described joy the same as the current manifestation of laughter in church services?

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO INQUIRE

For some, the very act of inquiring as to the validity of a professed spiritual experience may be criticized as a lack of faith and an evidence of unspirituality. However, it is our duty to pass everything by the test of Scripture. The example of the Bereans is commended to us, "for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17: 11*).

It is not unspiritual or ungodly to ask questions as to whether the Bible validates a particular doctrine expounded or experience claimed. The apostle Paul admonished us to "test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), and "weigh carefully what is said" (1 Corinthians 14:29).

Paul also warned leadership to "keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the

Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28-30).

Exercising doctrinal vigilance, however, requires balance lest the contenders for orthodoxy become unloving judges in the body of Christ. The Lord commended the Ephesian church for its hard work expended in testing false from true prophets, but He corrected them for leaving their first love (Revelation 2:2.4). It's easy to become unloving while contending for the right on any doctrinal battleground. Christian apologists may appear to be full of sour grapes and come across as legalistic and Pharisaic.

We should examine any matter in the light of Scripture, including the current phenomenon of "holy laughter," but it is wrong to conduct such an inquiry with an unloving spirit.

NORMATIVE VERSUS UNIQUE

We must ask two questions: (1) Does holy laughter occur in Scripture? If so, (2) are the incidents normative (Le., intended as a pattern for Christian experience)?

Why should we ask such questions?

Suppose someone appeared on the contemporary scene with the gift of healing, and people were healed by placing themselves in the shadow of the minister. Suppose, further, that the word got around, and other ministers also began claiming to have the shadow ministry. Suppose that yet others came along and said, "All ministers can have the shadow ministry, and all who want to be healed should get themselves into the shadow."

How would we evaluate such an emphasis and claims? By asking the two questions: (1) Did such an experience ever occur in the Bible? If so, (2) was it intended to be normative for all?

For some, the very act of inquiring as to the validity of a professed spiritual experience may be criticized as a lack of faith and an evidence of unspirituality.

The answer to the first question is "Yes" (see Acts 5:15). The answer to the second question is "No." Only Peter appears to have had the shadow ministry. His experience illustrates that the Holy Spirit may act sovereignly through an individual for a limited time and in a unique way, but such working on His part may not be designated as normative in the experience of the church. We only know something is normative if it is explicitly approved, commended, repeated consistently, or commanded in Scripture.

The Bible contains many other examples of the normative and the unique in the life of the apostolic church. For example, church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20). Were Ananias' and Sapphira's deaths for lying an exception or the rule? unique or normative? (Acts 5). Are we ever enjoined to call upon the Holy Spirit to make liars fall dead? No! We follow the normative pattern of Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 in dealing with sin in the life of a church member.

The Day of Pentecost phenomena are also examples of the difference between the unique and the normative: a mighty rushing wind, tongues as of fire distributed and resting upon the heads of the 120, and all speaking in other tongues as the Spirit caused them to speak. The wind and tongues of fire are unique and never occur again in the biblical text. We cannot build doctrine on them. However, speaking with other tongues recurs in connection with being filled with the Spirit. We take speaking with other tongues as normative for the initial physical evidence of being baptized in the Spirit because it is a repeated phenomenon on other occasions; hence we deduce from the text that speaking in tongues always occurred when persons were baptized in the Spirit.

Is the laughing revival a normative pattern of Christian worship and behavior which is explicitly taught in the Scriptures?

Ask the same two questions about laughing as the shadow ministry, church discipline, and the Day of Pentecost (wind, fire, and other tongues): (1) Does the holy laughter occur in the Bible? If so, (2) is it meant to be a normative experience for believers?

In answer to the first question, the Bible is filled with admonitions to rejoice (Genesis 18:12-15; 21:6; Psalms 5:11; 32:11;

107:19-22; 126:1-3; Zephaniah 3:14-17; Matthew 28:8; Luke 1:41,46; 2:10; 24:41,52; 10:20; John 15:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16). JoY characterized the Early Church even when it faced difficult times (Acts 8:8; 13:52; 20:24).

Note, however, that the emphasis lies on *joy* rather than *laughter*. JoY appears to be an integral and indispensable quality in Christian experience, not rooted in subjective feelings of the moment but in the objective reality that God has granted us salvation, redemption, and deliverance in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amid all accounts of joy in the Bible, no direct claim or inference is made that persons laughed uncontrollably, laughed in a crowd of worshipers with a host of others also laughing, or fell-unable to stop laughing.

Recognizing this lack of scriptural precedent for the modern charismatic phenomenon of so-called holy laughter, the advocates of the experience point to Acts 2 and invite persons to "have a drink at Joel's place."

Was laughter the condition of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost as the laughing revival advocates have assumed? (See Acts 2.) Did they have the giggles, belly laughs, or some in-between form of laughing? The sound which attracted the crowd is explicitly identified by Luke as the other tongues spoken by the 120.

Peter used the question, "What does this mean?"—a question referring to speaking in tongues, not laughing—to preach a strong sermon on repentance to unbelievers. A powerful response followed: 3,000 people confessed Jesus as Lord and were baptized.

If the Early Church had been laughing in Acts 2, they soon got down to the business of preaching—a remarkable contrast with some manifestations of contemporary phenomena where the laughing either crowds out all opportunity for preaching or continually interrupts it. The Day of Pentecost concluded with 3,000 getting saved and being baptized, not 120 stuck to the floor laughing.

We should treat the phenomenon of laughter in the same fashion as Peter's shadow: Rejoice in the sovereign and unique ways God may choose to demonstrate His blessing but avoid the temptation of making assembly

The next time a new wave of doctrine hits your church, ask: "If this is so important, why didn't Jesus mention it? Why didn't the apostles teach it? Why is it not referred to or commanded in Scripture?"

lines of laughing copycats in our churches or having laughing evangelists and pastors. Our major emphasis must be Christ himself.

NOVELTY

As people of the Spirit, we live a very experiential Christianity. When we attend church, we expect to feel God's presence. Rightly so. The Bible clearly teaches that Christ's presence fills not only our minds but our emotions as well.

Our openness to experience may also make us prey to novelty, however. Thus it is important for Pentecostals to be Bible based. The Spirit of God flows within the river of Scripture and does not venture where the Word of God does not also go.

Unfortunately, in our quest for experience there is often a dearth of solid, Bible-based preaching or personal Bible study. In their absence novelty enters as a device for attracting people and crowds.

If not careful, the Pentecostal church can quickly become known as "the church of what's happening now," doing anything to attract a crowd-driven by expediency rather than biblical principle.

The apostle Paul warned us about those who come into the body of Christ with fads and novelties (2 Timothy 4:3,4). As believers, we must find the central themes of the gospel: Jesus Christ-our Savior, Baptizer, Healer, and soon-coming King!

THE CURRENT REVIVAL OF GNOSTICISM

Toward the end of the apostolic era and the beginning of the second century, a heresy developed in Christianity called Gnosticism. Its title came from the Greek word *gnosis* [knowledge]. The Gnostics claimed extrabiblical revelation and were inordinately fascinated with the unseen world and hierarchies of angels. You were not spiritual unless you bought into their so-called secret knowledge, their mapping of the world

of principalities and powers. Paul warned against those who foisted onto the body of Christ such secret knowledge which had no basis in apostolic doctrine (Colossians 2: 18,19).

The next time a new wave of doctrine hits your church, ask: "If this is so important, why didn't Jesus mention it? Why didn't the apostles teach it? Why is it not referred to or commanded in Scripture? Why does it not seem to

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have been thought of or practiced by the Early Church?"

We must be on guard regarding the reemergence of a new Gnosticism in the church today which leads people beyond the sure foundation of Scripture into the orbit of persuasive personalities who promote and sell their own ideas and experiences. They do not obey the apostolic injunction to "preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2), preferring instead to pawn off on the body of Christ-for an offering or for notoriety-their new, heretofore secret spiritual elixir.

Further, we must be on guard lest this Gnostic emphasis, a twin to new age Eastern mysticism, subtly invades Christian worship. Such an emphasis seeks to bring the seeker into an altered state of consciousness wherein rationality is suspended, and the worshiper floats inert in the divine om, the Yogastate of mental void.

New Testament worship, while impacting the senses and the emotions, involves also the mind and will. To the spiritual mystics at Corinth, Paul gave the reminder that "the spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:32,33).

SCRIPTURE ONLY

In April, 1995, I was in Italy, and the weeping Madonna was attracting far more media attention there than the laughing revival has attracted in North America and Western Europe.

Luther's warning, "Scripture only," rings in our ears. If we blindly accept all nonscriptural phenomena simply on the basis of our feelings, experience, or the lack of a human explanation, then we risk drifting into a dangerous subjectivity which will in the course of time pull us, like the Roman church, farther and farther away from biblical Christianity. Such a drift can ultimately produce a generation easily prey to a complete deception away from Christ (Matthew 24:24).

It is not improper for Pentecostals to err on the side of caution. We would do well to remain within the circle of scriptural safety and not traverse into the danger zones of spiritual phenomena just outside the circumference (the penumbra) of God's written Word.

Why place major focus on peripheral experiences or doctrines when we may instead give central focus to our Lord, His doctrine, and that of His apostles?

THE ANTIDOTE

How can the body of Christ become immunized to the constant winds of doctrine which buffet us today?

The best answer is not to become a negative critic, a brittle apologist, or an unloving doctrinal sword rattler. Neither the world nor the church is helped by mean-spirited people. Unfortunately, we have examples of those whose theological orthodoxy is sound, but their behavior is inconsistent with the fruit of the Spirit. They shoot arrows of discord, selfish ambition, dissensions, and factions rather than demonstrate love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5: 19-22). (By the way, since self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, why is the trait of lack of self-control so celebrated in the laughing manifestation?)

Why this emphasis today on laughing? Is it possible that most church services and the individual Christian's spiritual life resemble a funeral more than anything else? There's no life-nothing's happening.

Has the joy of the Lord gone out of your church or personal experience? Is deadness in the body of Christ? The correction is not to go to the other extreme but to become centered in Christ Jesus.

We also need to recognize that our society is one which prefers the microwave to the oven. We want it all now. The laughter experience is joy microwaved. Joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, is developmental and takes time to grow, even as love and patience.

JoY should be part and parcel of our Christian experience. It flows out of our relationship to Jesus Christ. Since we know He is Victor over sin, death, hell, the devil, and the grave, we are alive with triumph.

Jesus himself gave us a picture of the true laughing revival when He told the stories of the things that are lost. His permission to rejoice is a welcome antidote to any false or aberrational emphasis present in the current laughing revival (Luke 15:6-24).

The true laughing revival, spoken of by Jesus himself, is one which comes to a church doing the work of evangelism, which knows the unlimited joy of seeing lost men and women, boys and girls, come to Christ.

Before that kind of revival occurs, there must be work and effort. The shepherd searches for the lost sheep, the woman seeks the lost coin, and the father agonizes over the lost son.

As this century draws to a close, may the body of Christ experience that kind of a revival-an unprecedented hour of evangelism with believers who truly celebrate over the lost being found.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

May I offer some counsel to those pastors and Christian leaders who are sincerely concerned for revival, who want

to embrace what the Spirit is doing but desire to avoid pitfalls which bring harm to the body of Christ in general and individual believers in particular?

1. Selfexamination

The laughing phenomenon should prompt us to look inside ourselves. Do you have the joy of the Lord?

Developmentally, joy flows out of one's personal relationship to Jesus. It is the second fruit of the Spirit, following love (Galatians 5:22)-love, then joy. The New Testament continually gives us practical help on becoming loving persons (Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 13). Our temptation is the desire to receive love rather than give it; however, in Jesus we have received by grace through faith the love of God in overflowing measure. A loved and loving person produces a life of joy.

Isn't that why Paul could write Philippians, the letter of joy, from a prison cell? He was not, at that moment, experiencing gales of laughter, but he could continually say, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

Our joy must be integrally related to the formation of Christian character. JoY walks together with the companions of love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The life of too many believers is marked by joylessness, despair, depression, bitterness, and anger.

The Holy Spirit's task is to replicate the life of Jesus in us; and Jesus, although never recorded as laughing, continually manifested joy (Luke 10:21; John 15:11). He wants His joy to dwell in us. We must, therefore, ask

ourselves if we are consciously or unconsciously blocking out His joy from our lives. Is there unconfessed sin? unforgiveness? failure to trust Him in trial?

Thus our initial reaction to the so-called laughing revival is not one of censure or condemnation but of introspection. Each of us must ask, "Does His joy radiate through my life?" If not, then my emptiness must be turned into hunger for His presence. We must let the Holy Spirit point out any corrective measures we need to take and then let Him pray through us in languages learned and unlearned (1 Corinthians 14:4).

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Surely an aspect of praying in the Spirit is the replenishment of joy in the inner life. If in my own personal communion with Him the Lord wants to download a great measure of joy so that I laugh before Him, then may I be willing to receive all He wants.

2. Regulation

Quite clearly, the apostle Paul distinguished between personal and corporate edification. Thus in 1 Corinthians 12-14 he placed a regulation on the public use of the gift of tongues-a maximum of three utterances per service. In private he spoke in tongues even more than the Corinthians.

We need to keep perspective:

(1) Unbelievers must be considered.

If even a scripturally established gift, such as other tongues without interpretation, turns off the unbeliever to the claims of the gospel, how much more a nonscriptural gift such as laughing. "Will they not say you are out of your mind?" (1 Corinthians 14:23).

(2) The church must be edified. We

must be concerned for the building up of the church. To the persons who misused the gift of tongues in the Corinthian church and to the contemporary advocates of laughing, Paul said under inspiration of the Spirit, "Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12).

(3) Love, not spiritual gifts or laughter, must be at the center. That's why 1 Corinthians 13 lies between the chapters on spiritual gifts (12 and 14). How sad to see persons who insist on exercising laughter at the expense of dividing a local church. Both laughers and nonlaughers would do well to regulate all conduct by the test of 1 Corinthians 13. Also, "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of [laughing]" (Romans 14:20, paraphrase).

3. The cold water

Many Pentecostals had the unpleasant experience of initially sharing their testimonies of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with a pastor or spiritual person whom they thought would rejoice with them, only to find that the trusted Christian poured cold water on their experience.

Our task as leaders is not to pour cold water on persons who testify to a fresh experience with God but to rejoice with them for experiencing a victory or deliverance. As we embrace them in their newfound joy, we also make it possible through our personal bond to become encouragers and models to them in further growth in Christ.

4. The continuum away from Scripture

Laughing in the Spirit appears to be on the edge of the circle of biblical doctrine. Unlike the gift of tongues, miracles, or discernment, for example, laughing in the Spirit gains no mention or approval in Scripture. Neither is it condemned.

Two very apparent dangers, however, are inherent in the current laughing phenomenon:

(1) It will assume a higher value

than the biblical experience of the baptism in the Spirit or praying personally in other tongues.

The Pentecostal revival will collapse within a generation if we even unthinkingly begin to devalue genuine Bible-taught experience in favor of new experiences not commanded or modeled in Scripture. Laughing is unique; speaking with other tongues is the normative scriptural pattern.

(2) Departing from experience which is rooted in Scripture to embrace spiritual phenomena of any sort in all likelihood will develop into other extreme manifestations.

Witness the current phenomena in some charismatic churches—roaring and even barking have begun. The roaring is explained as the Lion of Judah. I do not know what the barking represents. If the spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of the prophets (1 Corinthians 14:32), then surely the spirit of the roarer and

barker is also subject to them. Sometimes we need to call things by their real names, and I do not hesitate to say that barking and roaring are weird. They either come from a mistaken fleshly notion or are the devil roaring and his dogs barking.

Let not the Pentecostal church get caught up in mysticism which is totally devoid of any scriptural root.

GAMALIEL'S ADVICE

Some feel we should not attempt an examination concerning the current laughing revival, "For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God"

(Acts 5:38,39).

Remember who spoke those words? Paul's teacher, Gamaliel. They were true words as applied to the apostles and the church of Jesus Christ. However, Paul never took the advice of

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his old professor regarding false doctrine. Read his letters and note that he did not base the validity of any doctrine on its outward success, acceptance, or growth but upon fidelity to Jesus Christ. If Gamaliel's test were always to be used, then we would have to affirm many things as being from God which are not. For example, Islam, Buddhism, Mormonism, or Jehovah's Witnesses have not yet died out. The fact these religions are still growing is not a testament at all to their validity.

Paul's charge to Timothy and all Christian leaders was, "Preach the Word!" (2 Timothy 4:2), because "the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:3).

Only sound doctrine produces spiritual health and well-being, Christlikeness, and godliness. Most needed in the church today are those whose emphasis lies with the preaching of God's Word, the faithful exposition of eternal truth given us by inspi-

ration of the Holy Spirit. As preachers of the gospel, let us with diligence guard the trust given us. When the Word of God is not faithfully proclaimed, persons fall quickly into error and deviate from the centrality of Jesus Christ and His work of grace.

We are all praying today for God to revive us and empower His church to bear witness to His name throughout all the earth. And the Holy Spirit has already begun His renewing work. When revival occurs, it is always marked by deep repentance, passion for holiness, traving fasting and prayer, resurgence of spiritual gifts and fruit, unity in the Body, deliverance of the oppressed, anointed music, Christ-centered living and preaching, signs and wonders, ardent evangelism and missionary efforts, resurgence of young people preparing for full-time ministry, diminishment of social problems and crime, and-most importantly of all - the salvation of the lost.

"Oh God, send that kind of revival upon us!" (;I

Abridged. A complimentary copy of the unabridged version is available from: General Secretary, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65802.

**Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.*

George O. Wood, D.Th.P., is general secretary for the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

TOGETHER, WE CAN REACH



Billy Graham congratulates Don Argue on his election as president of NAE. Billy Graham has been a key part of NAE for decades.

BY DON R. ARGUE

"TODAY evangelicals are the country's largest category of Christians. Between 30 and 40 percent of the population is a realistic figure."² Evangelicals now represent the dominant stream in American Protestantism.³

"In the 1990 survey of the 500 fastest-growing Protestant congregations in the United States, 89 percent were found to be evangelical. Scarcely any part of the world has remained

untouched by the global renaissance of evangelicalism."⁴

Before we congratulate ourselves, we must compare gains and victories with the great need for spiritual renewal/revival in America. Our culture is plagued by moral and ethical compromise. Sin and selfishness dominate with results observable in every part of the nation.

Charles Colson has raised the question, "If there are so many evangelicals, why are we not impacting the culture in a greater way?"

This can be answered in two ways. The first is positive: If the influence of evangelicals were removed from our nation, the tidal wave of sin would devastate our culture. Thank God, as Bible-believing Christians we are having a significant impact on the spiritual life of the nation.

The second response to Colson's question is a challenge: Evangelicals are a major part of the population, but our influence is not as great as it could be. Why?

The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18) to reach all people is basic to our theology/doctrine. Again I raise the question, "Why is our influence not impacting the nation in a greater way?" I believe the answer is found in Jesus' words (John 13:34,35;17:20,21). The application and actualization of the Great Commission is demonstrated by our Lord in these verses. If Christians love each other as Christ loves us, the result is evangelism: "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35). Jesus again called Christians to unity, and He prophesied the result "that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).

Many believe God is clearly speaking to His church that His anointing is evident when Christians come together in unity and love to reach lost men and women. The current prayer movement and the men's movement, Promise Keepers, are examples of Christians coming together; the result is evangelism.

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) provides evangelical leadership for over 50,000 churches from 80 denominations and 197 Christian organizations and parachurch ministries. The driving vision of NAE is to reach America for Christ. Jesus promised that as we demonstrate our love for each other in the body of Christ "all men will know." This is evangelism.

NAE was founded in 1942 as a result of a national meet-

AMERICA FOR CHRIST

ing called for Christian leaders. The Assemblies of God was a major player in the call for united evangelical action. General Superintendent E.S. Williams, General Secretary J.R. Flower, and Thomas F. Zimmerman, pastor from Granite City, Illinois, attended. T.F. Zimmerman became the Assemblies of God general superintendent in 1959 and was elected the first Pentecostal president of NAE in 1960.

Thomas Trask, George Wood, James Bridges, Loren Triplett, and Charles Hackett, current Assemblies of God officers, serve on the NAE board of administration, as does G. Raymond Carlson, former general superintendent.

In the early days of NAE, God helped people like E.S. Williams and Harold John Ockenga craft a Statement of Faith. For 53 years the foundation of the Association has been this statement. Membership in NAE requires the signing of the Statement of Faith (see sidebar).

The ministries of NAE are multifaceted and include affiliates: National Religious Broadcasters, Christian Stewardship Association, Evangelical and Foreign Missions Association, Evangelical Child and Family Agency, and National Association of Christian Child and Family Agencies. The National Black Evangelical Association is a fraternal association.

The NAE-owned subsidiary, World Relief Corporation (WRC), provides emergency relief aid through the local evangelical church anywhere in the world. WRC has a ministering staff of over 300 serving around the world. Through evangelical churches, WRC has helped over 115,000 refugees to be resettled in the United States. The Assemblies of God is a vital part of WRC. Loren Triplett, executive director of Division of Foreign Missions, serves on the WRC board.

For over 50 years NAE has maintained a significant presence in Washington, D.C. Through the Office of Public Affairs, evangelical interests have been represented and protected in Congress, the courts, and the White House. The Office of Public Affairs facilitates contacts with the State Department for our foreign missionaries and the branches of the military for our chaplains.

During the coming months NAE will be launching a national program that will bring evangelical leaders together on the local level to reach their communities for Christ. "The anointing of the Holy Spirit is resting upon these efforts

as a fulfillment of John 13 and 17.

God is calling His church to work together to reach America for Christ! ~

Don R. Algue, Ed.D., is president of the National Association of Evangelicals, Carol Stream, Illinois. He formerly served as president of North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

ENDNOTES:

- 1Paul Galloway, "Evangelicals a Force, But Who Are They?" *Chicago Tribune* (May 26, 1995).
- 2Larry Eskridge, assistant director, Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.
- 3Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995).
- 4Alister McGrath, "Why Evangelicalism Is the Future of Protestantism," *Christianity Today* (June 19, 1995).

NAE STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

MISSIONS CONFERENCE



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What Does It Mean To Be Pentecostal?

Three Perspectives—

THE DYNAMIC BEHIND THE DOCTRINE

BY ROGER COTTON

I am a first-generation Pentecostal by choice after an experience in early adulthood and through marrying a third-generation Pentecostal. I am also a student of the history of the Assemblies of God and of Pentecostalism. The perspectives of where we have been and how others have viewed us helps me draw the following conclusions on what it means to be a Pentecostal.

From the beginning of Pentecostalism at the turn of the century, and even again in the charismatic renewal of the 1970s, the essential defining principle of Pentecostalism has been the desire for and active pursuit of all that God has for His people as described in the Bible. That means in practice Pentecostals have a high view of the Bible as relevant today, a unique dynamic in worship, and a special vitality in daily life.

First, it means Pentecostals view all the Scriptures as profitable for doctrine and instruction in what God wants for His people (2 Timothy 3:16). The narratives of the Bible are not just nice stories but revelations of precedents for our walk with God. The same Jesus, whose words and deeds are recorded in Scripture, still speaks and acts today

OUR DISTINCTIVE, YES...BUT NOT OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH

BY ZENAS BICKET

A faith Pentecostal is more than a tongues speaker. From the earliest days of 20th-century Pentecost, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was only one of four cardinal doctrines. Salvation, healing, and the imminent return of Christ rounded out the four cornerstones of Pentecostal belief. Adapting A.B. Simpson's Fourfold Gospel of Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King, the Pentecostals substituted the baptism in the Holy Spirit for the sanctification cornerstone! The substitution was logical and appropriate, for the Holy Spirit plays an important part in the believer's sanctification (Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11). But for later generations (especially outside Pentecostal ranks), the tongues-speaking emphasis of the Baptism gradually overshadowed the sanctification emphasis. Never should we respond to a question about our beliefs by speaking only of tongues or the infilling of the Spirit, no matter how precious that experience may be. We must be ready always to give a *complete answer* for the belief that energizes us as Pentecostals (1 Peter 3:15). Being Pentecostal involves more than testifying of an entry-level experience into the Spirit-filled life. It

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND RATIONALISM IN TENSION

BY BENNY AKER

"Oh, I've never seen a purple cow and never hope to see one, but this I will say now—I'd rather see than be one."

This little saying expresses in a special way the dilemma I faced growing up in a non-Pentecostal environment. We had heard about tongues speakers, but often it was not good or kind things. Then it happened: God filled me with the Spirit, and life has not been the same. Since then it has not been easy to know who a Pentecostal is or how she/he should act. Our roots in the holiness tradition often confuse our children who come into contact with other viewpoints, especially those with a strong sense of Pauline justification by faith alone (as opposed to legalism). And the rise and fall of televangelists has not helped us much, either.

The title of this article contains the word *be* and implies a contrast to the word *act*. To *act* as a Pentecostal is not the same as to *be* a Pentecostal. *Being* suggests something is inside, that which cannot necessarily be seen but can be misinterpreted by external qualities.

Let me, first, address a vital issue of the danger of rationalization. Though I spent my childhood years in another evangelical denomination, I have been Pentecostal (Assemblies of God) for 34



(Hebrews 13:8).

Second, Pentecostals have always been known for wholehearted, even exuberant, expression of worship. This comes with wanting all God has for them. There is a boldness and an excitement among such worshipers—a healthy allowance for the whole person to get involved in worship. The great joy and hope expressed in an atmosphere of freedom in Pentecostal services attracts outsiders. Also present is the expectation of supernatural manifestations of the grace of God through Christ as described in the New Testament.

Finally, Pentecostals have a dynamic in their daily lives as a result of seeking all that God has for them. He is still doing for believers today what we read about in the Scriptures. It has been exciting to experience the personal direct leading and empowering of the Spirit. Early Pentecostals came to expect an experience of the Spirit's power which they observed in Acts 2:4 and proclaimed for all believers. This baptism in the Holy Spirit became defined in terms of the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues.

More and more traditions were established over time that provided an increasingly narrow definition of a Pentecostal. Bible doctrines are important, but sometimes traditional applications are treated as though they were actually stated in Scripture.

Even more important, we must not lose the dynamic historical perspective of what it means to be Pentecostal. If we define ourselves only in terms of doctrines in contrast to what others believe, we get a fragmented or fossilized view of Pentecostalism and miss the vibrancy and dynamic of the whole picture!

Pentecostals are seekers after God. They are always open to new understandings of Bible truths for a present-day experience. They are striving to

learn greater yieldedness to the Spirit in both fruit and gifts, in holiness and ministry, and whatever else God wants to do in and through their lives. They encourage one another to express themselves freely and wholeheartedly in worship. An important result of the dynamic of the Spirit in their lives is that others come to know Christ. With this there is a sense of urgency because of the heightened expectation that Christ could return at any moment.

When these things are no longer true of us, we are no longer truly Pentecostal. When we see our group as having arrived at God's final truth and no longer sense our spiritual need nor hunger for more of what He has for us, we are no longer truly Pentecostal. I want the dynamic that led to the doctrine. Both are important to being a Pentecostal in the 1990s. iii

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¹The following chart gives an overview of my perspective of how Pentecostal experience progresses from the desire to the doctrine:

1	Earnest desire for and active pursuit of all that God has for His people as described in the Bible
2	Experience of the dynamic that God wants for all believers—the baptism in the Holy Spirit
3	Definition of the experience in terms of the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues
4	Exclusive doctrine of the group

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requires giving evidence of *continuing walk in the Spirit*, a life that is becoming more Christlike through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual fruit is certainly an evidence of a Spirit-filled life, the mark of a true Pentecostal. That does not mean that the Pentecostal is the epitome of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, meekness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23). It means simply that these virtues are being fashioned and developed in the life of the believer who cooperates with the Spirit's work in his or her life. An authentic Pentecostal cooperates with the fruit-producing work of the Holy Spirit.

A Pentecostal recognizes that the Spirit works in the body of Christ through *gifts and ministries* to edify and build up believers and to draw unbelievers to Christ (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30; Ephesians 4:11). Knowing that every believer is a priest and minister of God's grace (1 Peter 2:5,9) and through the inner working of the Spirit is appointed to minister or serve, the Pentecostal desires and expects the Spirit to impart one or more gifts and seeks to use those divinely given gifts to glorify God and edify mankind (1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 14:1). The regular operation of the gifts is the mark of a vibrant Pentecostal community.

A Pentecostal is a *soul winner*. Acts 1:8 is more than a memory verse. It is a distinguishing mark of a Pentecostal: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (NIV). The promise is "for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39, NIV). More than just a tongues experience, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience of divinely sent power—power to witness, to evangelize. Though everyone who witnesses is not a Pentecostal, one who does not witness is not fully Pentecostal.

The Pentecostal knows "God is spirit,

Having described the characteristics of a true Pentecostal, one may legitimately observe, "Most of those traits are desired by and seen in the lives of all devoted evangelicals." That cannot

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years. The first decade of my new life in the Spirit paralleled the emergence of the charismatic movement. Assemblies of God churches where I lived involved themselves in this revival. It was not long, however, before I picked up more and more of a distancing of many Assemblies of God ministers and churches from such meetings as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International.

In the last 10 to 15 years I think I have detected, in many areas, a shift away from Pentecostal life and worship styles: spontaneity of worship and prayer; prophesying; tongues and interpretation; and, in some cases, the manifestation of a hunger for more of God. It is not that we do not believe or desire these things—we do. During this time, many practical and theological threats have accosted us—we have had to turn our attention to think through these things: the shepherding movement, transcendental meditation, the latter rain movement, and the inerrancy issue. Could it be that in the process, we have picked up a mentality that is not conducive to the in-breaking of God's Spirit?

We would do well to reflect on earlier examples of the impact of rationalization on the church. For instance, the gift of prophecy all but died out after the first century.¹

Second-century Montanism was sort of a reactionary, yet serious, attempt to restore this gift to the church. Terrance Callan said, "Montanism was called 'the new prophecy,' an appellation which might suggest that it was not only a revival of prophecy but a different kind of prophecy that had been current in the church. It was attacked precisely because of this, criticized as a departure from the type of prophecy familiar in the church, i.e., prophecy without a trance."²

Robert L. Thomas, citing Aune, gave five major reasons for this decline, two of which are important to our topic at hand.

First, the presence of false prophets eventually undermined the authority of true prophets. The church responded by ruling out prophecy altogether. Second, the church decisively repudiated Montanist prophecy. (These two are closely related.) He included two additional reasons for the decline in a footnote, referring again to Aune. One is important for us: "The increasing Hellenization of the Church and the accompanying emphasis on the rationality of the faith. Such a trend was evident as second-century leaders sought to defend the Christian faith in a society that was thoroughly entrenched in its Greek philosophical background."³

The lesson we should learn is that in our dealing with error, we should not surpass genuine spiritual experiences because of the abuse of some errant practitioners. Furthermore, this process of decline may be all the more subtle because our Western culture is similarly Greco-rational in its worldview. That is, we tend to condition ourselves to rely merely on reason, even though we commit theologically to Spirit experiences.

This brings me to my second point. Not only is a strictly cerebral approach detrimental to Pentecostal experience, it conditions a mind-set that removes God from our lives. When we theologize in our strictly rational, Western way we *think about* God. This becomes a substitute for the presence of God. What Pentecostalism offers to the world is the immanence of a transcendent God. By making Him mostly transcendent through our Third Person (i.e., theology is only discussion *about* God) approach, we no longer experience Him in our lives.

Twenty years ago when students came fresh from our churches, it was common for them to say, "God told me" or "God spoke to me." We teachers hesitated to use the same expression and often cautioned others about using such expressions because of abuse and, in some cases, because of pride. In the last 12 years or so, however, rarely have I heard much language. I now encourage it

because it helps me to practice the presence of God.

I began, about the same time, to notice that some types of education trained the mind to think about God in the third person and thus to remove the presence of God. I made a conscious effort to search for a truly biblical Pentecostal educational approach. This search has led me to realize that a merely Western rational approach to education is detrimental to Pentecostalism and to Pentecostal ministry—it leads to skills that are not practical in a Pentecostal way.

With this in mind, one can be trained and know theology well, be in the ministry, but still not be a Pentecostal minister. My approach to education now takes great pains to have at its center a consciousness of the presence of God and His miracle-working power. Everything then fits orderly around this center.

While in many ways I am not the same person I was when first filled with the Spirit, I find I must cultivate the same sensitivity as when I was so hungry for God that nothing else mattered. The same sense of His presence and the results are still with me—that never changes. When He filled me with His Spirit, my soul had a bubbling up of the Spirit. This is what I had searched for so long. The Scripture came alive; I could not wait to tell others about this wonderful Savior whom I now knew in a powerful and personal way. Now I'd rather be a Pentecostal than see one. ~

¹Robert L. Thomas, "The Spiritual Gift of Prophecy in Revelation 22:18," *Journal of the Pentecostal Theological Society* 32 (June 1989): 212, notes authors who discuss this issue.

²Terrance Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and in 1 Corinthians," *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985): 139.

³Thomas, 207-215.

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PREVAILING GATES

BY JERRY McCAMEY

Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

What a promise! To know

that all the satanic forces of hell are not able to withstand the aggression of the corporate body of Christ gives us the assurance of a preordained victory. The gates of gangs, drugs, illicit sex, violence, pornography, alcohol, and abortion will not prevail against the Word, purity, holiness, and the Spirit-led life.

Then what's the problem? Something is not right—is not working. Not only does it seem the church is not attacking hell, but hell is attacking the church. For Matthew 16:18 to work, the church must be the aggressor. By only taking a quick inventory of our spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:14-17), it is clear that we, the Church, are designed to be attacking,

Where there is not a scriptural understanding and structure of accountability, the result is a prevailing gate.

beating, and pounding on the very gates of hell until they are destroyed. Either Jesus meant Matthew 16:18 to be figurative or something is not going according to plan.

What's the problem? The *what* is obvious-prevailing gates. However, I submit that the problem is not a matter of *what* but *where*. I am not worried about the gates I mentioned earlier—they will come down as soon as we can get to them. The problem is: The gates within the church are prevailing against us.

The church I am privileged to pastor has a very special ingredient. Nothing in its structure inherently prevents it from growing. No prevailing gates.

LEADING FROM THE PEW

SO many of today's congregations have created their own version of church. Some are led from the pew, not the pulpit.

The leader in many congregations is the 50-year charter member who has run off more good pastors than any church could ever hope for. In others it is the member with the most money who runs things. As a result, deacon boards bring in pastors not to lead the church but only to manage. It takes five board meetings to buy a chalkboard in some churches. Absurd! To let the pastor lead might mean changes, and God forbid! So the church asks the pastor to manage the church and maintain the status quo. The problem: *This structure is unscriptural—a prevailing gate.*

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Another prevailing gate is the lack of accountability. Some simply do not have an appreciation and respect for this principle. Therefore, they do not pursue a church structure which is dependent upon accountability. I cannot emphasize this strongly enough: Everyone must be accountable to someone else in the Lord's kingdom. Most people do not understand accountability and how to set a church in proper order.

To have scriptural accountability, you must understand the necessity for it to have an upward flow of direction. Accountability is something you choose to give—it cannot be taken from you. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22) does not say, "Husbands, make your wives submit." The wife's submission is completely in her hands. If the husband tries to force her to submit, it will never be true submission. The word *submit* implies an act of one's own choosing. I've never met a woman who had a hard time submitting to a husband who loved her "as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

A church must create and present to its members an atmosphere where they can choose to get involved or plugged in and become accountable. A pastor does not choose the members of his congregation or who will attend his church; they must choose him to be their pastor. If they will not give him his proper authority, then their relationship will not work. A pastor must act fully in his capacity and role as pastor. He must operate in complete authority—always remembering he is not a dictator of the people but a servant unto the Lord.

I am only Calvary Temple's pastor of the people as long as that is their desire. If I lead them and love them as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, the people will have no problem submitting and allowing me to lead in full scriptural authority.

If a pastor does not create this atmosphere of accountability, then one of two things will happen: Either (1) the people

will perish without a vision and chaos will rule in the church, or (2) the pastor will try to force people to follow his lead and oppress the people. Both of these will destroy churches. Some congregations refuse to be accountable to their pastor's leadership, and in other churches the pastor rules as a tyrant. Where there is not a scriptural understanding and structure of accountability, the result is a prevailing gate.

UNDUE ORDER

Another prevailing gate in the church is undue order. You can do the right thing the wrong way or at the wrong time. In so doing the right thing is no longer right. This may seem a little tough or picky, but God expects us to do *what* He says, *how* He says, *when* He says. The problem is one of perspective.

We begin to think we can take what God has commanded us and obey that command the way we see fit. Wrong! The Scriptures disprove this line of thinking. While David was transporting the ark of God, he came

to Nachon's threshing floor, and the oxen caused the ark to shake (2 Samuel 6). Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, and the Lord's anger was kindled against him. God smote Uzzah, and he died. Uzzah was doing a good thing—what seemed to be the right thing—but God had commanded that no one was to touch the ark. No matter how right or understandable Uzzah's action seemed to be, it was wrong.

You cannot operate the church of the living God by secular programs and procedures. While many methods may be acceptable as aids or helps, they cannot and must not become the standard of operation. A church must be run (1) from the pulpit, not the board room; (2) in church services, not business meetings; (3) by the pastor, not the president of the corporation; and (4) according to the Bible, not the bylaws. Doing the right thing the wrong way makes it become wrong (Revelation 2:1-4) and a prevailing gate.

I am often asked about church growth. My philosophy is: Find out what you are doing that is preventing church growth and stop doing it. Jesus said, "I will build my church." What prevailing gates are stopping Jesus from building His church where you are?

Let's be honest enough to define the prevailing gates in our churches and tear each one down so we can get on to our preordained victory over the gates of hell. **E**



Jerry McCamey is pastor of Calvary Temple, Indianapolis, Indiana.

*I am often asked about church growth.
My philosophy is: find out what you are doing
that is preventing church growth
and stop doing it.*

WHY CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION?



PHOTO BY
DAVE EDMONSON

BY DAYTON A. KINGSRITER

The "Rules and Piece of SH" of Harvard University in 1646 included this statement: "Everyone shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life.... Everyone shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of languages and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths."¹

Most major American universities started out with strong spiritual roots. Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, was not established until 1924, but its founding bylaws stated: "The aims of Duke University are to assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."²

These two examples demonstrate the dramatic shift American colleges and universities have made away from their original emphasis on spiritual values.

Speaking to the Eighth Annual National Conference of Accuracy in Academia, Mark Draper said, "Marxism survives in only two places on the planet: on Castro's island empire and on the American university campus. With the Soviet Union gone, the most socialistic, the most godless enterprise

on earth is America's educational system. The university has lost its soul."³

In "The Endless Binge" *Newsweek* reports, "They stagger, they get sick, they get into fights and I-night stands. Who are they? The leaders of tomorrow." In a national survey, Harvard University reported that 44 percent of all college students were "binge drinkers" (defined as five or more drinks in one sitting within 2 weeks of being surveyed).⁴

Why Christian higher education?

Our society needs moral and ethical leadership. The colleges and universities of America, led by the social activists of the 1960s, have all but abandoned the religious emphasis they once professed to be foundational. The future leaders of our country are being educated in environments with virtually no moral or spiritual moorings. "The predominantly liberal mind-set on American universities has made it 'politically incorrect' to be a Christian. For many students, it is unthinkable that Jesus could meet his or her needs."⁵

Why Christian higher education?

The church needs clergy leadership. Over 70 percent of our foreign missionaries, district superintendents, and ministers have attended an Assemblies of God college. Without Assemblies of God higher education, where would we get the clergy leaders for our Fellowship? We need leaders who are educated in a distinctly Pentecostal atmosphere by Pentecostal faculty members who will teach and model the doctrine of the Assemblies of God.

Why Christian higher education?

The church needs laypeople who are filled with the Holy Spirit to be board members, children's workers, choir members, Men's and Women's Ministries leaders, and Sunday school teachers. The church also needs the influence of Christian businessmen, teachers, lawyers, machinists, carpenters, plumbers, and other professionals in the community.

Why Christian higher education?

Because Christian colleges offer uniqueness in their pro-

grams that secular colleges do not have and never will have; student ministries, spiritual formation, spiritual nurture, wholesome social activities, safe environments—all held together by the concept of integrating faith with learning and living. Assemblies of God colleges offer the additional distinctive of Pentecostal faculty and students.

Why Christian higher education?

To give students excellent academics and a wholesome and safe alternative to the influence of secular education. The leading researcher in higher education in America reports that the number one influence on undergraduate students is their peer group. The second greatest influence is the faculty.⁶ Where are young people most likely to get the best academic, social, and spiritual influence from their college experience? From the secular colleges and universities that have abandoned their moral and spiritual roots or from an Assemblies of God college where they will be influenced by Christian, Pentecostal faculty and peers? The anti-God, anti-spiritual influence on secular campuses is having a devastating effect on Christian young people. "Because of the current anti-Christian propaganda dominating college classrooms, many of America's choice young people who are raised in Christian homes graduate from college as atheists or agnostics—mocking their Christian upbringing."⁷

In "Case for Assemblies of God Christian Higher Education," I carefully documented what is happening academically, socially, and spiritually on secular college campuses and compared it to the Christian college campus. Information in the research will help young people make an informed decision about the importance and viability of a Christian higher education. Are pastors recommending that their young people seriously consider attending an Assemblies of God college? Are they taking them to College Days? Pastoral influence is vital to their decision.

Why Christian higher education?

Our society and the church need leaders and laypeople who have been educated in an environment with academic excellence and emphasis on Judeo-Christian principles. Additionally, the Assemblies of God needs leaders and laypeople who have been educated in a Pentecostal environment to perpetuate the faith of our Fellowship. ~

—Adapted from *"The (Social) Pit and the Pendulum: A Case for Assemblies of God Christian Higher Education"* (see page 136).



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ENDNOTES:

- 1 "How Christians Started the Ivy League," *The Rebirth of America* (Philadelphia: The Arthur DeMoss Foundation, 1986), 41.
- 2 George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield, *The Secularization of the Academy* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1992), 3.
- 3 Mark Draper, "Take Back the Temple!" *Vital Speeches of the Day* (September 15, 1994), 733.
- 4 "The Endless Binge," *Newsweek* (December 19, 1994), 72.
- 5 Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ newsletter (Orlando: August 1994), 3.
- 6 Alexander W. Astin, *What Matters in College?* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1993), 410, 411.
- 7 Bright, 3.



W O R L D L I N K

Raising a Missionary Budget

WORLD
LINK



BY H.H. "SPUD" DEMENT

FROM ITS INCEPTION the Assemblies of God has been committed to worldwide evangelism and church planting. Missions is at

the heart of who we are as a Fellowship. At the founding meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914 some 32 missionaries were included in the list of recognized ministers-some of them were present and some had written from the field asking to be included in the list.

Many of these early missionaries traveled to the field at great personal sacrifice and with no guaranteed method of support. Since those early days a program of deputation has been established to provide missionaries with a system of prayer and financial support.

Pledges from churches indicate the endorsement of the missionary call by the

local church. Church members, family members, and friends make individual pledges to build the missionary's financial support. This base of support strengthens continuity of work on the mission field and helps reduce the attrition rate of personnel.

When a missionary receives approval from the Foreign Missions Board, a budget of monthly support and a cash balance are established. Veteran missionaries who return home after 4

years' service are presented with an adjusted budget which reflects current cost realities.

The monthly support budget is based on the cost of living in the assigned country and the work assignment. Monthly pledge sup-

port covers a mission-

ary's personal allowance, rent, medical insurance, foreign taxes, Social Security, pension, children's school expenses, work and ministry expenses, return airfare, and basic auto expenses.

A missionary's cash budget is based on estimated costs of single-time expenditures and covers airfare, household equipment, rent and utility deposits, freight, duty, language school, and visas.

Many missionaries also receive financial assistance from Women's Ministries groups for household goods and district offices for airfare and up-front cash. This assistance shortens the deputation period and decreases the stress many itinerating missionaries experience.

An important component of missionary work is partnership with the national church of the assigned country. Well over half of a missionary's budget is channeled into ministry tools and programs to enhance the growth of the Kingdom. The missionary's budget is similar to that of a local church and/or district office-a smaller portion goes to salary and benefits, and a larger portion goes to projects and ministries. Faithful support of the foreign missions family through monthly pledges and cash offerings is sincerely appreciated.

Raising their budgets is an important part of our missionaries' ministries. Sharing their vision with the local church instills a sense of missions, making it personal and relational. This interactive relationship builds vision and faith for the church and the missionary. ~

H. H. "Spud" DeMent is Division of Foreign Missions secretary of foreign missions relations in the United States.

PERSONAL

PLEDGES

Allowance
Rent
For

CASH

Household
Rent Deposits



MISSIONARY BUDGET

Ministry Assignment
Field Ministries
(Bible School, Literature, ICI, etc)
Field Fellowship Duty
(Missionary Council)
Children's Schooling
Ministry Travel
Auto Expense
Projects
Return Fares
Newsletters

Fares
Visas
Freight
Duty
Language Study
Project





Focus on America

II Soveu Lawaki, chairman of the Assemblies of God Tongan Fellowship, has planted 25 churches among his people in the U.S. Lawaki stays about 2 years with each new church, turns it over to a pastor, and then moves on to plant another church. That is success.

II We face three critical challenges if we are going to be relevant in the 21st century: (1) Focus on minorities. (2) Invade the cities—where the people are. (3) Bring back the supernatural.

II Seventy percent of students between the ages of 16 and 24 believe absolute truth does not exist and that all truth is relative and personal. These young people will be in positions of leadership and influence in our country and around the world when they graduate. Can we afford not to share Christ with them?

II The 1994 ACMR report indicates out of the 11,764 Assemblies of God churches, 2,545 have prison/jail ministries, and 4,623 have nursing home ministries.

II At Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti countless university students are being saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and baptized in water.

II It is estimated some 100,000 Indians live in the Greater Los Angeles area. Indian Revival Center in Bell Gardens is one of only two Native American Assemblies of God churches in the Southern California District. The district has asked for help in establishing more Native American churches in this Invasion 39 city.

II With an estimated 5 million adherents in the U.S., Muslims now outnumber

Assemblies of God members and adherents by more than 2.5 million. It is estimated that by the year 2000, Muslims will also outnumber the Jews.

II More Hispanics are in America than in Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Paraguay, Panama, and Uruguay combined.

The Division of Home Missions has appointed three couples as missionary candidates to Hispanic ministry, bringing the total missionary force to Hispanics in America to five.

II It is estimated there are more Jewish believers in the world today than at any time since the first century. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, there has been a surge of Russian Jews immigrating into the United States. Many are accepting Jesus as their Messiah.

II Project Hope targets the greatest single resource of the Assemblies of God today—its pastors. Project Hope links the small-church pastor with a seasoned mentor/facilitator to provide spiritual, character, and ministry effectiveness development.

II On any given night in San Francisco, California, some 20,000 homeless people are on the streets. San Francisco Rescue Mission, developed by Roger Huang, is reaching out to these people through two Sunday adult services—one English-speaking and the other Chinese-speaking—and other outreaches. His vision is to establish a Christian school and develop churches for different nationalities. ~

BY CHARLES E. HACKETT

Charles E. Hackett is executive director of the Division of Home Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

Surprises in Ministry

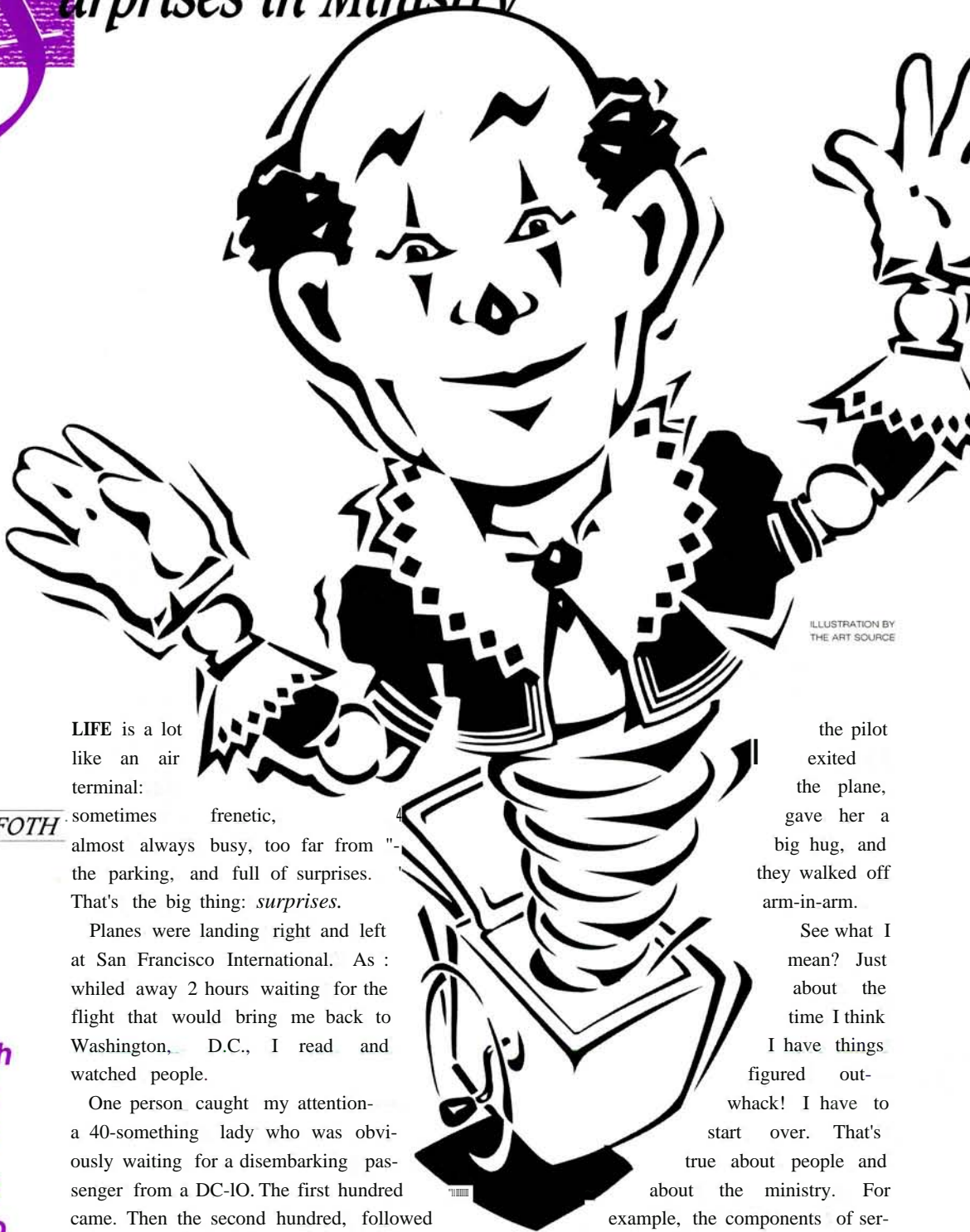


ILLUSTRATION BY
THE ART SOURCE

BY RICHARD B. FOTH

I rifled through the files in my head to figure out what to do with a guy who plays his mouth in church.

LIFE is a lot like an air terminal:

sometimes frenetic, almost always busy, too far from the parking, and full of surprises. That's the big thing: *surprises*.

Planes were landing right and left at San Francisco International. As I whiled away 2 hours waiting for the flight that would bring me back to Washington, D.C., I read and watched people.

One person caught my attention—a 40-something lady who was obviously waiting for a disembarking passenger from a DC-10. The first hundred came. Then the second hundred, followed by about a dozen others. She waited. Trying to ease what I sensed might be some apprehension over an incoming friend, I grinned and said, "Isn't that just how it is? He's probably the *last* guy in the *last* seat!" She returned the smile and said sweetly, "Oh no, he's the *first* guy in the *first* seat!" Just then

the pilot exited the plane, gave her a big hug, and they walked off arm-in-arm.

See what I mean? Just about the time I think I have things figured out—whack! I have to start over. That's true about people and about the ministry. For example, the components of services—some worship, testimony, teaching, altar (or alter) time. After singing and preaching hundreds of times, you think you have it down. Then you get surprised. You hope it's by the Spirit, but too often it's by people.

On a muggy night in 1973 at Urbana

Assembly of God in east central Illinois, about 200 folk showed up for the Sunday evening service. One of our very capable lay

leaders opened the service in prayer and started to ask the people to greet each other before they were seated. Suddenly, and without announcement, from somewhere in the sanctuary came the sound of a trumpet-on key and crystal clear-playing the old favorite, "How Great Thou Art."

The leader turned to me with an inquiring look. Shrugging, I raised my eyebrows to signal, "Don't look at me. This isn't my deal." It was the kind of exchange between leaders on the platform in an awkward moment which takes milliseconds to enact but shortens your life by 7 months. Simultaneously our heads swiveled in radar-like motion as we tried to locate the source of the unsolicited instrumental solo.

We found him somewhere around the song's phrase, "I hear the rolling thunder." He stood three pews from the back of the sanctuary on the center aisle. His neatly combed silver hair complemented his ruddy facial features. But it was the green Bermuda shorts that really caught my attention. To find university students uniquely clothed in a church service in those days was not unusual, and, of course, in the nineties all bets are off. On the other hand, to find a senior citizen so attired was unusual.

The most interesting thing about it, however, was the trumpet-there wasn't one. He was playing that brass melody through his tightly compressed lips. To say the least, the sanctuary was abuzz, and I riffled through the files in my head to figure out what to do with a guy who plays his mouth in church. At that moment, as often happens, the congregation came to the rescue and began singing the chorus.

As we finished the chorus I breathed a sigh of relief, only to realize the trumpeter had launched into the second verse. Not to settle for the ordinary, he cupped his hand to his

mouth and gave the trumpet a mute. The lady beside him, presumably his wife, tugged at his sleeve to get him to sit down. Finally, she succeeded. Teenagers who had wandered halfway around the sanctuary to get a better look headed back to their seats, and I moved to try to bring some coherence to what had just happened.

Shock is a wonderful thing. It protects the mind and emotions from the reality of a traumatic situation. I forged ahead as if the mouth-trumpet incident were just another expression of the creativity of the congregation. There was no way to explain the events of the last 3 minutes, and our folks by nature were resilient. Undoubtedly, visitors had gone. Meanwhile, I could see my ministry fading away; only grace could prevent anyone's asking about the incident after the service.

The following Thursday evening it came home to roost. A young married man from the congregation was in my garage working on my pastoral car. Sliding out from under the dilapidated 1964 VWbug, he said, "Pastor, could I ask you a personal question?"

"Sure," I replied.

"What'd you think of the trumpet man Sunday night?"

"What do you mean?" I responded innocently.

"Do you think that was in order or what?"

"Not really, but I was caught off guard and didn't know what to do. As far as what he did, I don't know that the Bible prohibits playing one's mouth in church. Why do you ask?"

"Well, I can do that too!"

"Really?"

"Vep, and I just wanted you to know that even though that guy didn't bless me spiritually, technically he was quite good."

Surprised again.

Both the congregation and I weathered that storm, but it took some time before I could sing "How Great Thou

Art" with a straight face. Successive Sunday evenings began a little more warily. Those folks long remembered that summer Sunday surprise.

If it's peace, quiet, and routine we want, the pastoral venue is not the place to find it. Nevertheless, stout hearts, let's keep moving ahead-pray hard, plan well, and expect-anything. ~

Richard B. Foth serves under the authority of the Potomac District, Assemblies of God, as minister-at-large to the congressional and diplomatic communities of Washington, D.C.

The closing business session of the 46th General Council in St. Louis included an historic statement on the wider use of ministries of color throughout the Assemblies of God. Following is the revised resolution adopted at the Council, preceded by the Assemblies of God general superintendent's statement of commitment to it.

Resolution 25 (Revised)

USE OF BLACK MINISTRIES

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT'S STATEMENT, AUGUST 12, 1995: This 46th General Council has adopted a resolution calling upon our Fellowship to enhance and accelerate efforts toward inclusiveness of our black brothers and sisters throughout The General Council of the Assemblies of God. I pledge that, with the Spirit's enablement, I will do all within my power to fulfill what this General Council has called for. I support this action with all my heart.

Whereas the gospel of Jesus Christ declares God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; and

Whereas the Scriptures have promised that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh; and

Whereas the world for whom Jesus died and the flesh upon which the Spirit is poured out is without regard to ethnicity, class, economic distinction, or gender; and

Whereas the foremost exemplary model of Pentecostal community in the 20th century is the Azusa revival where leadership and people joined together without regard to ethnicity-providing a divine rebuke against the Jim Crow laws and racial discrimination of this worldly age and throwing a shining light of God's intention for His church where the blood of Christ washes out the color line; and

Whereas because of the deep stain and sin of racism following the Azusa revival, predominantly black and white Pentecostal denominations went their separate ways for a season; and

Whereas the Assemblies of God was established during that time of separation so that our Fellowship became one from which black persons were mostly absent; and

Whereas our testimony to the world has suffered as a result of this separation, and our Fellowship has been deprived of the rich blessings which could have been made by our black brothers and sisters; and

Whereas in the goodness of the Lord and in the fullness of time, the Holy Spirit prompted us as a body in our 1989 General Council to repent of and denounce racism as a sin; and

Whereas across this Fellowship congregations are opening their hearts to become multiethnic communities which bear witness to Jesus Christ who told us that the world will know us by our love for one another; and

Whereas it is right that we repent of racism and ask our black brothers and sisters for forgiveness for failing to keep and treasure the shining ideal of Jesus and the 20th-century Azusa revival; and

Whereas we are committed to removing every last vestige of racism from our midst and restoring to the work of the Lord and the blessing of an integrated Fellowship; and,

Whereas toward this end we encourage our hearts the full participation of black persons within the Assemblies of God in fellowship and leadership; and

Whereas action by this General Council is needed to give impetus to our districts, ministers, and people for the full inclusion of black brothers and sisters throughout our Fellowship; therefore be it

Resolved, That this General Council ask the general superintendent and Board of Administration, the Executive and General Presbyteries, the executive officers and presbyteries of districts, pastors and ministers, local church boards, and congregations to take whatever actions are necessary or advisable to enhance and accelerate the progress being made in our Fellowship for the inclusion of black brothers and sisters throughout every aspect of the Assemblies of God; and, be it further

Resolved, That this Council request the general superintendent to issue a public statement speaking to the spirit of this resolution before the Council adjourns.



THE CHRISTLESS CHRISTMAS

Luke 2:41-50

INTRODUCTION:

On July 29, 1969, astronaut Neil Armstrong climbed down an aluminum ladder and put his feet on the surface of the moon. In an address to the nation President Richard Nixon said, "The greatest event in human history occurred when man first put his foot on the moon."

I contend, however, that the greatest event in human history was when God put His foot on the earth. He stepped out of heaven through the womb of a Jewish virgin. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. His name was Jesus.

Once again it is Christmas time. Christians realize this is the occasion when the Son of God became the Son of Man, and the God of Genesis became the Babe of Bethlehem. Allow the text to come alive this Christmas season.

1. Who lost Christ?

Joseph and Mary lost the Lord Jesus. Jesus had been with them 12 years. They, the ones closest to Him, knew everything about Him, but they still lost Him.

Some of the greatest men in the Bible fell into sin. Adam, Noah, Saul, Samson, David, and Peter failed God. How? Adam's disobedience, Noah's drunkenness, Saul's disposition, Samson's defilement, David's desires, and Peter's denial. No matter how long a person has known Jesus he can still lose Him, for all Christians are vulnerable to backsliding.

2. When did they lose Christ? (verse 41)

Joseph and Mary lost Jesus during a religious celebration. The Passover celebration, which involved sacrificing a lamb, symbolized Jesus. Christmas concerns Christ's birth—the sending of the Lord. The Passover made man look ahead to redemption. Christmas makes man look back at the Incarnation.

People may lose Christ in the midst of the Christmas season—when activities keep them from Christ. This Christmas, be careful not to lose Christ amid the celebration. Christians need to remember that their joy is because of Jesus, their songs are because of their Savior, their love is because of the Lord, their inheritance is because of the Incarnation, and their blessings are because of Jesus' birth.

3. When did they leave Christ? (verses 43,44)

There are three reasons why Mary and Joseph left Jesus behind:

a. *Their perception was weak.*

Jesus tarried in Jerusalem, and Joseph and Mary did not know it (verse 43). It is a tragedy to think you have Jesus when you do not—to think you are saved when, indeed, you are lost.

b. *Their presumption was wrong.*

Verse 44 indicates they supposed Jesus was in their company. It is wrong to suppose that Jesus is with you if you are careless about your relationship with Him. Make sure He is in your heart now; don't suppose you are right

with God.

c. *Their progress was wasteful.*

Verse 44 also indicates they went a day's journey without Him. A day without Jesus is a wasted day. A life without the Lord Jesus is a wasted life. How did they leave Jesus? Mary and Joseph left Him one step at a time.

One backslides from God one step at a time. If there was ever a time that you loved Jesus Christ more, then you have backslidden that much. Don't leave Christ behind this Christmas season.

4. Where did they latch onto Christ? (verses 44-49)

Jesus' parents found Him in the same place they had left Him: in the temple. The Passover had been celebrated in the temple. You will always find Christ where you left Him. There are several steps in getting back to Him:

a. *Recognize your problem concerning Jesus.*

Verses 44 and 45 indicate they sought for Him among kinsfolk and acquaintances but did not find Him.

Before one can return to Christ, he must realize that he has lost Christ. Mary and Joseph did not even allow family members to stop them from finding Jesus. Will Jesus be found among your family members this Christmas, or will you allow family to stop you from serving Him?

b. *One has to return to the place of Jesus.*

They sought for 3 days until they found Him (verse 48). There was a change in direction after a contemplation of condition.

- c. *One must regret his past without Jesus.*

Mary and Joseph sought for Him sorrowfully (verse 48). Godly sorrow leads to repentance. The saddest person in the world is one who once had Christ but has lost Him.

- d. *One needs to receive the person of Christ again.*

Not only did Jesus' parents seek Him (verse 45) and see him (verse 48), they secured Jesus by taking Him home with them (verse 49).

Keep Christ in your home this Christmas. Let Him be the center of conversation and the focal point of the family. If you have lost Him, receive Him again. Jesus is the reason for the season.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus precedes all others in priority and superiority, and He succeeds all others in finality. He came down the stairway of heaven, was born in Bethlehem, hidden in Egypt, raised in Nazareth, baptized in Jordan, and tempted in the wilderness. He performed miracles on the roadside, healed multitudes, and charged nothing for His services. He conquered everything that came against Him. Then He went to the cross of Calvary and died for the sins of the world. He was buried in Joseph's tomb; on schedule He rose from the grave

with the power of His omnipotence.

Where is Jesus in your Christmas plans this year? Are you worshipping Him, or have you left Him behind among the tinsel, toys, and tree? It is not too late to come back to Him. Don't allow your heart to be a busy inn that has no room for Him but a cradle for the living Christ and His nativity.

-Jimmy Davis, Spn'ngfield, Missouri

THE ROOT OF DAVID

Revelation: 5:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

The word *root* speaks of a plan. Roots are under the surface, hidden like footings for a building. The Revelation text shows fulfillment of all things that are to come. John referred to Jesus as the Root of David. Jesus' coming was no afterthought. Every detail was prepared and planned from the beginning of time (Revelation 13:8).

Roots speak of:

1. Beginnings

- a. God's plan from the foundation of the world
 - (1) Prophecy to Eve (Genesis 3:15)
 - (2) Continued through lineage of Abraham (Genesis 22:18)
 - (3) Renewed through Jacob (Numbers 24:17)
 - (4) The tribe of Judah prophecy (Genesis 49:10)
 - (5) Tied to family line of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1)
 - (6) Focused through house of David (Jeremiah 23:5)
 - (7) Tied specifically to a virgin girl (Isaiah 7:14)

- b. Beginnings significant (Zechariah 4:10)

- (1) God's plan started with a thought
- (2) Echoes throughout the ages

2. Development

- a. Plan developed (Matthew 1:1; Galatians 4:4)

- (1) Fulfilled in prophecy to Jacob (Luke 3:34)
- (2) Fulfilled in prophecy to Judah (Luke 3:33)
- (3) Fulfilled in prophecy concerning Jesse (Luke 3:32)
- (4) Fulfilled in prophecy to David (Luke 3:31)
- (5) Fulfilled prophecy concerning virgin (Matthew 1:18,24)
- (6) God's plan for each person (John 3:16)

- b. Opposition to plan

- (1) Herod (Matthew 2:1-8)
- (2) Judas Iscariot (Matthew 10:4; Psalm 41:9)
- (3) Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15)
- (4) Forsaken (Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:50)

- c. God's answer in the midst of opposition

- (1) David and Goliath
- (2) Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea
- (3) The fall of Jericho
- (4) Golgotha
- (5) Disciples turning the world upside down

3. Fulfillment in the "Root of David" (Revelation 5:5)

- a. Filled redemptive process
- b. Opened door to eternal life



c. Jesus purchased world with His blood

CONCLUSION:

God has a plan for each life-rooted in small beginnings, developmental stages. His ultimate goal for each one is a life of giving, "Freely you have received, freely give." The root has no purpose unless there is a plant. The plant has no purpose unless it is to provide life for something else; otherwise, it is a parasite.

—David Cawston
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

JESUS, NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

Luke 1:30,31; Philippians 2:6-11

INTRODUCTION:

The name of Jesus denotes all He is known to be—Son of God, Son of Man, Savior, Redeemer, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. When Jesus told His disciples to pray in His name, He meant they were to pray with total dependence upon Him as Master, Savior, and Lord.

Paul caught a glimpse of Jesus' supremacy through (1) every knee's bowing and (2) every tongue's confessing His lordship.

1. Kneeling and confessing of heaven-exaltation
 - a. From Sovereign to servant (Philippians 2:6,7)
 - b. From servant to Savior (Philippians 2:8)
 - c. From Savior to Sovereign (Philippians 2:9,10)
 - (1) Resurrection

- (2) Ascension—preexistent glory (Revelation 5:11-13)
2. Kneeling and confessing of earth-adoration
 - a. Earth direct recipient of God's act of love (Matthew 1:21)
 - b. Hebrew equivalent of Jesus—Joshua
 - (1) Israel's wandering 40 years
 - (2) Moses, the Lawgiver, died
 - (3) Captives in wilderness
 - (4) Joshua to the forefront
 - c. In the fullness of time—Jesus
 - (1) Man lost in sin
 - (2) The Law
 - (3) Brokenhearted
 - (4) Captives of sin
 - d. Jesus came (Luke 4:18,19)
 - (1) To preach
 - (2) Heal
 - (3) Deliver captives
 - (4) Restore sight to the blind
 - (5) Liberate the bruised
 - (6) Acceptable year of the Lord
 - e. Earth filled with adoration
 - (1) Jesus, Name above all names
 - (2) Our Redeemer
3. Kneeling and confessing under the earth
 - a. Prophecy to Eve fulfilled (Genesis 3:15)—hell on course to destroy kingdom of God
 - (1) Abel
 - (2) Noah
 - (3) Joseph
 - (4) Moses
 - (5) Jesus (Bethlehem, Mount of Temptation, Nazareth rejection, Calvary)
 - b. Satan defeated (Revelation 1:18)

CONCLUSION:

All these elements will submit to the

dominion of His majesty and power. God summons all creation to swell with glorious unison of praise to Jesus Christ, "Worthy is the Lamb!"

We are offered redemption—the choice of ~iving Christ as Savior. Today it is by choice; then it will be by command to bow and confess Jesus is Lord. Now it may be in worship; then, obedience. Now confession; then admission—Jesus, Name above all names.

—David Cawston
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES TO HAPPINESS

Matthew 5:3-12

INTRODUCTION:

To many people happiness is a goal. Jesus explained that happiness is a process.

1. Happy are the humble-minded, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

a. Three hardest words, "I need help!"

b. Coming to Jesus involves crying out, "I need help!"

Fulton Sheen used to say, "The worst thing in the world is not the fact that people are sinners, but... they are sinners and won't admit it."

2. How happy are those who know what sorrow means.

a. No road without bumps.

b. "Blessed are they that mourn"—"that show sorrow over Our hearts must sometimes be broken that we might gain

God's goals for our lives.

3. Happy are those who claim nothing.
 - a. Yielding personal rights to God-"Blessed are the meek....."
 - b. Evidence of violation-anger and greed.
 - c. Jesus our example-"despised and rejected of men" and "Father, forgive them"
4. Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for goodness...they shall be satisfied.
 - a. Involves what to say "Yes" to.
 - b. Society lacks convictions, A healthy spiritual appetite is an essential to real happiness.
5. Happy are the merciful.
 - a. How you treat **others** (Matthew 6:14,15).
 - b. Two words, *bitterness* and *resentment*, are great enemies of the human heart.
6. Happy are the pure in heart.
 - a. The utterly sincere-in worship, life, and service.
 - b. Joni Eareckson Tada broke her neck at age 17. Struggled, bitterness, heart infection. But today a dynamic witness of the love of God.
7. Happy are those who make peace.
 - a. Jehovah Shalom, "Peace be with you!"
 - b. Peace in relationships-making it right with those wronged.
8. Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness.
 - a. Fear of witnessing gone-don't fear what others may say.
 - b. Finishing the race-nothing can stop me.

CONCLUSION:

Happiness cannot be found in pills, things, places, or even other people. It can only be found permanently by following the concepts embodied in the greatest sermon ever preached,

-Glen D. Cole, Sacramento, California

THE FOUR FRONTS OF THE ABORTION BATTLE

Esther 4:12-16, NIV

INTRODUCTION:

Ours is not the first generation that has been called upon to speak in defense of life. Since Adam's fall death has dogged humanity's heels, and in fallen men it has found a ready and willing ally. In every age pagan cultures have practiced human sacrifice, infanticide, exposure and abandonment of unwanted children, and abortion. In every age the Spirit of God has raised up men and women of God for just such a time as this.

In every age the Church has stood in defense of life, and in every age the Church has prevailed. Pagan cultures have been reformed, evil practices-including infanticide and abortion-have been abolished, and new laws respecting the sanctity of life have been enacted.

With these thoughts in mind let's consider "The Four Fronts of the Abortion Battle":

- (1) intercession-the spiritual front;
 - (2) education-the political front;
 - (3) intervention-the practical front;
 - (4) reconciliation-the redemptive front.
1. Intercession-the spiritual front

(Ephesians 6:12).

- a. The *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 was more than a judicial decision-it was a covenant with death. Because it is a spiritual covenant with death it can only be defeated by spiritual means (i.e., intercession).
 - b. "How can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house" (Matthew 12:29)
 - c. In intercession we must ask Christ to bind the spirit of death which is the invisible power behind the visible rulers of this age,
2. Education-the political front.
 - a. We must reframe the question in the hearts and minds of the public. In its simplest form, the fundamental question is: "Dowe believe that a mother has the right to have the child in her womb put to death?"
 - b. We must educate the public in regard to the development of the baby in the womb, Make no mistake, even the earliest abortion kills a living baby.
 - c. We must fuel a grassroots awakening. It is our only hope of ending the abortion holocaust.
 - d. What can you do? Voucan:
 - (1) Educate yourself so you can educate others.
 - (2) Write letters to the editor of your local paper and to your elected officials.
 - (3) Help elect pro-life candidates.
 - (4) Become a host family for a



crisis pregnancy program.

(5) volunteer your services to a local pro-life organization.

(6) Organize a pro-life committee in your church.

(7) Adopt an illegitimate child.

3. Intervention-the practical front.

a. "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8).

b. "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:3,4).

c. Personal illustrations:

(1) I will never forget the attractive, weeping woman who approached me at the conclusion of a service in Kentucky. She told me that on her way to

the abortion clinic she had prayed for someone to be there to ask her not to kill her baby. No one was there and she aborted her baby.

(2) While preaching a pro-life rally in Anchorage, Alaska, I met a woman with a unique ministry. Each week she spends a day or two at the Anchorage Airport watching for native women who fly in to have abortions. When she spots one, she strikes up a conversation with her. With love and compassion she draws those desperate young women out of their shells, and they soon confide in her. Of course, she counsels them not to have abortions. If they agree, she makes arrangements for them to be cared for through a

local crisis pregnancy program, or she takes them into her own home. Several babies' lives have been saved as a result, and their mothers have been spared the trauma of abortions.

4. Reconciliation-the redemptive front (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Finally, you can become involved in ministering the healing love of Jesus to women who have been traumatized by abortion. The woman who makes this fatal choice is faced with a lifetime of guilt and regret. Apart from the grace of Jesus Christ, she has no way of escaping the painful consequences of her tragic decision.

CONCLUSION:

George Grant writes: "Knowing that the struggle for life would not be won in a day, the early Christians worked hard, educated their children, involved themselves in their culture, lobbied their magistrates, and built for the future. They knew that theirs was a multigenerational task, so they laid the groundwork for a multigenerational victory. The pro-life ethic was not an isolated single-interest issue for them. It was integrated into a comprehensive covenantal worldview that touched every area of life. Out of the context of this worldview they educated the people they lived with, worked with, worshiped with, and played with. Relying on the promises of God, they unleashed the truth that would ultimately set all men free."

-Richard Exley, Tulsa, Oklahoma

TWELVE CALLINGS FROM GOD

Hebrews 11

1. Called to do the right thing (verse 4).

Abel paid the price for doing what was right in God's sight (cf., Matthew 5:10).

2. Called to be pleasing to God (verse 5).

Enoch's greatest testimony was that he pleased God. You cannot please God without faith (verse 6; cf., 1 John 3:22).

3. Called to obedience (verse 7).

Noah's calling was to obey God's instructions. He could never have foreseen the outcome of obedience; neither can we.

4. Called to an inheritance (verse 8).

(Compare Romans 8:15-17 with Hebrews 1:2; also note 1 Corinthians 2:9.)

5. Called to reproduce (verse 11).

We are called to bring souls to Christ. Could Sarah have imagined the outcome of the birth of one child? Can you realize the outcome of winning one soul to Christ? Remember the Sunday school teacher who brought D.L. Moody to Christ.

6. Called to believe without seeing: (verse 13).

Remember Ruth's story. Is there any way that a Moabitess would have dreamed of being found in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5)?

7. Called to make a sacrifice (verse 17; cf., Matthew 16:24).

8. Called to be separated (verse 24; cf., 2 Corinthians 6:17,18).

9. Called to live by faith (verse 29).

God will also ask us to take a step of faith in seemingly impossible situations where He chooses to lead us.

10. Called unto warfare (verse 30; cf., Ephesians 6:11-18).

11. Called to help others (verse 31; cf., Matthew 25:40).

12. Called to endurance (verses 35-37; cf., Matthew 24:13).

-David C. Hammerle

Fallentimber, Pennsylvania



**"Pastor Dan, I really admire you.
You're such a nonconformist!"**



CENTRALIZED PURCHASING SAVES MONEY

Centralized purchasing with maintenance of an all-church stockroom for supplies could save most churches hundreds of dollars annually, be more efficient, and result in receiving better supplier discounts.

Most churches with attendance of 150 or more will make purchases for no less than nine areas of ministry, including the Sunday school, youth, music, men, women, boys, girls, and children's church. Each area will maintain supplies of paper clips, scissors, copier paper, construction paper, and a host of other items.

To avoid this kind of duplication, church supplies should be charged to the general fund and allocated to departments on the basis of need.

The first step in establishing an all-church supply-purchasing policy is to designate one or two persons to do all purchasing. Usually it is better to have at least two persons authorized to make purchases in the event one is unavailable when a purchase is needed.

In writing notify all suppliers of the centralized policy and give them the names of persons authorized to make purchases. Unauthorized persons should be discouraged from charging items to the church's accounts.

The church's purchasing agent should accumulate a list of items generally used by the church and locate sources from which each can be purchased. In the process of determining the needed supplies, the purchasing agent will discover a wide range of

items used by the church: office supplies, plumbing needs, electrical items (including lightbulbs), lawn-care items, general hardware, paper products (including toilet tissue and paper towels), and janitorial supplies. Most suppliers will give the church a 10 or 15 percent discount on all purchases.

Rather than shop all over town every time a purchase is made, establish one firm for each of the items needed. Then set up open accounts so purchases can be charged and paid by check. Charge accounts should be kept current with payments by the 10th of each month.

To avoid duplicate payments, never pay from invoices or shipping orders; wait until a bill is received and then pay. If the person making the purchases is not the one writing checks for payment, require the purchasing agent to initial and date all bills before payment.

In the process of initialing bills make certain the unit price is correct and the item charged is the one received. Model or stock numbers will usually help.

Consider mail-order firms where prices are better. For example, Quill Office Supplies carries an extremely large stock. Sometimes the prices are better than those offered by smaller local firms.

Although it will take time, an effort should be made to list all items in each category that may be needed in the future. Then it will be easier to obtain bids from suppliers of needed items. Once a supplier is selected, it would be wise to remain with that firm for at least 1 year. You may wish to reconsider the supplier at the end of the year.

Exercise care and don't overstock. Also, give departments a list of items available in the stockroom. Sometimes

church workers are inclined to make purchases on their own and pay cash for the items needed rather than checking with the church's supplies.

Be sure the stockroom is locked securely. Unfortunately, some people feel anything that belongs to the church belongs to the individual members.

Don't waste supplies. While the individual member of the church may not know the value of these items, a good purchasing agent will be aware that it costs to keep the stockroom supplied. When properly maintained, a centralized purchasing policy will prevent duplication of purchases and save the church much money.

—*Carl G. Conner*
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

FELLOWSHIP OF PREPARATION-THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

We precede the church business meetings with approximately 15 minutes of worship, Scripture reading, a choral offertory, and Holy Communion.

Worshiping before the church business meeting sets the scene for open repentance, purging of our flesh, and openness to seek the presence of the Holy Spirit upon the business deliberations. Simply to be reminded through the participation of worship and Holy Communion allows us as individuals to come personally to the feet of Jesus, where we reflect upon our salvation and consider the importance of our one-another fellowship. This certainly serves to humble each worshiper and draw us individually to acts of recon-

ciliation with our brothers. It also gives a fresh perspective regarding the Lord's business at hand.

Participation in Holy Communion levels the ground on which we stand. It also tends to modify responses and to soften inquiries during the business meeting that follows.

There is no attempt from the pastoral leadership to shape or mold opinions regarding an agenda. The desire is simply to sharpen our spiritual acuity to aid us all in seeing more clearly and hearing more dearly the voice of the Holy Spirit whom God has sent to lead and guide us into His great kingdom's truth. As a result, our business meetings are an extension of our worship. We leave the business meeting refreshed, informed, blessed, and nourished by the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

This spiritual preparation creates an atmosphere which is easily embraced. Without question, worship and Holy Communion preceding business meetings place our minds on the highest agenda.

—*Earl J. Banning, Houston, Texas*

TREATING VISITORS ROYALLY

Guests who attend Renton Assembly have come to the right church if they don't like to be ignored.

The first step is training our people to be friendly. We place greeters at every door and have a well-staffed hospitality center in the lobby where guests are registered and questions are answered cheerfully and efficiently. The center is supplied with guest packets filled with helpful information. Not

only are visitors given verbal instructions for finding Sunday school rooms, our hosts and hostesses escort first-timers to classes, nurseries, and other areas in the large building.

On Sunday mornings we greet guests from the pulpit. We used to invite first-time visitors to a monthly luncheon to give them an opportunity to meet other visitors and our key leaders. Now we offer a guest reception immediately following each of our two morning services where guests are served refreshments and introduced to key people in leadership. We also photograph guests and give the 5- by 7-inch color photos to them the following week. The photos also help our staff greet visitors by name.

Sunday afternoon each first-time visitor receives a call from a pastor or an elder. Our associate pastor sends them a personal postcard on Monday, and I also send them a letter that week. Visitation teams also deliver house-plant gifts to the visitors' homes the first week.

Many have commented on the warmth and hospitality they've received.

To facilitate integrating visitors into the congregation, we offer a "Discovery Class" to all newcomers quarterly. In the 4-week class attendees learn the vision of Renton Assembly; our strategy to reach our community for Christ; the importance of faithfulness in time, tithe and talents; insight concerning the believer's spiritual gifts; and how to take an active role in the church's ministries.

Churches of any size can adapt these ideas to make visitors feel welcome. In a day when more and more people are



feeling isolated in an impersonal society, reaching out to new people in creative ways may be the deciding factor in getting them to stay long enough to encounter the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

-Rick Ross, Renton, Washington

PRAYING ELDERS CONTINUE THE WORK OF DEACONS

When deacons are elected for definite terms, they often feel left out when their terms expire. If they have the call of a deacon, their desire for ministry does not diminish.

To keep these men functioning in their calling when they are not on the official board, set in place a ministry of praying elders. Invite these men and women to form the backbone of a prayer team.

On a quarterly basis bring them together with the current board for prayer and fellowship. Keep them updated on current prayer needs in the church. Make it clear that the role of praying elder is not policy-making but prayer support. Use praying elders also in the weekly prayer ministry of the church.

*—David B. Crabtree
Greensboro, North Carolina*

BUS MINISTRY EXPANDED FOR MAXIMUM BENEFIT

Although Renton Assembly has been involved with a bus outreach for many years, we have recently expanded our vehicles' uses.

We still have teams of workers who call and visit every child on our bus

routes, and we do periodic door-to-door canvassing in neighborhoods when establishing new routes. Each bus is equipped with a driver and two captains.

Our buses and vans are also used by our Royal Rangers, Missionettes, Christian school, children's ministry, youth ministry, Bible Quiz teams, singles group, and even our senior adults ministry.

Our senior adults are an active bunch, and they enjoy monthly outings to various locations in the area. After riding the bus to these special outings, several of them requested that a bus route be put in place so they could also have transportation to church. An airport shuttle van was procured for this because of the ease in boarding and a good purchase price. Several

unchurched seniors have been coming and finding Christ as Savior through this effort.

As our congregation grew, we rented a nearby high school for additional parking and ran a shuttle bus to and from the lot. I communicated to my staff, the elders, deacons, trustees, and other key leaders that I expected them to show leadership in parking at the shuttle lot. We printed up forms so people could give a 6-month commitment to parking there.

At the beginning of the push, riders were given special buttons to wear to identify them as caring enough about our visitors to give up their parking spots. As an added incentive, we provided coffee and doughnuts to the shuttle riders.

Last April we moved to our new loca-

tion and put our vehicles to yet another use. Although we have room for more parking, a number of those spaces are located some distance from the building. A roving shuttle picks up people from the farthest corners of the lot and deposits them 10 feet from the front door.

Some of our seniors, who live close to our old church and also those who ride public transportation to our old location, can now catch a shuttle there on Sunday morning and ride to our new site.

Since owning vehicles requires basic expenditures for insurance and upkeep anyway, we might as well get as much use out of them as possible. Our bus ministry touches many lives for the Kingdom.

-Rick Ross, Renton, Washington

POLAROID@ CAPTURES THE NAMES OF NEW FACES

One of the great challenges facing a growing church is name recognition of new people. A Polaroid@ camera and a felt-tip marker make the identification process faster. Endeavor to get a Polaroid@photo of new people/families at a newcomers banquet or any small-group setting. Ask them to write their names under their pictures. Place the pictures on 3-inch rings (maximum 40 pictures).

As our staff gathers for prayer every morning, each staff member takes a ring and prays for the families, calling their names before the Lord. This ensures our praying for every family in the church every day, and it helps us

learn names and faces of adults and children. Within a week our staff knows our new attendees by name, and we are constantly reminded to pray for them.

*—David B. Crabtree
Greensboro, North Carolina*

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Is there a program idea, outreach activity, or creative approach to ministry you have used that has worked? Tell us about it. We would like to know, and other church leaders will want to know, too.

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THE SECOND CHANCE

On New Year's Day 1929, Georgia Tech played the University of California in the Rose Bowl. A man named Roy Riegels recovered a fumble for California in the first half. Somehow he became confused and started running with the ball in the wrong direction. One of his teammates, Benny Lom, overtook and tackled him 65 yards away, just before he was to score a touchdown for the opposing team. When Cal attempted to punt on the next series of downs, Tech blocked the kick and scored a safety which was to be the margin of victory.

Everyone who was watching asked the same question: "What will Coach Nibbs Price do with Roy Riegels in the second half?"

The men filed from the field into their dressing rooms where they sat on benches and the floor—all except Riegels. Wrapping a blanket around his shoulders, he sat in a corner, put his face in his hands, and cried like a baby.

If you have played football, you know that a coach usually has a great deal to say to his team during halftime. That day, Coach Price was quiet. No doubt he was trying to decide what to do with Roy Riegels.

The announcement came 3 minutes before the second half was to begin. Coach Price looked at his team and said simply, "Men, the same team that played the first half will start the second."

The players got up and started out—all but Riegels. He did not budge. The coach looked back and called to

Riegels. Still he didn't move. Coach Price went over to him and said, "Roy, didn't you hear me? The same team that played the first half will start the second.."

Then Riegels looked up, his cheeks wet with tears. "Coach," he said, "I can't do it. I've ruined you. I've ruined the University of California. I've ruined myself. I couldn't face that crowd in the stadium to save my life."

Coach Price placed his hand on Riegels' shoulder and said, "Roy, get up and go back; the game is only half over." And Roy Riegels went back, and those Tech men will tell you they had never seen a man play inspired football as he played the second half.

My friend, life's not over yet. This New Year brings a new chance, a new beginning, another opportunity to start again. Let's get up one more time. God

is the God of the second chance.

Abridged from Moments for Christmas by Robert Strand. Reprinted by permission.

CARE FOR MY SON

A wealthy man died, apparently without leaving a will. Consequently, according to law, the estate was to be divided among the several surviving cousins who were the next of kin. Also, as prescribed by law, the deceased's household goods and other items of personal property were to be converted into cash in a public auction.

During the sale the auctioneer held up a framed photograph, but no one bid on it, including the cousins. Later, a woman approached the auctioneer and asked him if she might purchase the picture for a dollar, which was all she had. She said it was a photograph of

the deceased man's only son. She went on to relate that she had been a servant in the deceased's household when the boy lost his life trying to rescue a drowning person, and she had loved him very much.

The auctioneer accepted the dollar, and the woman went home and placed the photograph on a table beside her bed. It was then she noticed a bulge in the back of the frame. She undid the backing and there, to her amazement, was the rich man's will. The instructions in the will were simple: "I give and bequeath all my possessions to the person who cares enough for my son to cherish this photograph."

-Copied.

WATCH THAT STEP

A small country church was having the annual Christmas cantata. Part of their ritual was to march in singing, "O Come, All Ye Faithful." At the end they marched out singing, "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing." The church had a large floor furnace that heated the building, and its grating was in the center of the aisle.

The choir marched precisely up the aisle, each person three pews behind the other. The last alto stepped on the grating, and the pencil-size heel of her shoe went through the grating and stuck. Hardly breaking stride, she shook her foot hard several times, but the shoe was stuck. The man in line behind her was getting close. She slipped her foot out of the shoe and went limping up the aisle with only one shoe on.

The man coming behind looked down

and realized what had happened. If the shoe was left sticking there, it would break up the congregation. Thinking quickly, he reached down, grabbed the shoe, and gave it a strong twist.

To his amazement, the entire floor grate came up with the shoe. He dazedly marched up the aisle in time with the music, carrying the floor grate and the shoe.

Vou guessed it! The next man in line fell in the hole.

That was one Christmas program never forgotten by participants and observers.

Abridged from Moments for Christmas by Robert Strand. Reprinted by permission.

HE WAS A SAINT

In his book, *Simple Faith*, Charles Swindoll recalled a story he heard about two rich brothers who were also very wicked. Both lived a wild, unprofitable existence, using their wealth to cover up the dark side of their lives. On the surface, however, few would have guessed it, for these consummate cover-up artists attended the same church almost every Sunday and contributed large sums to various church-related projects.

Then the church called a new pastor, a young man who preached the truth with zeal and courage. Before long, attendance had grown so much the church needed a larger worship center. Being a man of keen insight and strong integrity, this young pastor had also seen through the hypocritical lifestyles of the two brothers.

Suddenly one of the brothers died, and the young pastor was asked to

preach his funeral. The day before the funeral, the surviving brother pulled the minister aside and handed him an envelope. "There's a check in here that is large enough to pay the entire amount you need for the new sanctuary," he whispered. "I'll ask is one favor: Tell the people at the funeral that *he was a saint*." The minister gave the brother his word; he would do precisely what was asked. That afternoon he deposited the check into the church's account.



The next day the young pastor stood before the casket at the funeral service and said with firm conviction, "This man was an ungodly sinner, wicked to the core. He was unfaithful to his wife, hot-tempered with his children, ruthless in his business, and a hypocrite at church..., but compared to his brother, *he was a saint.*"

-Charles Swindoll, *Simple Faith*,
(© WordPublishing, 1973).

REAL LOVE

Moses Mendelssohn, grandfather of the well-known German composer, was a hunchback.

One day he visited a merchant in Hamburg who had a lovely daughter named Frumtje. Moses fell hopelessly in love with her, but Frumtje was repulsed by his misshapen appearance.

When it came time for him to leave, Moses gathered his courage and climbed the stairs to her room to take one last opportunity to speak with her. She was a vision of heavenly beauty. After several attempts at conversation, Moses shyly asked, "Do you believe marriages are made in heaven?"

"Ves," she answered, looking at the floor. "d do you?"

"Yes, I do," he replied. "Vou see, in heaven at the birth of each boy, the Lord announces which girl he will marry. When I was born, my future bride was pointed out to me. Then the Lord added, 'But your wife will be humpbacked.'

"Right then and there I called out, 'O Lord, a humpbacked woman would be a tragedy. Please, Lord, give me the hump and let her be beautiful.'"

Then Frumtje looked up into his eyes and was stirred by some deep memory. She reached out and gave Mendelssohn her hand and later became his devoted wife. *

A wonderful line from the writings of the apostle Paul describes this kind of love in that love "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. "

Love is a very special kind of gift-to be loved it is given without thought of a reward coming back. Let's always remember to love in action as well as in words.

*Barry and Joyce Vissell, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, Inc., 1993).

Reprinted from *Moments for Each Other* by Robert Strand. Used by permission.

YOU CAN'T JUST SIT THERE

Thirty-three-year-old Larry Walters recently decided to see his neighborhood from a new perspective. He went to the Army surplus store one morning and bought 45 used weather balloons. That afternoon he strapped himself into a lawn chair to which several of his friends tied the now helium-filled balloons. He took along a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a BB gun, figuring he could shoot the balloons one at a time when he was ready to land.

Walters, who assumed the balloons would lift him about 100 feet in the air, was caught off guard when the chair soared more than 11,000 feet into the sky-smack into the middle of the traffic pattern at Los Angeles International Airport. Too frightened to shoot any of

the balloons, he stayed airborne for more than 2 hours, forcing the airport to shut down its runways for much of the afternoon.

Soon after he was safely grounded and cited by the police, reporters asked him, "Why did you do it?"

"Because," he said, "you can't just sit there."

-As cited in *Church of God Evangel*,
February 1994.

POWERFUL POSITIONS FOR PRAYER

Three ministers were talking about prayer in general and the appropriate and effective positions for prayer. As they talked, a telephone repairman was working on the phone system in the background. One minister shared that he felt the key was in the hands. He always held his hands together and pointed them upward as a form of symbolic worship. The second suggested that real prayer was conducted on your knees. The third suggested that they both had it wrong-the only position worth its salt was to pray while stretched out flat on your face.

By this time the phone man couldn't stay out of the conversation any longer. He interjected: "I found that the most powerful prayer I ever made was while I was dangling upside down by my heels from a power pole, suspended 40 feet above the ground."

-Reprinted from *Illustrations unlimited*
(Tyndale, 1988)

MISSING CHRISTMAS

George Mason's life centered on his business. He lived alone and on this Christmas had refused all invitations—even to his brother's home.

Christmas Eve, after his employees had left, he went into the office vault to get extra cash. Soundlessly, on newly oiled hinges, the great door swung shut behind him.

Desperately he pounded on the door. Then he realized no one could hear him. Everyone had left, even the cleaning woman. *Surely I can make it overnight*, he consoled himself. Then he remembered that the next day was Christmas, not a workday. His heart pounded with fear as he wondered if he would have enough air. It was a new vault. Hadn't he heard something about a "safety air hole"?

Feeling around in darkness, he finally located it at the bottom of the wall; a gentle breeze was coming in.

Christmas Eve and Christmas passed. He was alone as he had planned, but he was uncomfortable, hungry, and thirsty. He tried to sleep—anything to pass the time. He thought of friends and family and how they must be enjoying Christmas. He wondered if they had missed him.

The day after Christmas the chief cashier arrived early and unlocked the vault but did not open the door. Without anyone's seeing him, George Mason staggered out and tottered to the water cooler. Then he took a taxi to his lonely apartment to freshen up. Back at the office, no one suspected a thing.

Physically he had missed Christmas, but friends and family hadn't given him a thought; so in a way he hadn't missed anything. After that lonely experience, he wrote these words on a little card: "To love people, to be indispensable, somewhere—that is the purpose of life. That is the secret of happiness." He then taped the card to a wall high in the vault to remind him of what he had missed.

We can miss Christmas in a lot of ways. It may take special effort not to miss the impact of this season. I, for one, want to remember and be remembered this upcoming holiday season. Let's decide together that we will not miss this Christmas.

Abridged from Moments for Christmas by Robert Strand. Reprinted by permission.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Are you looking for another place to use that great sermon illustration you used in last week's message? *Enrichment* will pay up to \$25 for each sermon illustration it uses. If the material has previously been published, please indicate the original source. Send your contributions to:

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Preaching

Using the Techniques of Journalists to Add Impact to Your Sermons

Preachers face a pressing challenge: how to present the timeless and scriptural in a way that resonates with today's churchgoers. We can say nothing truly new, but it does seem new. Like a successful novelist, we must find a way to make the old new again. We can say nothing truly new, but it does seem new. Like a successful novelist, we must find a way to make the old new again. We can say nothing truly new, but it does seem new. Like a successful novelist, we must find a way to make the old new again.

Mark Galli & Craig Brian Larson

Mark Galli and Craig Brian Larson (Zondervan, 160 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

The EFFECTIVE MINISTER of EDUCATION

- Calling
- Qualifications
- Roles
- Responsibilities
- Relationships
- Rewards

A COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK

JERRY M. STUBBLEFIELD

Jerry M. Stubblefield (Broadman and Holman, 240 pp., paperback, \$17.99)

A SERVICE

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B O O K R E V I E W S

Preaching that Connects: Using the Techniques of Journalists to Add Impact to Your Sermons

Mark Galli and Craig Brian Larson

(Zondervan, 160 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

That is why a book like *Preaching That Connects* is such important reading for those who have something to say and want to say it well. The book is full of practical suggestions that can, in the words of Haddon Robinson, "Make the good news about Jesus sound more urgent than the evening news with Peter Jennings."

Mark Galli and Craig Larson, the authors, share a variety of techniques that preachers can incorporate in both their sermon preparation and sermon delivery to communicate with their audiences more effectively. Some of the topics include: "How To Be More Creative," "Introductions That Get Listeners," "Structuring Your Sermon," "What To Do When You Can't Find an Illustration," and "How To Develop a Style of Communication That Works for You."

The book's strength is that it avoids gimmicks. Subjects are not only discussed in theory, but examples are given for each concept to help the reader make the necessary application. The reader is also encouraged to realize that many of the skills mentioned may take time to develop.

Preaching That Connects is an excellent book for those who are just getting started in the ministry and those who want to follow in the apostle Paul's steps, who at Iconium "spoke so effectively that a number of Jews and Gentiles believed" (Acts 14:1, NIV).

-Reviewed by John Lindell, pastor of James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

The Effective Minister of Education

Jerry M. Stubblefield (Broadman and Holman, 240 pp., paperback, \$17.99)

The Effective Minister of Education is a handbook that clearly and thoroughly defines the role of the minister of education. It provides much-needed direction for those who feel a calling in this area and to the church that may be adding this position to its staff for the first time.

The book is laid out in four parts, and each deals with an area of significant concern for the minister of education.

Part 1 develops a strong argument for the existence of this important role. He addresses the personal and professional qualifications of a minister of education.

Part 2 defines the various roles the minister of education will be required to fulfill.

Part 3 explores the minister of education and his relationships with God, his family, and staff.

Part 4 takes the minister of education through the entire process of how to get started: candidating process; ethics involved for both the church and the candidate; and a sample resume, interview preparation, protocol for meeting committees, a list of questions candidates may be called upon to answer; and questions candidates may want to ask the committee.

The book is unique in that it covers so much material and so many areas without becoming too heavy. It is well documented and interspersed with a number of quotes from other writers. While the book doesn't give anything new, the material is organized and presented in a fresh, informative way—well structured for quick and easy reference.

-Reviewed by Larry Thomas, training network coordinator/administration consultant in the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.

B O O K R E V I E W S

The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament

Craig S. Keener (InterVarsity Press, 842 pp., hardback, \$29.99)

A few hours with this volume will rapidly convince one that Craig Keener, an Assemblies of God Theological Seminary alumnus and now professor of New Testament at Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, North Carolina, is a rising star among evangelical New Testament scholars. A unique and helpful tool, it earned *Christianity Today's* highest ranking for any biblical studies entry in the 1995 Book Awards. Written simply and clearly, though meticulously researched, this book will be a valuable acquisition for every thoughtful student, pastor, and teacher who tries to understand the original setting for any passage in the New Testament.

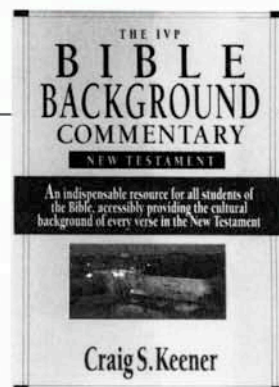
The *Commentary* begins with introductory sections explaining its nature and use. It is not a classic exegetical commentary with extensive treatment of lexical, grammatical, and literary matters. Rather, Keener concentrates on illuminating first-century life for those of us who have neither the time, tools, nor inclination to become experts on the biblical world. He begins each book of the New Testament with a brief, nontechnical introduction identifying author, date, and setting and then moves, passage by passage, providing cultural, social, and historical background useful for interpreting the text at hand. A glossary of terms is at the end along with maps, chronologies, and other useful charts, all designed for the nonspecialist.

To give some idea of the contents, Keener brings to life Paul's exhortations about the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 by showing how well-to-do

Greco-Roman patrons often seated their noble guests in the best room to be served the best food and drink while the less fortunate, in plain view of the others, were seated in the large atrium to receive, to their dismay and embarrassment, inferior food and drink. The prejudices of society at large thus spilled over into the church causing anger and division. We have here a gold mine of such information for every passage in the New Testament.

Obviously, in any resource of this size, there will be occasional differences of opinion. However, the book is carefully researched and judiciously written from an orthodox Christian perspective to provide dependable information without overt theological bias. I heartily recommend it.

—Reviewed by Edgar R. Lee, S.T.D.,
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary academic dean and professor of practical theology,
Springfield, Missouri.



Craig S. Keener (InterVarsity Press, 842 pp., hardback, \$29.99)

Adrenaline and Stress: The Exciting New Breakthrough that Helps You Overcome Stress Damage

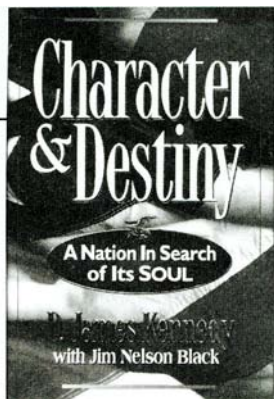
Archibald D. Hart (Word, 209 pp., paperback, \$5.99)

Adrenaline and Stress is destined to become a classic in counseling literature. After describing the nature of stress, Hart discusses the damage it does to those who succumb to what he calls "The Hurry Sickness" and tells how to find healing.

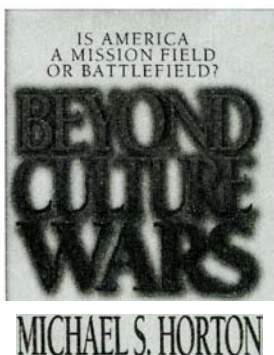
Hart shows how stress can be managed creatively and gives "Spiritual Antidotes for Stress."

Adrenaline and Stress is written in a readable style and is laced with helpful diagrams and charts. The questionnaires are helpful for self-diagnosis. Study guides at the end of the book make it effective for use in both individual and group studies.

—Reviewed by Raymond T. Brock, Ed.D.,
an Assemblies of God minister and licensed counselor,
Tulsa, Oklahoma.



D. James Kennedy with Jim Nelson Black (Zondervan, 304 pp., hardback, \$18.99)



Michael S. Horton (Moody, 287 pp., hardback, \$16.99)

B O O K R E V E W S

Character and Destiny: A Nation in Search of Its Soul

*D. James Kennedy with Jim Nelson Black
(Zondervan, 304 pp., hardback, \$18.99)*

In *Character and Destiny*, D. James Kennedy, well-known author and television pastor, presents a solid case for retrieving what he claims we have lost due to our apathy and cowardice: our national morality. This book is down to earth without being trite. The author manages to pack documented, relevant information into each chapter while spicing those facts with personal anecdotes.

Page after page contains information, statistics, and illustrations which any pastor would find useful for the Sunday morning message. Kennedy doesn't stop with dry figures but manages to keep the reader's interest with controversial, if not shocking, stories. One cannot imagine this refined Presbyterian minister facing off with a Jehovah's Witness in her home, though when he finishes the story the reader is about ready to shout for victory—a victory won not with rhetoric but with love, compassion, and a refusal to back down from what is right.

The Heart of a Great Pastor

H.B. London, Jr., and Neil B. Wiseman (Regal, 250 pp., hardback, \$15.99)

Throughout the book London and Wiseman give encouragement to increase satisfaction for ministry by rekindling one's original motives for ministry. Rejoice in achievements and celebrate victories as God-given enablements.

The book points out the special perks that only pastors enjoy, gives a personalized blueprint for ministry, and suggests how to grow a great soul by getting into shape spiritually through a fresh encounter with God.

The book's supportive, caring attitude comes through and will help pastors take a fresh look at their ministry, move past any disillusionment, and refocus on the ultimate call.

—Reviewed by Larry D. Meeks, pastor, Calvary Temple, Springfield, Missouri.

As always, Kennedy avoids denomination squabbles. His information is applicable to all believing Americans. He is clear, concise, and to the point without being judgmental. The book is a wake-up call for every believer and is a must-read book for every pastor and teacher. Though not a reference book, it is one that will be pulled from the shelf and used many times.

—Reviewed by Jim zabloski, freelance writer and manager at Life Publishers International, Deerfield Beach, Florida.

Beyond Culture Wars

Michael S. Horton (Moody, 287 pp., hardback, \$16.99)

Have American evangelical Christians succumbed to a preoccupation with self-help pop psychology, political ideologies, and marketing techniques in their zeal to advance the gospel? Horton believes we have and that our excessive reliance on these emphases impedes the pure proclamation of scriptural truth. Is he saying these things are always wrong? No. However, he believes that we *equate* these *with* the gospel, and this adversely affects our preaching and theology.

In other words, what we call "relevance" is actually syncretism (blending Christianity with other religions). What we would abhor our overseas missionaries doing, we unwittingly and unthinkingly accept in the American context. Horton severely criticizes the tendency to baptize political ideologies and methodologies as "Christian. "

I agree with the essence and much of the content of Horton's critique. Unfortunately, he attempts to lay much of the blame at the Arminian's feet, which is unrealistic and unfair. Before diving into Horton's critique, the reader should digest Methodist Thomas Oden's preface, because Oden challenges some of Horton's conclusions.

Many Pentecostals will struggle with

B O O K R E V I E W S

Horton's critique of the "signs and wonders" movement, although he acknowledges that it evidences longing for God. Pentecostals will also disagree with other issues he raises.

In spite of these drawbacks, Horton is a thought-provoking writer who ultimately confronts the reader. When I began the book I had a "go get 'em" attitude toward those I perceived as misrepresenting the gospel. When I finished, I asked God to cleanse me instead. Horton's concluding suggestions on recovering authentic proclamation are extremely helpful, regardless of one's theological convictions. *Beyond Culture Wars* is highly recommended reading.

—Reviewed by James E. Book,
Assemblies of God missionary with
ICI University, Irving, Texas.

Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and Family Stay Married

Michael J. McManus (Zondervan, 346 pp"
paperback, \$14.99)

In his book, *Marriage Savers*, McManus explains how too many churches help couples prepare for elaborate wedding ceremonies but do nothing to help them prepare for lasting marriages.

Marriage Savers provides extensive help for those who want to restore America's crumbling families. It outlines programs and helps for everyone: dating and engaged couples, newlyweds, stepfamilies, even those with deeply troubled or broken marriages.

The book also outlines how to avoid bad marriages before they begin, how to strengthen existing marriages, how to save troubled ones, and how to help pastors create a Community Marriage Policy that will significantly cut back on divorces.

McManus lists several excellent programs churches can use in taking a proac-

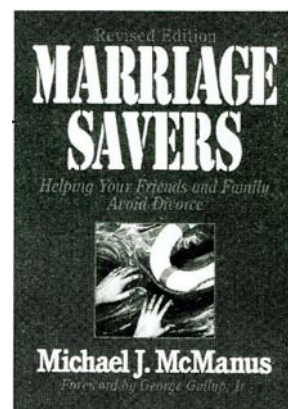
tive role in building strong marriages such as "Relationship Instruction," PREPARE (Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation), and mentor couples.

Another unique, important program which originated with McManus is the Community Marriage Policy where churches in cities agree to adopt certain programs to prepare engaged couples for marriage. In each community churches develop their own guidelines.

Every pastor and counselor should read the book and will find it filled with ideas, programs, and motivation to strengthen the role of marriage and family in our nation. McManus and his book recently have been featured in national media such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, CNN, CBS, and other outlets. The book also has been made into a 6-part video series with a 13-lesson study guide.

(See article by McManus on page 68.)

—Reviewed by Juleen Turnage, Office of Public
Relations Secretary, Springfield, Missouri.



Michael J. McManus
(Zondervan, 346 pp., paper-
back, \$14.99)

User-Friendly Greek: A Commonsense Approach to the Greek New Testament

Kendell H. Easley (Broadman and Holman, 767 pp., paperback, \$74.99)

Assuming that the reader of this book will have completed at least 1 year of Greek, the author concentrates on those broad areas of Greek grammar that must be mastered if a person is to make practical use of Greek as a tool in sermon preparation.

Included at the end of each chapter is an application section that guides a practice exercise in translating and locating those issues that have been explained and developed within the chapter.

I recommend this book to students of Greek. It is especially helpful to ministers who want a refresher course and are serious about the important role the Greek New Testament can play in effective and efficient sermon preparation.

—Reviewed by W Randolph Tate, Ph.D., associate professor of biblical studies,
Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri.

COOPERATIVE URBAN MINISTRIES TRAINING PROJECT AWARDED RESEARCH GRANT

The City Gate project (CGp) based at North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minn., has received a \$44,250 research, planning, and development grant. The money was awarded through Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Contextualized Urban Theological Education Enablement Program. The Project team will use the grant to develop a comprehensive and cohesive curriculum plan that equips students for effective inner-city ministry.

Dr. Paul Freitag, CGP director and North Central's director of student ministries, said, "The uniqueness of the project is that it is at the cutting edge of theological education in our society." The Project is a cooperative program to develop a seamless curriculum available at three postsecondary levels—institute, college, and seminary. The Project team includes representatives from all three levels.

The curriculum "will fit into a degree, as any other major would," Dr. Freitag said. "Since much of urban ministries training is contextual, the seamless curriculum will allow this to be an educational resource program for persons at any level of education." Partners in the Project are North Central Bible College (NCBC), the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) in Springfield, Mo.; and the Minneapolis Urban Bible Training Center (UBTC). UBTCs, a program of the Division of Home Missions, are inner-city training centers offering ministry courses to

local ministers.

"Our intent is to develop a model that can be replicated in other institutes, colleges, and seminaries, especially across denominational lines," Dr. Freitag said.

ACMR VITAL STATISTICS ARE UP FOR U.S.

Reports for 1994 show increases over the previous year in most indicators. Membership is up 1 percent (1,354,337); Sunday morning worship attendance gained 1.4 percent (1,504,417); and adherents grew 2.3

percent (2,324,615). Churches (11,764) were up less than 1 percent due to districts cleaning up church rolls. The U.S. population grew about 1 percent during this same time period.

For more information, contact the Office of Public Relations or the statistician.

UPDATED BENEVOLENCES GUIDE AVAILABLE

A 16-page updated Benevolences Guide that explains the ministries of the Benevolences Department is now available for free distribution.

These ministries include Hillcrest Children's Home, Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home, and Disaster Relief.

To receive your copy of the new Benevolences Guide check rsc #18.

ACTS ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SET FOR MARCH 21,22

The Assemblies of God affiliated Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS) Annual Educational Leadership Conference is tentatively set for March 21 and 22, 1996, in

Springfield, Mo.

The conference will feature practical instruction in the nuts and bolts of financing and developing the entire school-increasing name recognition and visibility in your community, developing relationships, providing a quality education, and building a solid financial base. Times of refreshing and inspiration are also essential elements of this annual conference.

The Thursday night awards and accreditation banquet is another highlight of the conference. Also, Evangel College, Central Bible College, and the

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary cooperate to provide opportunities to interview graduates and others for Christian school and church ministry positions.

More information on the conference is available by calling (417) 862-2781, extension 4025.

ACTS EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ANNUAL MEMBER BUSINESS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 20

The ACTS executive board will meet Wednesday, March 20, 1996, to consider



“Couldn’t we sing some faster hymns?”

NEWS & RESOURCES

annual renewals of ACTS Accredited Schools and conduct other business. John Foster, ACTS president and administrator of Assembly Christian School, New Iberia, La., will complete his 2-year term. Stephen Sharp, administrator of Mountain View Christian School, Las Vegas, Nev., will succeed Foster as ACTS president.

Other officers will be nominated and elected at the general session Friday morning, March 22. Additional business will include consideration of changes in the ACTS accreditation and teacher certification programs. Preschool accreditation procedures will also be presented at this time for membership consideration and possible approval.

The 1994-95 ACTS association membership included approximately 200 schools and individuals.

FEBRUARY 181S HIGHLANDS BABY BOOTEE CLUB DAY

Sunday, February 18, is the annual Highlands Baby Bootee Club Day. The club is a program designed for churches and church groups to help the babies at Highlands Placement Services and Maternity Home.

To receive a free packet with a program, check rsc #19.

ACTS STUDENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR MARCH

ACTS has scheduled national student activities March 21-23 in Springfield, Mo. Both boys and girls basketball and cheerleading competitions are scheduled for three levels: varsity (12th grade and below), junior varsity (10th grade and below), and junior high

school (8th grade and below).

Individual Bible Quiz tournaments: teens-Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter (12th grade and below) and elementary-Bible Fact-Pak (6th grade and below); spelling for elementary (8th grade and below); student legislation session; and additional events are planned for the weekend.

For more information, write or call Christian School Services, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Mo. 65802; (417) 862-2781, extension 4025.

DFM ANNOUNCES PRAYER TASK FORCE TARGET SITES

The Division of Foreign Missions Prayer Task Force (PTF) ministry is coordinating teams of workers for spiritual warfare in strategic areas around the globe. Plans are under way for ministry in these places in 1996: Isiro, Zaire; San Jose, Costa Rica; Bissau, Guinea-Bissau; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Budapest, Hungary; Ulan Bator, Mongolia; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Windhoek, Namibia.

As part of the PTF ministry, pastors and laypeople travel to other nations to fast and pray for revival and the pulling down of spiritual strongholds. In nonrestrictive countries team members also participate in street evangelism, literature distribution, and Good News Crusades.

Each participant in a PTF team is responsible for trip expenses. The cost of the trip is tax deductible, and churches can receive World Ministries Giving credit.

For more information about the PTF ministry or to volunteer as a team

member, contact the Division of Foreign Missions Task Force Ministries office.

NEW BOOK FOCUSES ON UNREACHED PEOPLE

Now available from the Division of Foreign Missions is a new book for children, *Who Are the Shuar?* The book focuses on 19 unreached and partially reached people groups from around the world.

It contains information that will provide children with a basic understanding of each group's lifestyle, customs,

religious beliefs, exposure to Christianity, and specific prayer requests. Written in a simple yet interesting style, the full-color, 48-page book can be a beneficial tool for personal Bible study, family devotions, or classroom use.

"~bout 2 years ago God impressed me that we must do more to involve children in missions. This book is a result of that burden," said Joyce Wells Booze, Foreign Missions editor. "Missionaries and the publications staff have cooperated to put this book together. We believe the book will fill a definite need in our Fellowship."

Who Are the Shuar? sells for \$2 and is available from the Division of Foreign Missions.

NUMBER OF MISSIONS CONVENTIONS GROWING AMONG U.S. CHURCHES

Churches conducting missions conventions in 1994 reflect a 26 percent increase over 1992, according to Sherri Doty, statistician for the Assemblies of God. Last year 3,924 churches reported holding a missions convention. In 1992 the number was 3,114.

In an analysis of each district's participation, Nebraska reported that 63.6 percent of its churches held organized missions conventions, the highest in the nation. The Oregon District had the greatest percentage (89.7) of churches holding missions services.

NEW BROCHURE AVAILABLE ON WHITNEY LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND

The Division of Home Missions (DHM) has produced a brochure for the

Whitney Library for the Blind, which outlines available resource tools and how the library was founded.

Twenty-five percent of Americans over age 40 have impaired vision. Others have disabilities that make it impossible to hold a book, even though they are sighted. The library's gospel tools will help increase their spiritual maturity.

Most materials from the library are free and available on a library-lending basis. For your free brochure, check rsc #21 (order#722-672).

NEW CHURCH EVANGELISM DAY IS FEBRUARY 11

Our Fellowship is called to pray for and recognize the DHM New Church Evangelism (NCE) ministry endeavors and missionaries on New Church Evangelism Day, February 11. This day allows pastors opportunity to share NCE strategies to plant churches, train workers, and reach the lost.

It also gives opportunity to receive an offering to support ongoing efforts to spread the gospel.

Several NCE resources are available from DHM, including informative brochures, a poster, and a video.

MISSIONARY FAMILY MINISTRIES PUBLISHES NEWSLETTERS FOR HOME MISSIONARY KIDS

The DHM Missionary Family Ministries has recently begun publication of four quarterly newsletters geared to home missionary kids (MKs) ages 3-18: *Toybox* is for 3- and 4-year-olds, *Kid's Club* is for ages 5-8, *Launch Pad* is for 9- to 12-year-olds, and *Vision*

is for ages 13-18.

The newsletters offer activities, Bible lessons, humor and cartoons, and other material. MKs are also encouraged to send in their own material to be included in the newsletters.

NATIONAL MEN'S DAY PROMOTES "BUILDING MEN! BUILDING MINISTRY!"

January 14 is National Men's Day across our Fellowship. The theme is "Building Men! Building Ministry!" Scripturally, men are the foundation of the home and society, so it is our challenge to build men and then build ministry through them.

We encourage pastors to recognize and applaud the men of their congregations on this special day and provide opportunities for men to participate in the churches' ministries. Challenge them to be better Christians, husbands, fathers, and friends.

To receive National Men's Day helps, check rsc #22 or call the Men's Ministries Department, (417) 862-2781.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD NEWS SERVICE-A HELP TO MINISTERS

What's New Nationally is a news service of the Office of Public Relations and is available for only \$25 per year. Monthly releases carry reports on national legislation affecting our churches, a roundup of worldwide Assemblies of God news, announcements of national and international Assemblies of God and Pentecostal meetings, and releases for the biennial General Council.

For a free sample of *What's New*



NEWS & RESOURCES

Nationally, call the Office of Public Relations at (417) 862-2781, extension 2120, or check rsc #23.

NEW BULLETIN INSERT AVAILABLE

"The Ten Commandments" is a new bulletin insert produced by the Office of Public Relations. This beautifully designed two-color insert measures 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches and is ideally suited for display purposes or to keep in a Bible.

With the removal of the Ten Commandments from public facilities and the moral breakdown of our society, it becomes urgent for the church to raise this standard of righteousness boldly once again.

To order, check rsc #24 (available in quantities of 50). Presently, 24 bulletin inserts are available. For a free packet of samples, check rsc #25.

FREE MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO HIGHLIGHT ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HIGHER EDUCATION

Free materials to promote Assemblies of God higher education are available from the Christian Higher Education Department.

Dr. Dayton Kingsriter, department secretary, has prepared an extensive research paper entitled "The (Social) Pit and the pendulum: A Case for Assemblies of God Christian Higher Education" (#746-075). The report includes information comparing the secular and Christian college campus, which is vital to prospective students and parents. To receive free copies, check rsc #26 and state quantity.

The *Assemblies of God College Guide*,

Second Edition (#746-054), also is a valuable resource. The 32-page, full-color *Guide* provides a preview of each of the 17 endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary schools. Information regarding academic programs, financial aid, admissions requirements, ministry opportunities, housing, and much more is included. Request a free copy for your church library and quantities for your youth group. Check rsc #3 and state quantity.

Theme poster, prayer card, and bulletin insert are pieces designed to highlight Assemblies of God higher education. The attractively illustrated theme, "It's not just what they know...It's WHO they know," emphasizes the importance of the Christ-centered education offered at Assemblies of God postsecondary schools. To receive the free theme poster (#746-001), check rsc #5 and state quantity. For free bulletin insert (#746-051), check rsc #4 and state quantity. Check rsc #6 and state quantity to receive free prayer card (#746-002).

BACK ISSUES OF PARACLETE AVAILABLE

While supplies last, back issues of *paraclete: A Journal of Pentecostal Studies* are available for \$2 each from Gospel Publishing House. To help identify which issues contain the articles you need in researching the theology of the Holy Spirit and the history of Pentecostal revivals, a cumulative subject-author index (#747-000), including references for all articles published 1967-95, is available for \$3; postage and handling charges are extra.

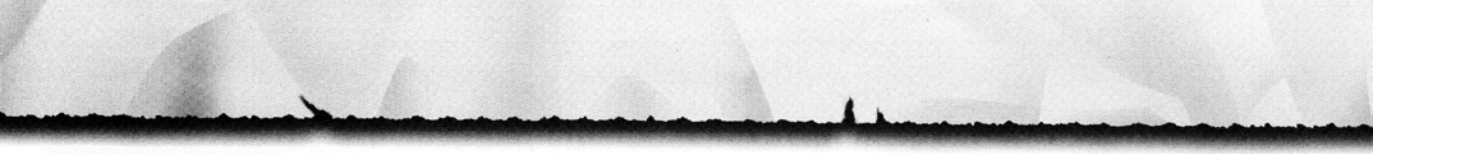
For orders of \$5 or more, call GPH toll

free 1-800-641-4310. If you would like an order form (#747-113) for back issues of *Paraclete*, check rsc #27.

LAST CALL FOR THE COUNCIL TODAY

This is the last time the General Council newspaper, *The Council Today*, will be made available in packaged sets. Each set contains all six issues from the August 8-13, 1995, General Council in St. Louis, Mo.

Each issue contains news stories of events, seminars, and meetings as they



occur throughout the Council. All six issues of *The Council Today* can be ordered for \$8.95 (postage included). To order your set(s), check rsc #28 and indicate quantity.

SOUTHERN ARIZONA BIBLE COLLEGE CLOSES DOORS

Due to low enrollment and high operational costs, the governing body of Southern Arizona Bible College, Hereford, Ariz., decided to close the school immediately following the 1994-95 school year.

For 1~ years SABC educated ministers in an Hispanic cultural setting. The college opened its doors in September 1976 for the purpose of offering intensive instruction in God's Word and for training pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. The college was owned and operated by the Central Latin American District Council of the Assemblies of God.

POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES, COLLEGE DAYS FOR SPRING 1996

The first day of spring 1996 classes and College Days (listed respectively) have been announced by the following Assemblies of God postsecondary schools:

American Indian College, Phoenix, Ariz.-Jan. 11; Feb. 8-10.

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.-Jan. 5; no College Days.

Berean University, Springfield, Mo.-Rolling enrollment (correspondence courses and degrees).

Bethany College, Scotts Valley,

Calif.-Jan. 11; Jan. 25,26.

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.-Jan. 11; March 21,22.

Central Indian Bible College, Mobridge, S. Dak.-Jan. 10; no College Days.

Evangel College, Springfield, Mo.-Jan. 11; March 21,22.

Latin American Bible Institute, San Antonio, Tex.-Jan. 9; no College Days.

Latin American Bible Institute of California, La Puente, Calif.-Jan. 23; no College Days.

North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minn.-Jan. 11; Feb. 1,2 and March 28,29.

Northwest College, Kirkland, Wash.-Jan. 8; April 11-13.

Southeastern College, Lakeland, Fla.-Jan. 11; Feb. 1,2.

Southern California College, Costa Mesa, Calif.-Jan. 10; no College Days.

Southwestern University, Waxahachie, Tex.-Jan. 10; Feb. 29 and March 1,28,29.

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N. Dak.-Jan. 10; April 11,13.

Valley Forge Christian College, Phoenixville, Pa.-Jan. 10; March 15 and April 12.

Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.-Jan. 15; Jan. 10-12.

NCBC NAMES GORDON ANDERSON SIXTH COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Dr. Gordon Anderson was unanimously appointed the sixth president of North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minn., May 4. He succeeds Dr. Don Argue, who served as president since 1979. Effective April 1, Argue was named president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

Anderson is currently the director for the Eurasia Education office for the Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions. He was professor at NCBC and taught hermeneutics, homiletics, church history, and philosophy for 12 years.

Anderson earned his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and his master's and bachelor's degrees at the University of Portland, Ore. He also earned a bachelor of arts at Southern California College, Costa Mesa, Calif. In addition to pastoring in Oregon and Colorado, Anderson and his wife Dianne have taught at Bible schools in India, Belgium, Croatia, Taiwan, and Thailand.

North Central Bible College is one of 17 endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary schools.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN FEBRUARY

There is still time to register for the Children's Ministries Conference to be held in Springfield, Mo., February 12-14, 1996. With the theme, "Rescue the Children," the conference will focus on ministries and strategies for reaching this generation's kids.

Over 70 workshops, directed by noted children's ministers, will add a practical dimension to the 3-day event. Exhibitors will also display the latest resources for local church ministries.

Speakers are George O. Wood, Joan Nelson, Ed Corbin, LeRoy Bartel, Dave Winchell, Dan Rector, Andy Holmes, and Jim Gerhold. Mary Rice Hopkins is the conference worship leader.

NEWS & RESOURCES

The early deadline for individual and group registrations is January 2. All delegates are responsible for making their own housing arrangements.

For registration and housing information, contact Children's Ministries Conference, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, Mo. 65802-1894.

VBS THEME FOR 1996 ANNOUNCED

Emergency personnel are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They never know when they will have to put their

lives on the line.

The theme for vacation Bible school (VBS) in 1996, "Life Call 9-1-1," brings this kind of excitement into your church. Local emergency personnel may be invited to your VBS to demonstrate and explain both the dangers and privilege they have of serving the community.

"Life Call 9-1-1" will help you involve your children in exciting rescue operations in a biblical context. They will be fascinated by references to the rescue operations that took place in God's Word and by the many activities that present rescue-scene challenges. The children in your church will discover truths from God's word about the many different ways God comes to our rescue. Because of His love and care for us, we can be saved from Sin, Affliction, Violence, the Elements, and even from Death.

Order your "Life Call 9-1-1" exam kit from the Gospel Publishing House today (\$32.95, order #29-9680).

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE APPROVES NAME CHANGE

The Board of Regents of Southwestern Assemblies of God College, Waxahachie, Tex., met in December 1994 and unanimously voted to change the name of the school to Southwestern Assemblies of God University. The name change became effective June 1, 1995.

The Board of Regents also unanimously approved the establishment of two graduate degree programs: a master of arts in practical theology and a master of arts in education. These programs will begin as soon as the accrediting

agencies of the college approve them.

Southwestern has held various designations through the years. Formerly known as Southwestern Bible School and Southwestern Bible Institute, Southwestern has adapted its name to fit its function.

GOALS SET FOR BGMC DAY

"Jesus!" is the theme for Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade Day (BGMC), January 28. The goal is to raise \$400,000 for missions projects in the U.S. and abroad. A BGMC Day planner is part of the November *Christian Education Counselor*. Additional promotional items include a church bulletin insert (#715-067).

For more information on this missions education and stewardship ministry for children (ages 12 and younger), contact the BGMC office.

DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION NATIONAL DIRECTOR RESIGNS

David R. Bundrick resigned as national director of the Division of Christian Higher Education, effective June 9, 1995. He was secretary for the Education Department 3 years before his appointment to national director in 1989.

As national director, Bundrick chaired the Board of Christian Higher Education, which approves Assemblies of God endorsement of 17 postsecondary schools. He served on the boards of the four Springfield postsecondary schools—Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Berean College, Central Bible College, and Evangel College. Implemented under his leadership were the Pentecostal Textbooks

Project (Logion Press, a division of Gospel Publishing House), which publishes collegiate-level textbooks written by Pentecostal educators/authors, and *On Course* magazine, a quarterly magazine for teens (circulation 160,000).

Bundrick made many lasting contributions to Assemblies of God Christian Higher Education, including convening the Christian Higher Education leadership summit, initiating the National Educators Conferences, helping develop two national scholarship programs, and editing *paraclete* magazine.

In addition to accepting responsibili-

ties as senior associate pastor at First Assembly of God, Jefferson City, Mo., Bundrick is continuing his Ph.D. program in higher education administration at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Bundrick, with his wife Maria and their three children, assumed his position in Jefferson City, Mo., July 1.

RADIANT LIFE RELEASES TWO MORE TITLES IN THE SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY SERIES

Radiant Life announces the release of two new titles in the Spiritual Discovery Series for use in the spring 1996 quarter.

Parenting the Elementary Child by Dr. Raymond T. Brock is designed to help parents who have elementary-age children. Issues addressed include childhood developmental stages, discipline techniques, developing a spiritual climate in the home, the effects of birthing order, financial stress, and intimacy-challenges parents face during this ever-changing time.

Additional studies focus on the unique challenges of the one-parent family, the blended family, the traditional family, and families with exceptional children.

How To Study the Bible by G. Raymond Carlson is a reworked version of Carlson's book by the same title. It introduces the learner to the background of the Bible, rationale for studying the biblical text, and techniques to enrich the believer's Bible-study experience. Users of *How To Study the Bible* will explore the inductive method of Bible study, topical study procedures, biographical studies,

word studies, and the synthetic style of Bible study.

The Spiritual Discovery Series offers individual and group study curriculum for contemporary adults. Study guides are designed in a workbook format. Leaders guides include the study guide material as well as resources and methodology designed to facilitate a group learning experience.

Parenting the Elementary Child and *How To Study the Bible* join four titles already released in the Spiritual Discovery Series: *A New Way if Life* by Robert L. Brandt, *Bible Prophecy* by Stanley M. Horton, *Parenting: The Early Years* by Kay E. Marchand, and *Spiritual Devotion* by Nathan H. Nelson.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DAY SLATED FOR FEBRUARY

Churches will have opportunity to recognize the various ministries of women within the local church on February 25, National Women's Ministries Day, and to give an offering to support the national Women's Ministries Department. Offerings help cover administration costs and services the department provides.

Women's Ministries includes the ministry of all the women in the church—from musicians, Sunday school teachers, and nursery attendants to secretaries and prayer partners. They also come together for fellowship, personal growth, inspiration, and outreach. Goals are (1) to minister to every woman according to her need and (2) to help each woman find her personal place of ministry.



NEWS & RESOURCES

The theme for National Women's Ministries Day 1996 is "Vessels of Honor." In December a packet of materials will be mailed to local Women's Ministries coordinators to assist them in planning their observances. The packet includes a program guide, offering envelopes, a sample bulletin cover, and other theme-related items.

The program guide contains a pastor's feature, planning guidelines, program choices, theme-related music, creative ideas, and resources. To receive your personal copy of the program guide, check rsc #30.

NEW TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES

"We Build People" is the new vision for Christian education ministries. A motivational video and brochure were introduced at the General Council in August and subsequently mailed to all Assemblies of God churches. Resources to assist discipleship ministries in the local church are continuously being developed.

For a list of the newest tools, contact Sunday School Promotion and Training Department.

FASTING & PRAYER '95 TO BE HELD IN LOS ANGELES

November 15-18, 1995, are the dates for Fasting & Prayer '95 to be held in the Los Angeles (Calif.) Convention Center, according to Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ founder and president. This is a Host and Invitation Committee-sponsored event for the purpose of encouraging revival in our nation and the world.

"The Lord willing, thousands of men and women will gather with us from across the country and many foreign lands," Bright said. "We are praying that all participants will not only experience the reality of meeting God as we seek His face but will be equipped and trained to encourage fasting and prayer for national and world revival as they return home-fulfilling the Great Commission in their homes, churches, communities, and throughout the world."

Fasting & Prayer '95 is to be a direct continuation of the days of prayer and fasting in Orlando, Fla., last December.

CONFERENCE FEES PER PERSON:

Regular registration: \$150

(postmarked/faxed* by Nov. 5, 1995)

On-site registration: \$175 (after Nov.5)

Hotel reservations must be submitted by Nov. 1, 1995. Contact the address/telephone number below for information. *Registration by phone or fax can be made by credit cards only: 1-800-678-4434 Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-9 p.m. (EST); fax 1-800-472-8929. Mailing address: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 100 Sunport Lane, Orlando, Fla. 32809.



ENRICHMENT SURVEY AND READER RESPONSE

It's official. *Advance* has a new name: *Enrichment*—A Journal for Pentecostal Ministry. Now that you have had a chance to read over the first issue (fall/95) in the new format, you're in a better position to tell us what you like and don't like about the changes. But before you do that, please take a moment to fill out the reader survey below and reader response on the opposite page. NOTE: If you filled in and mailed the reader survey (front

side) from the fall/95 issue, please do **not** fill it in again. Complete only the reader response section on the back side (#s 10-12). Thank you.

Mail or fax to: *Enrichment* Journal, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802, (417) 862-0416. To preserve your anonymity on the survey, please do not include a return address. Send the survey and response pages by December 22, 1995.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

1. Are you?

1. ☐ ordained
2. ☐ licensed
3. ☐ certified
4. ☐ specialized

2. Are you?

1. ☐ male
2. ☐ female

3. Is your age?

1. ☐ under 30
2. ☐ 30-39
3. ☐ 40-49
4. ☐ 50-59
5. ☐ 60-69
6. ☐ 70 or over

4. Are you?

1. ☐ married
2. ☐ remarried
3. ☐ single
4. ☐ divorced
5. ☐ widowed

5. Are you?

1. ☐ white
2. ☐ black
3. ☐ Hispanic
4. ☐ Native American
5. ☐ Asian & Pacific Islander
6. ☐ other

6. Are you?

1. ☐ senior pastor with no paid staff
2. ☐ senior pastor with one paid staff member
3. ☐ senior pastor with two to three paid staff members
4. ☐ senior pastor with more than three paid staff members
5. ☐ evangelist
6. ☐ home missionary
7. ☐ foreign missionary
8. ☐ educator, administrator
9. ☐ educator, faculty
10. ☐ retired minister
11. ☐ district official
12. ☐ staff pastor

7. If staff pastor (check all boxes that apply)

- a. ☐ associate/assistant
- b. ☐ youth
- c. ☐ music
- d. ☐ Christian education
- e. ☐ church administrator
- f. ☐ counselor
- g. ☐ other

8. If staff pastor, are you?

1. ☐ full-time
2. ☐ part-time

9. What is the average worship attendance of your church?

1. ☐ under 50
2. ☐ 50-99
3. ☐ 100-199
4. ☐ 200-399
5. ☐ 400-699
6. ☐ 700-999
7. ☐ 1,000-1,999
8. ☐ 2,000-2,999
9. ☐ over 3,000

10. What is your annual salary, not including benefits?

1. ☐ less than \$20,000
2. ☐ \$20,000-\$29,999
3. ☐ \$30,000-\$39,999
4. ☐ \$40,000-\$49,999
5. ☐ \$50,000-\$59,999
6. ☐ \$60,000-\$69,999
7. ☐ \$70,000-\$79,999
8. ☐ over \$80,000

11. What is your highest level of education?

1. ☐ less than high school
2. ☐ high school graduate
3. ☐ some college work
4. ☐ college graduate
5. ☐ some graduate work
6. ☐ graduate degree
7. ☐ some postgraduate work
8. ☐ doctorate

12. Have you attended an Assemblies of God college?

1. ☐ yes
2. ☐ no

13. Have you graduated from an Assemblies of God college?

1. ☐ yes
2. ☐ no



YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL GUIDE US IN PLANNING FUTURE ISSUES.

1. List three themes you would like to see covered in future issues.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
2. As you reflect on your own preparedness for ministry, list areas in which you feel the least prepared.

3. *Enrichment* includes several columns/departments (Sermon Builder, Managing Your Ministry, For Women in Ministry, Confronting Contemporary Issues, etc.). Are there other areas you would like included?

4. Who in the Assemblies of God would you like to hear from? Is there a particular topic you would like him/her to address?

5. Which Christian leaders outside the Assemblies of God would you like to hear from?

6. List topics you would like the general superintendent to address in his column, "Ask the Superintendent."

7. Which theological themes would you like covered on a scholarly level?

8. List contemporary issues you would like discussed?

9. If you are a woman in the ministry, what subjects interest you most?

TELL US ABOUT THIS ISSUE.

10. What two things did you like most about this issue?
 1. _____
 2. _____
11. What two things did you like least about this issue?
 1. _____
 2. _____

PLEASE RATE THIS ISSUE'S CONTENTS BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER.

		1=LITTLE VALUE		5=GREATEST VALUE		
12. a.	Ask the Superintendent	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Ministry: A Commitment to Priority Living	1	2	3	4	5
c.	The Priority of Pentecostal Worship	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Saying "Yes" to the Needful Central Issues of Your Calling	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Priorities for the Parsonage	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Sermon Study and Preparation—A Necessary Priority	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Ministry—In Pursuit of Excellence	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Panhandler Turned Postman—The Priority of Mentoring	1	2	3	4	5
i.	The Pastor and the Priority of Public Relations	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Perils and Issues Facing the Church	1	2	3	4	5
k.	The Worst and Best Ways to Prepare for Marriage	1	2	3	4	5
l.	The Salvation of Your Face	1	2	3	4	5
m.	The Laughing Revival	1	2	3	4	5
n.	Together We Can Reach America for Christ	1	2	3	4	5
o.	Prevailing Gates	1	2	3	4	5
p.	Why Christian Higher Education?	1	2	3	4	5
q.	Sermon Builder	1	2	3	4	5
r.	Word Study	1	2	3	4	5
s.	For Women in Ministry	1	2	3	4	5
t.	Ministerial Enrichment	1	2	3	4	5
u.	Clergy, Church, and Law	1	2	3	4	5
v.	Confronting Contemporary Issues	1	2	3	4	5
w.	Managing Your Ministry	1	2	3	4	5
x.	Family Matters	1	2	3	4	5
y.	Counselors Corner	1	2	3	4	5
z.	Equipping Evangelists	1	2	3	4	5
aa.	Theological Enrichment	1	2	3	4	5
bb.	WorldLink	1	2	3	4	5
cc.	Focus on America	1	2	3	4	5
dd.	Wit and Wisdom	1	2	3	4	5
ee.	Sermon Seed	1	2	3	4	5
ff.	Ministry Ideas That Work	1	2	3	4	5
gg.	Illustrate It	1	2	3	4	5
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With Christ

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In Closing

BY RICK KNOTH

Silent neglect. It's a phrase that could comfortably describe the important areas of life that slip by unnoticed, untouched. Weeks, months, even years sometimes pass before a crisis from one's neglect is realized.

Silent neglect recently came in the form of an undetected mass lodged at the base of my neck. My sister, a seasoned nurse who was visiting from Michigan, noticed the swelling, and my wife confirmed her by-chance discovery. As I gently probed the affected area my casual posture quickly stiffened. I didn't want to appear overly concerned, but this unwelcome lump now invading my otherwise healthy body had my full attention. When the doctors asked how long it had been there, I replied, "I don't know-maybe several months, maybe longer."

Two doctors' initial evaluations caused even more concern. Further tests verified the presence of a large, solid mass attached to the left lobe of the thyroid. After 3 weeks of tests, doctors' appointments, and a roller coaster of assorted emotions, a biopsy pointed to a nonmalignant mass. What relief! I was off the hook-this time, anyway.

Preoccupation with the urgent clouded my view of the weightier, important concerns of my life. Consequently, I put myself and my family at considerable risk. More prodigious, though, was the presence of physiological symptoms that were warning me all along of possible danger; unfortunately, I hadn't taken the time to hear what they were saying.

In ministry we belabor the continual drag of distractions. For us life is a long series of interruptions. Not only

are we frayed by the busyness of ministry and frazzled by the lack of time, but seldom do we step back for a clearer view. When our view is dim, reality is masked; then the destructive influence of distraction begins to take its toll. The tyranny of the urgent sits comfortably in the front seat, while the important again waits patiently for a more convenient time. The crisis moment lies silently in the shadow of the urgent-waiting to jump out and grab us unexpectedly.

In his book, *Empires of the Mind*, Denis Waitley writes: "Most of us have houses but not the domestic lives we wanted. We have photo albums and videotapes of our children but not the spiritual strength that underpins healthy families. We're extremely busy, sometimes frantically busy, but we don't quite know where we're going. We cope with the urgent but keep putting off what we sense is truly important" (page 5).

The unfortunate consequence of silent neglect in ministry is seen in the minister who has expended time and energy erecting monuments to his own success but has left himself open to moral failure; the stressed-out pastor's wife who is ready to forsake it all because of her husband's lack of attention and understanding; and the PK who becomes rebellious and wayward because a father or mother is unavailable and/or inattentive.

In the days following my experience, I mused, *What other priorities in my life have I left unattended? Is something bigger waiting in the wings to jump at me again and challenge my silent neglect?*

Crisis events have a way of purging

us of the inconsistencies and undesirables we have allowed to accumulate in our lives. The mind plays its games by walking us through a series of life events-past, present, and future. Either by guilt or by necessity we begin the process of sorting out the important from the urgent, the necessary from the unnecessary, the loving from the unloving, the selfish from the unselfish. The important priorities of life-God, family, and then ministry-regain their God-given positions.

From the pages of this issue on the minister and his priorities the word *balance* stands tall. Success in the ministry is not measured by the size of one's church nor by the number of degrees hanging on the office wall. Rather, it is measured by faithfulness to the important priorities in life: God, family, church.

Is your life balanced in these areas? Step back and take a closer look. You may be surprised by what you see. May God help us to tip the scales in the right direction. ~



Rick Knoth is the managing editor of Enrichment, based in Springfield, Missouri.