

ENRICHMENT

WINTER 1997

Discipleship

- Rick Warren **Developing Mature Members** 10
Here is a six-step plan for developing members to maturity that works.
- Ronald McManus,
Jerry Strandquist,
Bill Hull **Empowering Believers for Service** 14
Is the conventional success of bodies, bucks, and buildings keeping the church from empowering people for ministry?
- Bob Moorehead **Turning Undersized Believers into Mature Disciples** 22
Are we programming the church for failure by ignoring the mandate to make disciples?
- Leroy Bartel **Five Characteristics of Disciple-Making Churches** 28
Is your church in the business of making disciples? These five criteria will let you know.
- J. Melvyn Ming **Discipling by Design** 40
Selecting a model to guide you in effective disciple making.
- Mike Clarensau **Decision Cards Can Become Disciples** 50
How to guide new Christians through the early steps of their spiritual journey.

Also inside...

- David A. Womack **The Pensacola Revival: Today's Azusa Street** 56
Not since the revival at Azusa Street have so many people traveled to one place to participate in a spiritual awakening.
- Bill G. Bates **Pastoring in Rural America** 65
Suggestions for pastoring in rural America to help you bloom where you are planted.
- Gary B. McGee **The Dilemma We Face When Pentecostals Quench the Spirit** 68
Safeguarding the Pentecostal blessing in our congregations.



Ministry Matters

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, NASB).

Discipleship was one of the major issues Jesus dealt with before He physically left the earth. He not only wanted all the world to hear His precious gospel, but He wanted those who chose to respond to understand *how* to be Christians, to walk the life, and to observe all things that He commanded.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is more than taking in a seminar on Christian living—it is a relationship, a moment-by-moment walk with the resurrected Lord. This Teacher will never leave us nor forsake us; He will always be there to help us do all He commanded. In a sense, we never leave the classroom.

Individuals who come to Christ have a new life, a new understanding, and a sensitivity to spiritual things. "Old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This one issue is a major departure from cults such as Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. The cults cannot give new life to their followers by teaching them to follow their doctrines. People only have new life by giving all their lives to Jesus.

A disciple is an obedient follower, a learner, and has a desire to become like the teacher. "The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26) because they looked, sounded, and acted like little Christs. They had a relationship with Jesus Christ, and His life literally affected everything they did. In turn, they told others about Christ, and community after community began to have groups of disciples. The pace was set by the Early Church and has

continued to this day.

The Assemblies of God missionary who led me to Jesus when I was 21 years old not only told me how much God loves me, but he spent much time teaching me how to live the Christian life and trust the eternal Teacher. Early on I learned that making disciples takes time and effort. Some get with the program sooner than others, but the Lord is patient with all. As ministers we spend a high percentage of time "teaching them to observe all things" (Matthew 28:20), which is a major part of our job. Alone we simply cannot do it all. If we want more disciples, we teach the disciples how to make disciples. We teach those God has given us to reproduce.

The same Teacher who helps us know how to be disciples will help those we pastor as well. As an example to those we serve we should be able to say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." However, we do not want our followers to be dependent upon us but upon Him.

Discipleship is not easy believism. Jesus is the absolute Lord of the committed Christian. Vance Havner said: "Nowadays we have created an artificial distinction between trusting Christ as Savior and confessing Him as Lord. We have made two experiences out of it when it is one. So we have a host who have 'accepted Christ' in order to miss hell and reach heaven, who seem not at all concerned about making Him Lord of their lives. Salvation is not a cafeteria line where we can take the Saviorhood of Christ and pass up His Lordship, take what we want and leave the rest.... We have only one option: we can receive the Lord or reject Him. But once we receive Him our option ends. We are then no longer our own but bought with a price.

There is a cheap, easy believism that does not believe and a receivism that does not receive. There is no real confession of Jesus as Lord. It is significant that the word *Savior* occurs only 24 times in the New Testament, while the word *Lord* is found 433 times. A Christian is a believer, a disciple, and a witness."¹

The last refrain of the hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," summarizes what our response should be: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." **E**

ENDNOTES:

¹Vance Havner, *The Best of Vance Havner* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 124-126.



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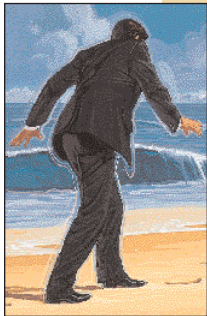
TABLE OF CONTENTS

THEME: DISCIPLESHIP

Ask the Superintendent

Interview with Thomas E. Trask

To qualify for ministry, Christians must be disciplined—growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Then pastors must release them for service, thus allowing them to use the gifts and talents God has given them8



Developing Mature Members

By Rick Warren

Drawing from personal experience and the Life Development Process strategy used in his church, the author shows ministers how to become committed to discipleship so they, in turn, can guide people toward spiritual maturity10

Empowering Believers for Service

Interview with Ronald McManus, Jerry Strandquist, Bill Hull

Have we focused on evangelism in response to the Great Commission but been remiss in pursuing strong discipleship programs in the church? These men think so14

Turning Undersized Believers into Mature Disciples

By Bob Moorehead

Conversion to Christ and continuance in Christ are the basic components of disciple making, with maturity as the end product. The author discusses mentoring, methods, and materials for discipling22

Five Characteristics of Disciple-Making Churches

By Leroy Bartel

Considering the outward-focused church, the inward-focused church, and the disciple-making church, where does your church fit? Here are five characteristics that disciple-making churches have in common28

The Great Omission—Go and Make Disciples

By Jeff Swaim

Discipleship is the key to a focused, reproductive ministry. In this article the author explores some of the misconceptions about discipleship and identifies the biblical principles and benefits. He compares discipleship in the church to the hub of a wheel—all spokes of ministry are connected and flow from that hub32



Discipling by

By J. Melvyn Ming

Using the acrostic SEND, the author addresses disciple makers and the requirements for their success. He offers suggestions on delivery systems to accommodate the difference in learning style and lifestyle—strategy that moves people to deeper spiritual growth40

Design

God's Final Exam for Church Leaders

By Steven R. Mills

Believers without a firm foundation in God's Word are often swayed by fads and erroneous doctrinal teaching; hence the need for intentional teaching and mentoring to ground people in the faith. Here are some thought-provoking questions to make church leaders measure their disciple-making quotient44

Making Disciples for the 21st Century

By Sylvia Lee

The church is responsible to develop the persons won through its outreach into mature disciples who will disciple others. How? By providing a community that includes people in the church's life, instructs them in the spiritual disciplines, involves them in ministry within the Body, and invests them in the broader church mission47



Decision Cards Can Become Disciples

By Mike Clarensau

How are new converts like infants? The analogy is clear-cut: New babes in Christ require more care than general worship services can provide—they need the help of mature Christians. The analogy is further developed through infant stages involving dependence, medical care, nutrition, and family bonding50

Discipleship—Selected Bibliography

Compiled by Gainsbrugh

Resource Network

Bibliography includes books, audiocassettes, videos, magazines, ministries, newsletters, and miscellaneous helps54

FEATURES

**The Pensacola Revival:
Today's Azusa Street***By David A. Womack*

Revival has come to Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. The pastor attributes it to a sovereign move of God in response to fervent prayer. He feels the revival is not only for his church but the whole community and beyond56

**Sacred Assembly II—
Marching to God's Orders***Interview with Thomas E. Trask*

The Fellowship held the first Sacred Assembly in 1994 for the purpose of humbling ourselves, praying, repenting, and letting healing begin in the church. It is time for a second Sacred Assembly, not to have just another program or meeting but to wait upon God for revival61

**Endorsed, Accredited,
Empowered***Interview with Wayne Kraiss*

The recently appointed commissioner of Christian Higher Education addresses pertinent issues in Assemblies of God higher education63

Pastoring in Rural America*By Bill G. Bates*

This pastor looks at his rural setting and sees the community—the business, residential, and industrial areas—as his church65

**The Dilemma We Face When
Pentecostals Quench the Spirit***By Gary B. McGee*

Debate over appropriate responses to the Spirit continues. How shall we resolve this dilemma that strikes at the very heart of our belief in the ministry of the Spirit and our own identity? The author gives biblical answers68

EDITORIALS

MINISTRY MATTERS*By Wayne I. Goodall*1**IN CLOSING***By Charles T. Crabtree*127

COLUMNS

**SERMON BUILDER:
THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST
(HEBREWS) PART 3****Jesus: Superior
to the Lawgiver***By Richard L. Dresselhaus*74**WORD STUDY: MATHÊTÊS****Disciple***By Douglas A. Oss*77**MINISTERIAL ENRICHMENT****Choosing Those Who Work
Alongside You***By Wayne I. Goodall*80**MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY****Budgeting in the Local Church:
Participation Counts***By Michael Comer*82**CLERGY, CHURCH, & LAW****Dealing with the Death of Your
Spouse***By Randall K. Barton*86**FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY****Change: A Time for Laughter
and Tears***By Peggy Musgrove*90**FINANCIAL CONCEPTS****Everyone Has a Financial
Dream***By Dennis R. Wubbena*92**FAMILY MATTERS****Being There for Your Kids***By Calvin C. Carmen*96**WIT AND WISDOM****A Contemporary Parable of
the Elk Hunter***By David Myers*98**WORLDLINK****Unchanging Principles***By H.H. "Spud" DeMent*100**The Long and Short of
Missions***By Don Corbin*101**FOCUS ON AMERICA***By Charles E. Hackett*103

DEPARTMENTS

SERMON • SEED104**MINISTRY • IDEAS • THAT • WORK**108**ILLUSTRATE • IT**112**BOOK REVIEWS**116**NEWS & RESOURCES**120**WITH CHRIST**126Wayde I. Goodall,
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Enrichment (ISSN 1082-1791), is published quarterly (October, January, April, July).
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Missouri 65802. Assemblies of God ministers may reproduce nonbyline material from
Enrichment in church publications, giving credit to the journal. Signed articles may not be
reprinted without permission of the authors. **Subscription rates:** USA—1 year \$18; 2 years
\$32. Outside USA add \$6 per year. **Subscriptions:** All subscription correspondence, includ-
ing change of address, should be sent to *Enrichment*, Customer Services, 1445 Boonville,
Springfield, MO 65802, phone 1-800-641-4310. Periodical postage paid at Springfield,
Missouri, and at additional mailing offices. Printed in the USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Enrichment, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802.

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

Ask the Superintendent

What is the purpose of His adding to the church if it doesn't result in men and women following Jesus?



PHOTOS BY MEL SNYDER

In this interview, General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask discusses the subject of discipleship, drawing from his overview of the Fellowship as well as his personal experience.

PLEASE COMMENT ON YOUR CONCERNS REGARDING ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCHES AND DISCIPLESHIP.

First, I am so pleased you have devoted this issue of *Enrichment* to discipleship. It is vital for the life of our Fellowship to conserve the results of revival. As God breathes upon us with a fresh wind of the Spirit, it would be a tragedy not to conserve what He gives to His church.

A recent report indicates that 43*

percent of our 11,823 U.S. churches report having no follow-up program for those who are saved at our altars or through evangelism outreaches. That violates Jesus' command to "go and make disciples"—not just see them get saved but make disciples.

This is a hot button for me, because we are talking about the Kingdom—that which is closest to God's heart. God will give churches as many disciples as He can entrust to their care. To the Early Church the Lord added daily "such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). The purpose? So that men and women could be converted and disciplined. What is the purpose of His adding to the church if it

doesn't result in men and women following Jesus? He will add, but we are responsible for discipling.

PLEASE DEFINE MAKING DISCIPLES.

Making disciples is taking new converts from infancy—newborn babes—to maturity, developing in them the attributes, character, and disciplines of Christian living. A disciplined person can be used in ministry. That's why Paul, writing about the qualifications for deacons, warned against using novices or undisciplined persons. They must prove themselves by growing in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SHOULD DISCIPLESHIP BE CARRIED ON IN EVERY DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM OF THE LOCAL CHURCH?

Yes, each department and ministry should complement each other so that new Christians become well-rounded. Otherwise a person is single in emphasis and development. Just as a proper diet makes a person healthier physically, the spiritual diet must also be balanced for proper development.

WHAT HAPPENS IF CHURCHES DO NOT HAVE PROGRAMS THAT ARE MAKING DISCIPLES?

If a church does not have a program to disciple men, women, and young people who are being saved, it will not retain those people. If new Christians are not grounded in the Word, they will not be able to stand in the times of temptation when the enemy buffets them. That's why Jesus told the Parable of the Sower. If the seed is planted upon good ground and is nourished [discipled], it will stand and bring forth much fruit.

PROBLEMS SOMETIMES STEM FROM PLACING PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN GROUNDED IN THE LORD IN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OR LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH.

I have seen that happen over the years, particularly when somebody of renown finds the Lord. The church has been too quick to give such people the platform, and they become puffed up and proud. They haven't matured spiritually, and they lose out with God.

Our motivation was not wrong, but the church didn't give those people time to get their feet on the ground. They couldn't stand all the accolades and commotion around them. The enemy came in and stole the seed out of their hearts.

HOW CAN MINISTERS PRIORITIZE THEIR TIME AND MINISTRY TO DEVELOP DISCIPLES IN THEIR CHURCHES—TO HOLD THEM AND CLOSE THE BACK DOOR?

One means is series preaching—building line upon line and precept upon precept. This gives continuity. Pastors can't spend all their time at that, but ministries can be in place such as new-converts classes where new Christians are taken through the fundamentals of the faith. Teaching is very important, and this is where Sunday school helps. There has to be a teaching arm of the church. When ministries are in place to help new converts, it is advantageous to add a membership class.

When I was pastoring it was understood that before new converts or people transferring from other churches could become members, they must complete a lengthy membership class. This class taught why the church believes what it believes, why we practice what we practice, and why we teach what we teach—it gave the new people a reason and support for their faith.

A spiritual-gifts class is also helpful.

HOW CAN THEY UTILIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY?

That is so important. The Assemblies of

God has been good at evangelism, and I say that to our credit. We have done a fair job in discipleship—not a good job—and could do much better. However, we have not done well in providing ministries for people so they have the joy of fulfillment after they have grown in graces. We must allow them to put something back in so they can be a blessing to the kingdom of God and use the gifts and talents God has given them.

ARE SOME PASTORS NERVOUS ABOUT GIVING PEOPLE RESPONSIBILITIES? ARE THEY THREATENED OR AFRAID THE PEOPLE WILL DO SOMETHING INAPPROPRIATE?

That is probably true, but even when people are trained properly, they will make mistakes. In the early years of my ministry, people were tolerant and patient with a young fellow out of Bible college, and God was patient. I have learned a lot and am still learning. That is true with new converts and with the church as a whole—we are all in a learning process. So what if people make mistakes? You sit down with them and teach them. Not to confront them is unfair—they learn from their mistakes. Perhaps many in leadership have been afraid of doing that.

Are they going to be offended and leave the church? It depends upon two things: (1) the person's spirit—how they receive correction and (2) the spirit in which you go to them. If you go to them in love and point out the scriptural pattern of correction, most people are desirous of learning. Occasionally someone is not teachable, but you probably won't hold that person anyway.

OUR LEADER AND MENTOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WAS SUCCESSFUL IN DEVELOPING MEN WHO RADICALLY CHANGED THE WORLD. WAS THERE A SECRET TO HIS LIFE?

He invested himself in His followers. There is no substitute for a leader's investing himself or herself in other leaders. We develop people—leaders. Jesus was a Master at that.

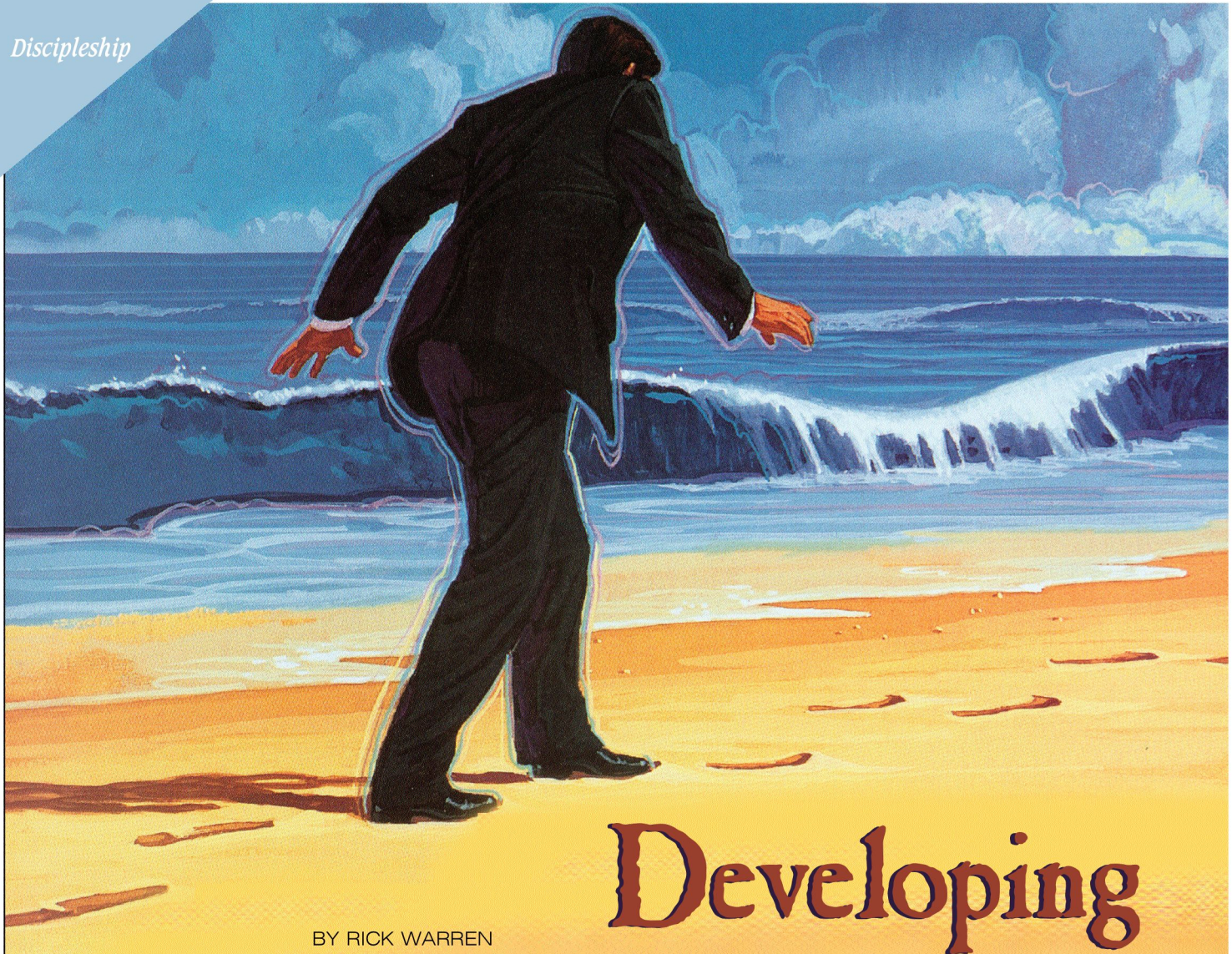


AS OUR PASTOR, HOW WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THAT WE GROW CHURCHES THAT BUILD PEOPLE—DISCIPLES? WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WALKED INTO A CHURCH?

I would look for people who were of my spirit—those who were teachable, hungry, and wanted to be used of God. I would begin to pour myself into them—on a one-to-one basis or in a small-group setting. That's where multiplication can take place. If you will train, teach, and invest yourself in others, they will multiply you through themselves. Soon you have a core of trained leaders—disciples, followers.

First, you are followers of Jesus Christ, and they have to be followers of you and believe in you. God has put pastors, evangelists, teachers, and apostles in the church. With this God-given authority, and if you execute your office properly, you will have followers to be disciplined, not worshipers—there's a difference. God doesn't want people to worship us, but He does want us to have followers. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

**An additional 18 percent did not respond to the question when asked if they had a follow-up program for new converts.*



Developing

BY RICK WARREN

*“Our greatest wish and prayer is that you will become mature Christians.”
(2 Corinthians 13:9, Living Bible)*

The New Testament is very clear that God's will for every believer is spiritual maturity—He wants us to grow up. Paul said, “We are not meant to remain as children at the mercy of every chance wind of teaching.... But we are meant to speak the truth in love, and to grow up in every way into Christ, the head” (Ephesians 4:14, *Phillips*).

The ultimate goal of spiritual growth is to become like Jesus. God's plan since the beginning has been for us to be like His Son (Romans 8:29).

The big question, then, is: How does spiritual growth happen? How do we become mature in Christ?

MYTHS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Before I share the Saddleback Church's strategy for developing believers to maturity, I want to dispel some popular misconceptions about spiritual growth and maturity. It is important for any strategy to be based on accurate information.

MATURITY MYTH 1: *Spiritual growth is automatic once you are born again.* Many churches have no organized plan for following up on new believers and developing members to maturity. They leave it all to chance, assuming that Christians will automatically grow to maturity if they attend church services; and if they encourage people to show up at meetings, the job will get done.

TRUTH: *Spiritual growth does not just happen.* Churches are filled with people who have attended services for their entire lives, yet are still spiritual babies. An assimilated member is not the same as a mature member.

Spiritual growth is intentional and requires commitment and effort. A person must *want* to grow, *decide* to grow, and *make an effort* to grow. Discipleship begins with a decision—it doesn't have to be a complex decision, but it does have to be sincere. The important thing is that God has a part in our growth, but so do we (Philippians 2:12,13). Without a



ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

Mature Members

commitment to grow, any growth that occurs will be circumstantial rather than intentional. Spiritual growth is too important to be left to circumstance (see Romans 6:13).

MATURITY MYTH 2: *Spiritual growth is mystical, and maturity is attainable by ONLY a select few.* Unfortunately, many Christians feel that spiritual maturity is so far out of their reach, they don't even try to attain it. They have a mystical, idealized image of what a mature Christian looks like. Maturity, they believe, is only for supersaints. Some Christian biographies have been partly responsible for this myth by glossing over the humanity of godly people.

TRUTH: *Spiritual growth is very practical.* Any believer can grow to maturity if he or she will develop the habits necessary for spiritual growth. We need to take the mystery out of spiritual growth by breaking the components down into practical, everyday habits.

MATURITY MYTH 3: *Spiritual maturity can occur instantly if you find the right key.* Many sincere Christians spend their lives earnestly searching for an experience, a conference, a revival, a book, a tape, or a single truth that will instantly transform them into mature believers.

TRUTH: *Spiritual growth is a process that takes time.* There are no shortcuts to maturity (Ephesians 4:13). Saying that maturity is a destination at which we arrive implies a journey, and spiritual growth is a journey that will last a lifetime.

*“Building up the church, the body of Christ, to a position of strength and maturity.”
(Ephesians 4:12, Living Bible)*

Spiritual maturity is demonstrated more by behavior than by beliefs.

Believers grow faster when you provide a track to grow on. The result is Saddleback's philosophy of edification, the Life Development Process which uses the baseball diamond as an analogy for growth. People understand how we want them to mature when they see a milestone of spiritual growth assigned to each base. We explain that our goal is to help them move around the bases of life.

If you lead people to commit to growing spiritually, teach them some basic habits, and give them guidance as they progress around the bases, you can expect to see them grow.

MATURITY MYTH 4: *Spiritual maturity is measured by what you know.* Many churches evaluate spiritual maturity solely on the basis of how well you can identify Bible characters, interpret Bible passages, quote Bible verses, and explain biblical theology. However, while knowledge of the Bible is foundational to spiritual maturity, it isn't the total measurement of it.

TRUTH: *Spiritual maturity is demonstrated more by behavior than by beliefs.* The Christian life isn't just a matter of creeds and convictions; it includes conduct and character. Beliefs must be backed up with behavior. Our deeds must be consistent with our creeds.

The New Testament repeatedly teaches that our actions and attitudes reveal our maturity more than our affirmations (James 2:18). If your faith hasn't changed your lifestyle, your faith isn't worth much.

God is far more concerned with our character than He is with our comfort.

As I mentioned earlier, biblical knowledge is just one measurement of spiritual growth. In addition, we can measure maturity through perspective, conviction, skills, and character. These "Five Levels of Learning" are the building blocks of spiritual growth we use at Saddleback Church. One real danger of having knowledge without the other four components is that it produces pride (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Christians need relationships to grow.

We don't grow in isolation; we develop in the context of fellowship.

Knowledge must be tempered by character. Any strategy your church develops to build up believers must help people not only learn the Word but also love it and live it.

MATURITY MYTH 5: *Spiritual growth is a personal and private matter.* The idolatry of individualism in American culture has influenced even the way we think about spiritual growth. Most spiritual formation teaching tends to be self-centered and self-focused without any reference to our relationship to other Christians. This is completely unbiblical and ignores much of the New Testament.

TRUTH: *Christians need relationships to grow.* We don't grow in isolation; we develop in the context of fellowship (Hebrews 10:24,25). God intends for us to grow up in a family.

Relationships are the glue that keeps people connected to your church and are essential for spiritual growth. The Bible teaches that fellowship is not optional for a Christian; it is mandatory. Christians who are not connected in loving relationships with other believers are disobeying the "one another" commands given in God's Word (1 John 1:7).

Many Christians never witness because they don't know how to relate to people. People must be taught how to develop relationships. Although this seems obvious, very few churches take time to teach their members how to relate to each other.

MATURITY MYTH 6: *All you need is Bible study to grow.* Many evangelical churches have been built on this myth. I call them "classroom churches." They stress the teaching of Bible content and doctrine but give little, if any, emphasis to believers' emotional, experiential, and relational development.

TRUTH: *It takes a variety of spiritual experiences with God to produce spiritual maturity.* Genuine spiritual maturity includes having a heart that worships and praises God, building and enjoying loving relationships, using gifts and talents in service to others, and sharing faith with lost people. Any church strategy to bring people to maturity must include *all* these experiences: worship, fellowship, Bible study, evangelism, and ministry. In other words, spiritual growth occurs by participating in all five purposes of the church. Mature Christians do more than study the Christian life—they *experience* it.

By removing all experience from the Christian growth process, you are left with nothing but a sterile, intellectual creed that can be studied but not enjoyed or practiced. Experience is a great teacher. In fact, we can learn some lessons *only* by experience. Study without service produces Christians with judgmental attitudes and spiritual pride.

One of the ways
to assess whether
your church is maturing
spiritually is if the standards
for leadership keep getting
tougher as time passes.

DESIGNING YOUR STRATEGY

Saddleback Church's strategy for developing disciples is based on the six truths I identified in contrast to each myth. We believe that spiritual growth begins with commitment, is a gradual process, involves developing habits, is measured by five factors, is stimulated by relationships, and requires participation in all five purposes of the church.

1. Raise the level of commitment. One of the ways to assess whether your church is maturing spiritually is if the standards for leadership keep getting tougher as time passes, requiring a deeper level of commitment to Christ and spiritual growth.

Each time you raise the standards for leadership, you bring everyone else in the church

along a little bit. When you raise the standard of commitment for those who are in the most visible positions of leadership, it raises the expectations for everyone else.

How do you get people to commit to a process of spiritual growth?

You must ask people for commitment. If you don't ask people for commitment, you won't get it. One of the most helpful things a church can do for people is to assist them in clarifying what commitments to make and what commitments to decline. A barrier to spiritual growth for many people is not lack of commitment but overcommitment to the wrong things.

Ask confidently for a big commitment. Jesus always asked for commitment clearly and confidently. He was not at all reluctant to ask men and women to drop everything and follow Him. Often, the greater the commitment you request, the greater response you will get. People want to be committed to something that gives significance to their lives. They respond to responsibilities that give life meaning and are attracted by a challenging vision.

Be specific in asking for commitment. Another key to developing commitment is to be specific: Commit to Christ, then to baptism, membership, habits for maturity, ministry, and fulfilling their life mission.

Explain the benefits of commitment. Another key to developing commitment is to identify its benefits. We always end up being blessed when we're obedient. Be sure to explain the personal benefits, the family benefits, the benefits to the body of Christ and society in general, and the eternal benefits of committing to spiritual growth. People have an innate desire to learn, to grow, and to improve, but sometimes you must awaken that desire by stating your learning goals and growth objectives in terms of their value and benefit.

The church has the real secret to meaning, significance, and satisfaction in life, but we often present it in such a bland, unattractive way. Compare the quality of a church ad with an advertisement for something else and you'll see the difference right away.

Build on commitment rather than toward commitment. Even though you tell people where you are taking them (by challenging

This plan
is to perfect us,
not pamper us.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72

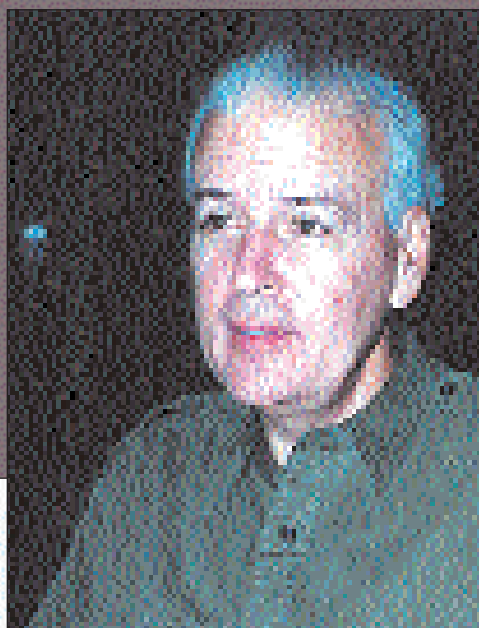
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INTERVIEW WITH RONALD MCMANUS, JERRY STRANDQUIST, BILL HULL

Empowering Believers for Service



*Ronald
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Bill Hull



*Jerry
Strandquist*

The Lord's command in Matthew 28 is to "go and make disciples of all nations." It's what ministers of the gospel are called to do. In this interview Enrichment editors talked with three men who have a passion for making disciples in the local church: Ronald McManus, pastor of First Assembly of God, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Jerry Strandquist, pastor of Bloomington Assembly, Bloomington, Minnesota; and Bill Hull, former pastor and author of several books on disciple making, who is currently the director of Mission USA for the Evangelical Free Church of America and lives in San Diego, California.

**Are we simply here to
perpetuate ourselves? to pay
the pastor's salary? Or are we here
to build the kingdom of God?**

—Strandquist

If we are not training and equipping people for ministry and to fill the roles of leadership in ministry, then we don't have a future as a church.

—McManus

WHAT DOES MAKING DISCIPLES MEAN, AND HOW IS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

MCMANUS: The mandate is to make disciples, not decisions. We have focused on getting people to the decision point and failed to look at how to nurture and grow people in Christ. It is not a question of being one or the other. A church must be both—discipling and evangelistic.

The nurturing aspect of the ministry is critical, for once people are born again, we spiritual parents take on the major responsibility of seeing them grow in Christ. Therefore, every aspect of the ministry—from counseling, Sunday school, and small-group discipleship programs to what we do in the pulpit on Sunday—has a discipleship focus as we try to nurture and grow people in Christ. Thus we try to fulfill the Ephesians 4 model, which is for pastors to equip God's people for works of service and to see them grow up in Christ in all things.

STRANDQUIST: I like the analogy of raising a family. We're in the process of raising children to reproduce themselves. One of my great concerns is the focus of reaching people and then discipling them. We are always in a process of reaching, growing, and training people so they, in turn, will reproduce.

HULL: Discipleship means to be fully committed to the great commandment as well as the Great Commission. The great commandment is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love your neighbor as

yourself, which means a love response to God to obey Him with everything we have (John 15). In the local church, the greatest and most important area of obedience corporately is to make disciples. So the leaders of the church are to be disciples and make disciples based on Matthew 28.

This is done on three levels: (1) The leaders have developed a biblical philosophy of making disciples that they are modeling, (2) they have a plan, and (3) they are implementing the plan.

Along with that, the pastor defines *disciple* and presents discipling as normal from the pastorate and the pulpit—that it is normal for people to be disciples and to make disciples.

Then implement a strategy that involves as many people in the church who would like to be in it. Challenge them to move from one phase of spiritual development to the next. Wrap up leadership teachings, selection, and training process all in one system.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CHURCH IS ONLY INTERESTED IN GETTING PEOPLE BUT NOT DEVELOPING THEM?

MCMANUS: That church will eventually cease to exist. If we are not training and equipping people for ministry and to fill the roles of leadership in ministry, then we don't have a future as a church. I know of churches that do not exist today because they saw themselves simply as soul-saving stations/evangelistic centers and failed to nurture, grow, and establish people in the things of God.

HULL: Making disciples includes three dimensions, and I call this “3-D disciple making”—*deliverance* or evangelism, *development* (that is, training, developing, and helping people understand what their gifts are and how they can be utilized), and *deployment* (deploying people into the mission field beginning right

It is easy to give in to conventional success—bodies, bucks, and buildings—rather than empowering people and sharing the ministry.

—Hull

there in your own Jerusalem).

A church that decides not to make disciples and has no intentional plan is similar to going to a school that has no grades—everybody is together to learn things out of sequence with no way to develop the kids with their peers and on to the next level. It would not be productive at all.

STRANDQUIST: We could be prosecuted for child abuse. We've been pretty good at evangelism, but once the child has been brought to the nursery, we don't know what to do with him. We give him

mission statement? Is that mission statement clear? What kind of business are we in? Are we simply here to perpetuate ourselves? to pay the pastor's salary? Or are we here to build the kingdom of God? I believe the Scripture is very clear that He has sent us here to reach, teach, and equip—ultimately to release people in the kingdom of God.

ARE WE SEEING A RENEWED INTEREST IN THE PROCESS OF REACHING, TEACHING, EQUIPPING, AND RELEASING PEOPLE?

HULL: I see a renewed interest in it—people want to know how to get beyond inspiration. They long for authenticity and quality. Many think church growth can be manufactured or stimulated. I believe it is an interplay of a lot of key areas of ministry such as passionate spirituality, dynamic worship, and empowering leadership. Then the church grows naturally—as Paul said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gives the growth.” People are looking for that kind of growth; and with the signs of revival in our country, people are longing and yearning for something deeper and that has more staying power.

MCMANUS: The whole relational aspect of the ministry of nurturing people is something we are just beginning to get a handle on. The whole area of nurturing [discipling] people is where most of our churches have failed to understand the process. We don't believe in instant sanctification, but we want to practice it in our attitudes toward new converts—we want them to fit in where we are with people who have been saved 40 years. And that would be quite an indictment on saints who have been saved 40 years and expect a newborn baby in Christ to be as mature as they are. We have a lot to learn about opening our arms to

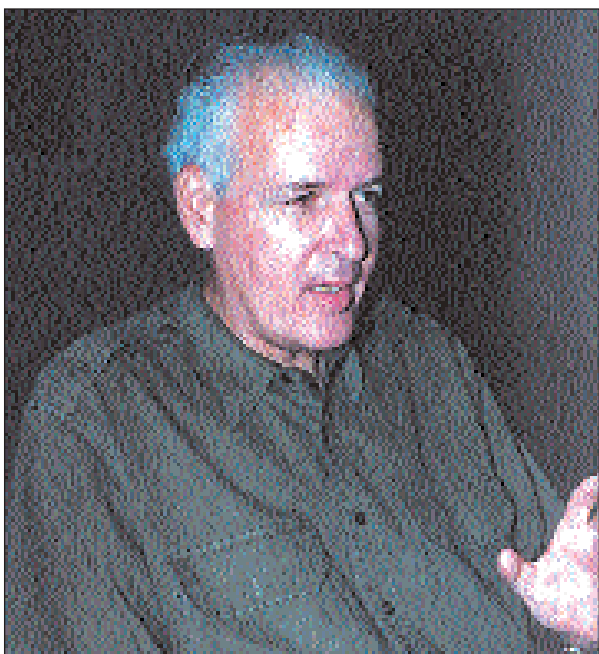
people and knowing how to nurture them and develop them in their relationship to Christ.

WHY HAS THE CHURCH BEEN INEFFECTIVE IN MAKING DISCIPLES?

HULL: We have had a “sit and listen” mentality in our churches. What caused churches to look successful was having large numbers of people in pews listening to somebody talk. So, the congregations took on supporting roles with the clergy having the starring role. The church has been measured by how many people come and listen to the speaker and how good its program is, not by how it challenged people. It is easy to give in to conventional success—bodies, bucks, and buildings—rather than empowering people and sharing the ministry.

Another reason is the seminaries. Historically they have not taught leaders how to teach others but how to give good sermons. The Great Commission is to teach others to obey everything that Christ commanded. Pastors like me entered into the pastorate with the false idea: “Preach it and they will come,” rather than teaching pastors they should be empowered, that teaching people to obey is more than preaching. Preaching is a good start, but we are more than dispensers of information. We are instructors in what it means to live the Christian life, and it involves connecting rhetoric to results—having an infrastructure in the church that supports your speech, your preaching.

MCMANUS: We are experience-oriented. Our experience with the Holy Spirit indicates we want to see things happen in that kind of a spontaneous setting. Thus, when we talk about the process of growing people, that's work and involves spending time with people, structuring opportunities and training for people to grow, teaching classes, and a host of other things. Growing people in Christ involves a lot more work on the part of the church. That's why we don't do it very well.



Discipleship means to be fully committed to the great commandment as well as the Great Commission.

—Hull

a handshake, hand him a bottle, and say, “God bless you. Welcome to the kingdom of God.” Then we send him on and hope he makes it. If we did that with our children, somebody would be at our home shortly, saying, “That's child abuse.” But that's what we are doing in the kingdom of God.

I always like to ask myself, “Why are we here? What's our reason for existence? Do we have a mission or a

WHAT HAS BEEN THE RESULT OF THAT?

MCMANUS: We are not seeing our people multiply and reproduce themselves. Statistics show that our growth rate today is minimal, and we are not really growing and discipling people to reproduce themselves.

STRANDQUIST: What about qualitatively—the quality of the people we are producing? Are we seeing anemic Christians because of our lack of discipleship? Definitely! We are producing immature Christians. Because they don't know doctrine and the Word of God, they are swayed by every wind of doctrine.

Again, it's a little bit like the analogy of raising children. If I allowed my kids to eat what they want, they'd be eating only hot dogs and ice cream. That, I believe, is happening in our churches today. There is an unbalanced diet.

CONTRAST AN EVENT-ORIENTED CHURCH WITH A PROCESS-ORIENTED CHURCH. HOW DOES A CHURCH MOVE FROM ONE TO THE OTHER?

HULL: An experience- or event-oriented church essentially goes from one mountaintop to the next and then tries to survive the valleys in between. An event-oriented church relies upon things that happen on the campus of the church to bring people in—people-gathering

events such as singing Christmas trees, Easter pageants, or Christian athletes. People tend to view the pastor as the real draw along with the luminaries they bring in, and they more or less serve that larger purpose.

The process church says, "We're going to teach the Bible here. We're committed to the Scriptures, developing small groups, training people and leaders. We want to focus off campus to where the people are whom we are to reach. We want to train them, empower them, and help them learn how to reach their networks, relatives, friends, associates in neighborhoods, and spheres of influence." The star quality in a process church is letting people who have gifts lift the weight of ministry—everybody lifting together, like in Ephesians 4.

Too often in the event-oriented church when people are converted, they sever all contact with non-Christians. The process church—the church without walls—throws people out into the community. The pastor becomes an equipper instead of a superstar, a facilitator who leads by example by serving people's best interests. He or she is responsible for bringing the very best out of people, empowering them, instructing them for ministry, and looking at them as equals and partners in ministry. The better they look, the better he or she looks. It takes a secure person to be able to do that.

To get from one to the other is not easy. The leadership of the institutionalized church gets wrapped up in red tape, and they can't release their people to minister. So the first thing is to reaffirm the values of reaching people for Christ, developing them, and deploying them. Transform the church in its attitude and structure to liberate people and move more into process orientation.

We've been pretty good at evangelism, but once the child has been brought to the nursery, we don't know what to do with him. We give him a handshake, hand him a bottle, and say, "God bless you. Welcome to the kingdom of God."

—Strandquist



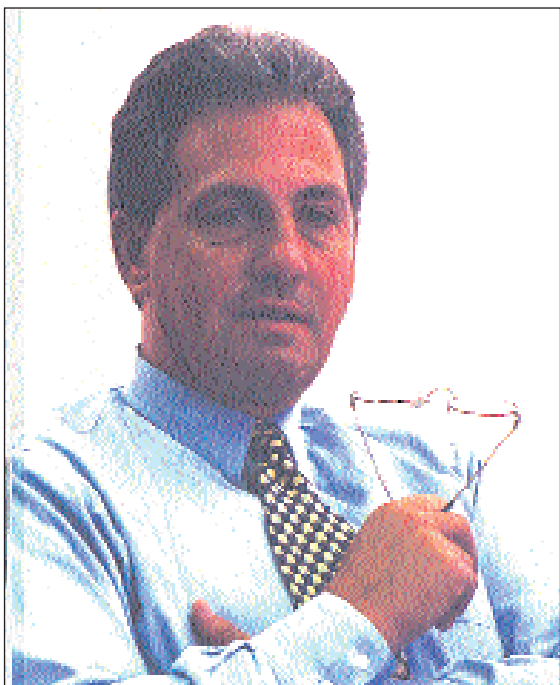
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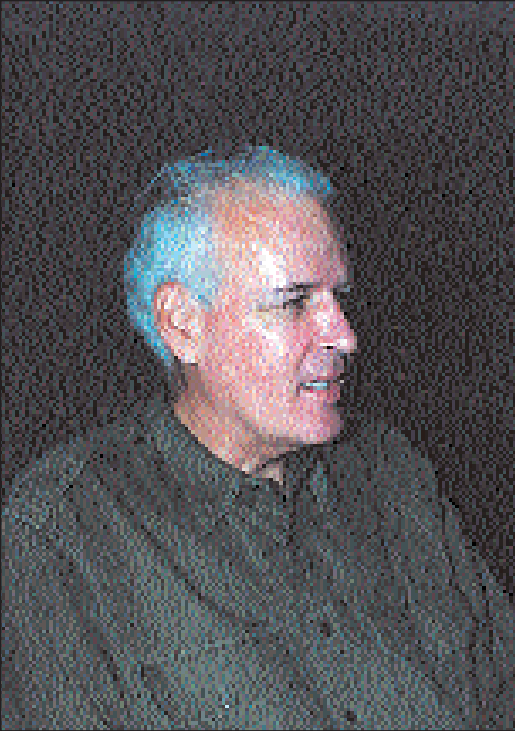
—McManus

STRANDQUIST: We must ask ourselves why we are doing what we're doing? Why do we exist? Continually evaluate it. Building relationships and trust is a process. That's what we need, not another program, not another teaching session. We need to do something that'll work for us at this time in our church.

HOW DO THE PASTORS WHO UNDERSTAND THIS PRIORITIZE THEIR MINISTRY AND LIVES TO DEVELOP A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM IN THE CHURCH?

MCMANUS: First, come to the decision that instant answers are not the way it's





With the signs of revival in our country, people are longing and yearning for something deeper and that has more staying power.

—Hull

done. It doesn't happen in a Sunday service. You have to get away from the event-oriented mentality, because an experience a person has with the Lord at an altar on Sunday is only as meaningful as an ongoing relationship with the Lord during the week.

Pastors must understand their commitment is to the long haul in people's lives. Begin to look at how they can put together opportunities that are going to strengthen the marriages of their churches, how to grow people and see healing come to the broken places in their lives—the kinds of opportunities they are going to offer to teach and train people to fulfill in ministry and to understand that this is a long-haul process, not an event.

STRANDQUIST: Sometimes it's easier to preach and conduct services than to equip others to do works of ministry. And that's what we are really called to do. I have a capable staff—some of the best in the country—but it's not about

us. It's about equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry so that if you were to leave or to die, that ministry will continue because you've trained them. That will be the greatest compliment to you.

Ultimately, we have to believe this is important and that we are called to do more than preach sermons and conduct services. Then communicate it to the leadership. A church can change dramatically if we are united in one heart and one purpose.

HULL: Preaching was always my first priority because it touches everyone and defines what the church is about, what is normal, and what we're going for as a church. Then I would focus on developing leaders through a model small group.

I would select them, train them to do what I wanted them to do, and help them form groups. They would teach those people what I taught them, which would produce four or five groups doing what the original group did. They would find apprentices and do the same thing. Soon we'd have 25 or 30 leaders meeting in a leadership community, who, in turn, would go out and lead small groups. Thus I would be training leaders and helping people at the same time.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN DEVELOPING YOUR ELDERS, DEACONS, TRUSTEES OTHER THAN YOUR STAFF PEOPLE, BUT PEOPLE WHO ARE GOD-RAISED LEADERS IN YOUR CONGREGATION?

STRANDQUIST: When I came to Bloomington, there were three groups—elders, board members, and staff. The only time the three groups got together was at a Christmas party. The three groups had three different agendas. Part of the reason was they had never gotten together. So, 2 or 3 years ago I said, "It's time for us to come together." During our normal board meeting, we have a meal, and the staff, the elders, and the trustees come with their mates.

We fellowship together, eat together, pray together. Then I have the staff and

the elders, if they can do it in about 5 minutes, share some of the exciting things that are happening. We throw up some trial balloons and talk about them. Thus we are all attempting to be one voice, in one accord, working together. It's not the staff, the elders, and the trustees in separate corners. We are working together. It is important for the mates to be there also because they are key leaders in this church.

MCMANUS: I have done similar things, spending quality time with board and staff. With pastoral staff and leadership, our egos are so connected to people needing us it's hard to move to the next level. At one time I gained my fulfillment from people needing me, but today my fulfillment as a pastor comes from seeing God doing things through people I have invested my life in by training and equipping them.



Sometimes it's easier to preach and conduct services than to equip others to do works of ministry.

—Strandquist

The church can never be released to be what God has called it to be until the pastor is freed up to understand what

his or her calling is and where he or she finds fulfillment.

STRANDQUIST: Something else: I try to get together with key young men in my church. I invite 5 to 10 of them for breakfast and pointedly tell them: "I've invited you because I see your faithfulness. The Scripture talks about committing these things to faithful men, and you are not a trustee or an elder at this time, but I see in you the ability and the gifts to eventually become a leader in this church. I want you to start now to lead. You may be elected or appointed, or you may never be elected or appointed, but I want you to start acting and responding like a leader today. I see God's gift in your life and His hand upon you, and I want to spend some time with you."

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE NOT PROPERLY DISCIPLED IS PUT INTO A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH?

MCMANUS: Trouble, because you are asking somebody to do something who has not been equipped to do it effectively. It will hurt the people that person has worked with. So often we fail to make requirements of people for places of service in the ministry, thinking we are going to hold them. However, when we make requirements for people to serve in places of ministry, more people apply for those things, and it says, "This is important—this is valuable."

The person will know, "If I have to be trained to do this, then it must be important to the pastor and to this church." We require people to be members of our church before they can serve. How can we commit to them if they won't commit to us? It's a matter of mutual commitment of ourselves to one another to grow in Christ and to fulfill the calling God has put upon our lives. Failure in ministry always comes back to hurt the Kingdom.

HULL: If an individual is given a leadership position who doesn't belong there, it's kind of like playing a basket-

ball game with a bad referee—you're in the game and there is little you can do. You can complain; you can whine—but you're still stuck with that person the whole game. If you get the wrong person in leadership, you're stuck with him or her for a period of time.

WHY WAS JESUS SO SUCCESSFUL IN DEVELOPING MEN, AND WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HIS STYLE?

STRANDQUIST: Jesus saw men for what they could be. They were obviously rough. (We wouldn't have them as board members in our churches because they were rough, crude, and outspoken.) Then He took on the responsibility to train them, not only by teaching but by His example. They saw the disciplines in His life of prayer, of solitude, of fasting, so it was more than just a teaching experience—they walked with Him and lived with Him.

He was also very patient with them. When they made mistakes, He worked with them, encouraged them, and taught them. He recognized their gifts and worked with them accordingly.

HULL: Jesus knew His objective, which was to turn things over to His disciples. He took them through phases: "Come and see"; "come and follow Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men"; and "come and be with Me that you might go out and preach." This was followed by the Resurrection and Pentecost and the beginning of the Church.


STRANDQUIST: I also read that leaders are disciple makers or people who help

others make the transition from the past to the future. That's exactly what Jesus did.

WHERE DOES A LEADER BEGIN IN BUILDING A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM IN THE CHURCH?

HULL: First, preach it—preach what's on your heart. Second, select some key leaders—people with hungry hearts and teachable spirits. Develop a model, as mentioned earlier. You can't make disciples without accountability, and you can't have accountability without structure. Start with that and multiply it. That's how it works.

MCMANUS: Don't lament the lack of trained leaders. You'll have trained leaders when you stop running long enough to invest yourself in people and begin to equip them for the work of the ministry.

STRANDQUIST: Start where you are with what you have. If you are faithful with little, He'll make you ruler over much. Begin looking for faithful men and women—young or old—in whom to invest some time and begin to share your vision with them. Seize the moment. Share your passion. 

An experience a person has with the Lord at an altar on Sunday is only as meaningful as an ongoing relationship with the Lord during the week.

—McManus





PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE EDMONSON

Turning Undersized into Mature

BY BOB MOOREHEAD

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF when you read the word *discipleship*? No, it's not just a buzzword, the latest trend, or another program. It is the marching orders Christ gave to the Church—the lifeblood of the Church.

THE MANDATE

Making disciples isn't optional—it is a must. It's not up for a vote, negotiation, or alter-

ation. The Lord's last command should be our first concern: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19*).

The church board, council, or committee is not to tamper with that mandate. It's a given. If the church is the church, it will honor the command. If the church is only playing church, it will ignore the command or, at best, make it say something else.

Churches today are doing a lot of different things, but the one thing they aren't doing, by and large, is making disciples. Can you imagine taking an army into a major battle with untrained soldiers? We would lose the battle hands down. American churches are filled with nice, well-dressed, friendly, untrained people who don't have the slightest clue they have a personal and corporate responsibility to make disciples where they work and live.

THE MEANING

What does the mandate mean? What does "make disciples" mean? It doesn't mean to get decisions. Making a decision in a public meeting by lifting a hand or going to the altar is not the same as making a disciple. It may very well be a first step, but that's all it is. Disciple making is a twofold process: (1) conversion to Christ and (2) continuance to Christ.

Disciple making is incomplete without either of those components. It starts with telling others the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ and continues with presenting Christ as God's full and final answer to our sin. The gospel lets people know they cannot save themselves and must actually receive Christ into their lives by personal invitation to be Lord of their lives.

Continuance is where maturation comes in. When a new baby is born, the birth doesn't really take long. However, 18 to 20 years are involved in maturation. We call it development in the physical and mental realm. It's strange—we get alarmed when a baby doesn't grow and develop physically but not when a baby believer doesn't develop and mature spiritually. Because this second phase of discipleship is all but neglected in the church, our churches are full of undersized believers who shake their baby rattles when they don't get their way. They have never been fed and developed.

Unfortunately, television is discipling our people today. Their value systems and worldview are being shaped by thousands of murders, rapes, violence, and sexually explicit bedroom scenes pouring into their living rooms nightly. The average believer is watching the tube some 21 hours every week but trained in

the Word only about 11 minutes weekly. Since a pupil will be like the teacher (Luke 6:40), imagine what the end product will be.

In discipleship we are interested with the end product. Paul talked about presenting every person "complete," "mature," or "perfect" in Christ (Colossians 1:28). Fully devoted and capable followers of Jesus Christ should be the end product. Where is our product today? Disciple making isn't finished until we have reached people for Christ, matured them in Christ, and enabled them to be reproducers themselves.

Imagine a man's building a large radio factory. He hires 400 people to assemble radios of all kinds, has radio training classes, offers incentives for employees to learn, pays good wages, runs three shifts, and starts up the assembly line. He returns later to see how things are going. Every light is on in the factory, machines are running, people seem busy, three shifts are working, and the place is buzzing with activity. When he asks how many radios were turned out that week, he is met with the foreman's blank stare and reply, "Well, none, but boy, what activity we have here! This is really a busy place." Something's wrong. A place that is designed to build radios, built to build radios, equipped to build radios, and produces no radios ends up at the end of the assembly line.

Do I have to make the application? The church's end product is a person saved and trained to help bring others to Christ. However, the product is missing. The success of any church is not how many people the ushers count in the auditorium—even if it is 8,000. Success is determined by how many disciples are being produced.

THE MATERIAL

In what areas does a believer desperately need instruction?

- Assurance of salvation
- How to study the Word of God
- Prayer
- The Holy Spirit and gifting
- Soul winning

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(1) conversion to Christ and
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Are We Making Disciples ?

Professing Christians don't demonstrate the character, lifestyle, and values of true Christians.

- 60 percent of all Americans attend church at least once per month.
- 25 percent of church members admit they never pray.
- 35 percent never read the Bible.
- 60 percent never give to missions.
- 70 percent never assume responsibilities in the church.
- 85 percent never invite anyone to church.
- 95 percent never win anyone to Christ.

- The Church
- Stewardship and finance
- Servanthood
- The rapture of the Church
- Time management
- Leadership
- Marriage, home, and the family
- Discipling others
- Holiness and purity

A disciple is instructed three ways: by the mentoring of another believer, from the Holy Spirit, and through the preaching of God's Word.

THE METHOD

Multiplication! I am always moved by how Jesus did it. He was not a mass media person. He selected 12 men and then spent 3 years pouring His life into them: "He appointed twelve...that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14).

What a simple process! Someone has put His method this way:

- He did it.
- They watched Him do it.
- He taught them how to do it.
- He did it with them.
- He released them to do it by themselves.

On a 20th-century scale, that ought to be our basic plan. It was a plan of multiplication rather than addition. Paul addressed this many years later when he wrote to young Timothy: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust

to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Note the chain effect. It speaks of the power of multiplication. It is like the adage that asks, "Would you rather have a million dollars or a penny doubled every day for a month?" Many would immediately say, "Give me the million dollars." But a penny doubled every day for a month amounts to \$10,737,418.24. God wants us multiplying, not merely adding numbers to our churches.

Is this not why Jesus chose the method He did? He expected His disciples to reproduce. What He poured into their lives, He expected them to pour into others' lives. Thus, discipleship is not a dead-end street. A strategic part of disciple making is letting the new convert know that he or she is told to tell, changed to challenge, and saved to serve. It just comes with the turf.

Someone has pointed out that 50 percent of our world's population has not heard the gospel. Without the system of multiplication, world evangelism will only hobble along well behind the population growth. Today it takes 1,000 Christians 365 days a year to win one person to Christ and train him. At this rate, we'll lose the battle. Without multiplication, there is no hope of winning our world to Christ. However, with this method, our world can actually be won.

This point was driven home to me several years ago when I began the Lay Witness Training program in our church. I took two people and for 18 weeks poured soul-winning

skills into them, holding them accountable to a very high standard. Going in, they knew that when those weeks were finished, which included on-the-job training, each would be required to take two people and pour into them what I had poured into their lives. They did. Soon the three of us were training six people. Then the 9 of us began training 18 people. Then the 27 of us began training 54 other people. Shortly, the 81 of us started training 162 people. From there the numbers really got big. Today, many years later, well over 2,000 have been trained. Did they all stick? No, but a large number did, and the training is still in progress. It may sound slow at first, but over time, multiplication becomes more than mere addition.

THE MENTORED

What does a disciple look like? What shape does the product take at the end of the process? Many descriptions could be given, but a few will suffice:

1. A disciple bears much fruit (John 15:8).
2. A disciple loves God and others (Matthew 10:37; John 13:35).
3. A disciple is a selfless person (Luke 14:33).
4. A disciple bears his cross (Matthew 10:38).
5. A disciple continues in God's Word (John 8:31).
6. A disciple witnesses to others (Mark 8:38).


In short, disciples are ones who attach themselves to Jesus Christ and long to develop the marks of Christlikeness in their own lives. This attachment isn't to be found by merely absorbing a lot of facts about Jesus but becoming Christlike so Christ can live His life through them.

Where do we begin? By the maxim that *everyone* in your local church should be in one of two categories: discipling or being disciplined by someone. We're either pouring our lives into a disciple or, as a disciple, learning as someone pours his or her life into us. The motto ought to be, "Everyone training or being trained." Anything short of that is not only unbiblical but programs the church to failure in its task. Therefore, ask yourself the questions, "Am I willing to obey Christ's command to make disciples?" "When will I get started?"

The following should be our affirmation:

My Public Declaration

I've caught the vision, made the decision, stepped over the line; the dye has been cast, the step has been taken, the confession has been made, the promise has been spoken, I have become a follower of Jesus Christ! My past is redeemed, my present secured, my future made hopeful, my bridges burned, my old life crucified, my new life sanctified, the journey begun, the goal is from sight to faith, from guilt to wholeness, from darkness to light, from prison to freedom, I'm on my way!


Nothing will deter me, drag me, deceive me, detour me, derail me, deprive me, deprogram me, or destroy me. I won't look back, turn around, slow down, fall down, or go down. I've entered the race full of power, delivered from weakness; full of hope, delivered from despair; full of faith, delivered from doubt; full of courage, delivered from Satan; and full of boldness. Obstacles won't tire me; pleasures won't allure me; for I've made the choice, settled the account, sealed the orders, filed the flight plan, and am on my way. I'm done with low vision, sight walking, minidreaming, meaningless meandering, dwarfed doings, petty projects, and cheap talk. I'm through with half-hearted commitment, mediocrity, broken promises, and shoddy discipline. With a new mind I'll think holy thoughts; with a new tongue I'll speak a new message; with a new walk I'll go different places; with new eyes I'll see different visions. I've been bought with a price, sealed with His Spirit, and guaranteed an inheritance. From this day forth I'll live like a prince coming into His inheritance. 

Disciple making isn't finished until we have reached people for Christ, matured them in Christ, and enabled them to be reproducers themselves.

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

Bob Moorehead, Ph.D., is senior pastor of Overlake Christian Church, Kirkland, Washington; president of Northwest Graduate School of Ministry; and has a radio ministry, "Courageous Living," that is heard from coast to coast.





Five Characteristics of Disciple-Making Churches

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE EDMONSON

BY LEROY BARTEL

When I think of congregations and their approaches to disciple making, three case-study churches come to mind. (I could give names and places.) We've all seen congregations like these, commented on their approaches and practices, and observed both the positive and negative characteristics of each type.

1. OUTWARD-FOCUSED CHURCH

This church is often pastored by a person with a passion for souls—and sometimes an equally great passion for numerical success. The pastor longs to have the fastest growing church in the district—if not the entire denomination. Often this congregation goes through new converts like a new mother goes through disposable diapers. Worship music is high-energy,

and sermons are fiery and emotional. Sometimes Christian education is neglected in the frantic attempt to reach more and more people.

2. INWARD-FOCUSED CHURCH

This church is almost the exact opposite. Correctness of doctrine and Bible knowledge are the pride and joy of this body of believers. They love deep teaching and the “meat of the Word”—in contrast to what they refer to cynically as the “milk of the Word.” Tradition often rules almost everything—from music to programs and even policy and procedures. Emphasis is on conserving and preserving “what we have.” Sometimes this kind of congregation hasn't seen a convert walk an aisle in years.

3. DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH

This congregation is alive and vibrant. Souls are saved weekly and then disciplined to become productive contributors to the church's mission and ministry under God. New programs are constantly developed to meet needs and fulfill the church's mission. Older programs are evaluated, refocused, rejuvenated, or phased out. They avoid the pitfalls of congregations one and two, learn from the strengths of the other approaches, and insist that everything they do be evaluated in terms of a biblically driven mission. They are in the business of making disciples.

My experience has been that disciple-making congregations share the following five characteristics:

1. They are committed to Christ's mandate to make disciples. These congregations understand their challenge is to build people—not just programs, buildings, or budgets. They see themselves fundamentally as disciple-making ministries and correctly understand that Christ's mandate (Matthew 28:19,20)—often called the Great Commission—is first and foremost a command to make disciples. In fact, the word translated *teach* in the King James Version of verse 19 is the verb form of the noun most often translated *disciple* in our Bibles. The verb is in the imperative mood, indicating that it is a clear command from our Lord to His disciples. It is the dominating idea of the entire sentence. Even the word *go*, most often emphasized in the sentence, is actually a modifier of the verb in the Greek and explains how and under what circumstances the disciple making ought to be done—"in your going" or "as you go" make disciples. Our Savior's command was to "make disciples," not simply count converts. These churches understand that.

They also correctly understand that they are to make disciples of everyone: Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans; the rich, the poor, the affluent, and the homeless; the educated and the illiterate; from the nursery to the nursing home—the cradle to the grave. We cannot afford to be exclusive or selective. When the Bible specifies "of all nations," these churches understand they are to make disciples of all people groups.

Christ's mandate does not simply mean they are to teach people about Christ or the Bible or doctrine. Christ said, "[Teach] them to *observe* all things" or, as the New International Version correctly translates, "[Teach] them to *obey* everything I have commanded you." (Parents know there

is a vast difference between "knowing" and "obeying.") These churches get involved in helping people learn to live out the Christian life and to experience the adventure of following Jesus every day of their lives. Even their evangelism is fundamentally an enthusiastic call to follow Jesus.

2. They give priority to the teaching ministry of the church. These congregations realize that our Savior was referred to as a teacher as much as He was a preacher.

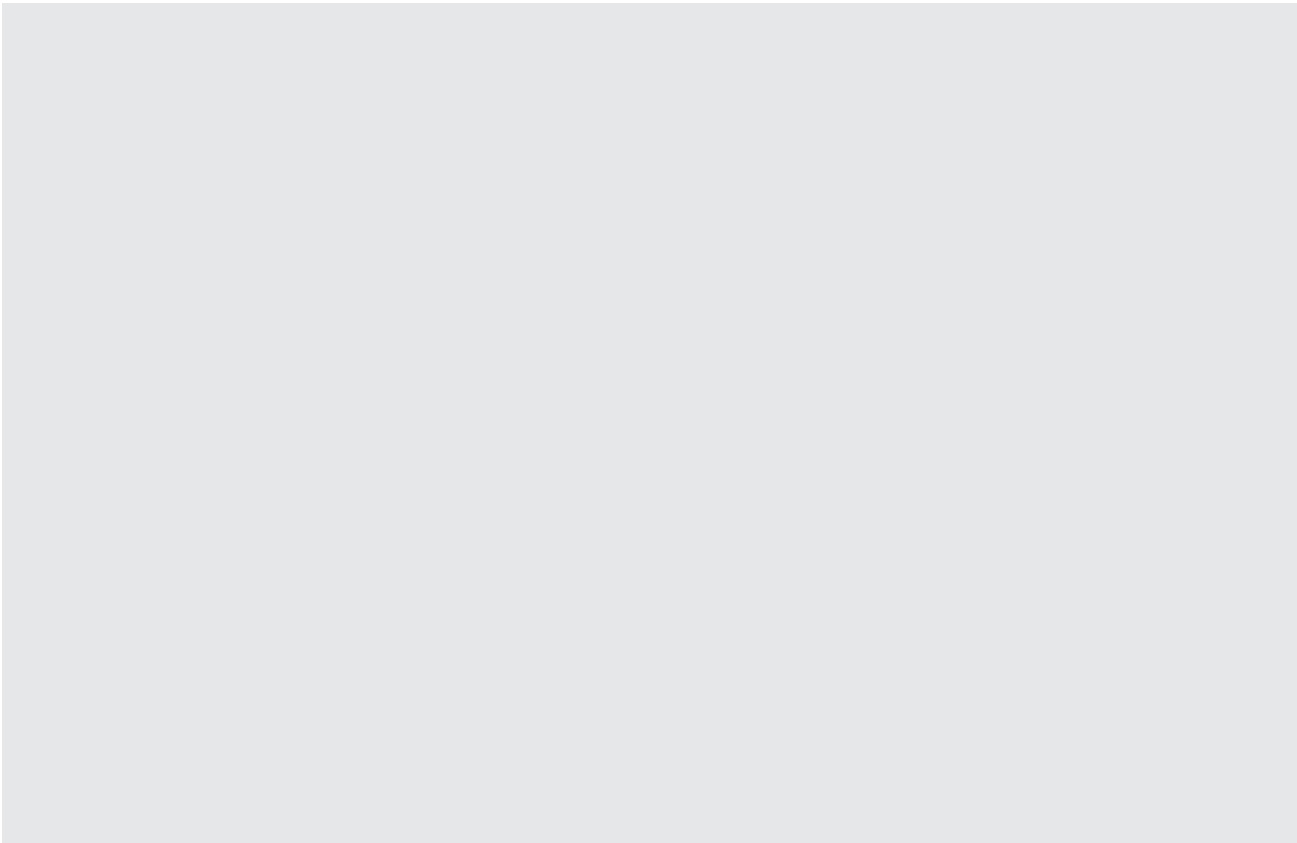
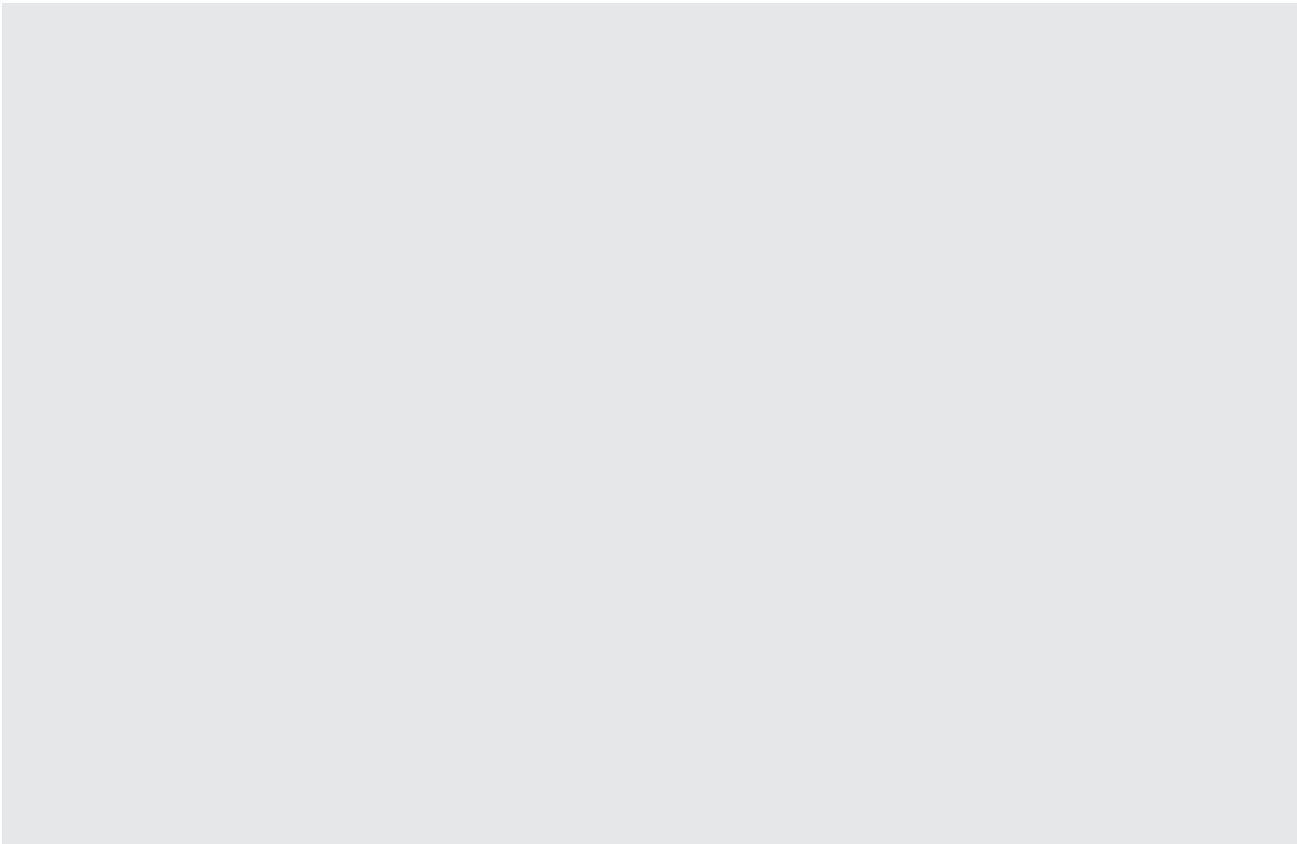
Teaching is much more than simply giving an exciting presentation of truth (as important as that is). In fact, to limit teaching simply to a presentation of truth or a public-speaking event is to rob it severely of its biblical dynamic. Check it out—by Bible definition, teaching is helping another person come to know Christ and personally experience His life-changing love and power. It involves leading other people to discover the truth of Scripture and apply it to their lives. It entails working with them to learn what the adventure of the Christian life is all about and doing everything in their power to help them live it out in the power of the Holy Spirit. It adopts a mentoring model that is receiving fresh emphasis today.

In emphasizing the teaching ministry of the church, these congregations invariably stress the importance of Sunday school or its functional equivalent and recognize the practical necessity of a discipling ministry at every level of human development. Believers must have a biblically grounded faith and need to get together to study and apply the Bible to their daily lives. They have a healthy appreciation for the spiritual dynamics and caring intimacy that are a part of small-group nurture.

Convictions of Disciple-Making Churches

1. *The church exists to serve God by serving people.*
2. *The church is responsible to cause people to want to learn as disciples.*
3. *The church will be accountable to God for its influence on people and the community.*
4. *The church is accountable and responsible because it controls the process.*
5. *The church should judge its success by the spiritual development and values of its people.*
6. *The church influences more by character and commitment than by its programs and communications.*
7. *The church's effectiveness is based on its practice of and alignment with biblical principles in the reach-*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



Discipleship

D I S C I P L E S H I P

learn

prepare

assimilate



*The key
to a focused,
reproductive
ministry is
discipleship.*

The Great Omission—

Go and Make Disciples

BY JEFF SWAIM

Mentoring, accountability group, visitor assimilation, purpose-driven church, people-building skills, seeker sensitive, and promise keeper are buzzwords which have surfaced in ministerial circles during the past 3 years. All are new ways of looking at the need for building a discipleship process in lives and in the church at large.

The key to a focused, reproductive ministry is discipleship. However, we need to face problems surrounding discipleship, identify the fallacies and myths concerning it, understand the principles of discipleship, and enjoy the benefits.

PROBLEMS SURROUNDING DISCIPLESHIP

We don't understand discipleship. Many think discipleship is something mystical and authoritative. Others think it is something only for new converts. The Gospels tell us Jesus' terms for becoming a disciple. We also are familiar with the Great Commission. We preach it and teach it, but do we understand it and do it?

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus established a foundation for a disciple's attitudes and motives in relationship to God and others. Thoughts, motives, and actions in and out of the community of believers will affect or be affected by the disciple.

The Gospels also carry Jesus' terms for discipleship. A disciple must: lose his life, not try to gain the whole world; have love for fellow believers; deny himself and die daily; take up the cross, identify with Christ, and not be

conformed to the world; follow Jesus in love, faith, and obedience; love the Word of God and carry it out in obedience; have a supreme love for God above family, friends, and self; be willing to give up everything to follow Christ. It is a life of selfless service to God and others.

Ministers would do well to read these Scriptures through the eyes of a disciple, a follower of Jesus. To understand discipleship and make disciples, we must first be willing and obedient disciples ourselves.

We were never disciplined. Ministers must fulfill the requirements for the credentialing process. The form does not ask if we have been disciplined, who disciplined us, and who we are discipling. We are not required to be a disciple or to disciple others. The tragedy in ministers' lives may be that no one ever invested time in them beyond a new-convert's class. They are schooled in the skills of ministry to succeed and not fail, but somehow they are set up to fall short of God's best through lack of a personal discipleship process.

We learn how to prepare sermons, take tests, and assimilate information. Tragically, many were never taught how to know God, how to walk with God, how to receive identity of who they are in Jesus and who Jesus is in them—not from performance, how to die to self, how to win others to Christ, how to disciple others, how to release others to ministry, how to submit to spiritual authority, and how to be a disciplined child of God.

We don't make discipleship a priority. Church calendars are jammed with all kinds of

Ministers must fulfill the requirements for the credentialing process. The form does not ask if we have been disciplined, who disciplined us, and who we are discipling.

**The tragedy in ministers' lives may
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activities. The minister's calendar is jammed with meetings, events, counseling, visitation, study time, administration, preparation, and closure of each event. Are these activities and events the best we can do? Discipleship becomes an add-on ministry to which no one has time to commit. Work smarter, not harder.

Our lives can become so busy we don't take time to grow as fruit-producing Christians nor produce fruit in others, and our ministry becomes unfulfilling, ineffective, and barren. With determination each growing disciple must plow up the barren ground of a busy schedule, plant seeds of godly fruit, and expect to reap a harvest. (See Jesus' warning and invitation in John 15.)

We view discipleship as a program. Discipleship is a personal commitment to go beyond the conversion experience and walk with Christ and others in fulfilling the mission of the church. It is a lifestyle lived out daily, modeled, and caught by others through a close personal relationship. Classes and published materials can assist in this process, but discipleship must be caught through a mentoring process and personal surrender to the lordship of Jesus.

Understanding the Principles of Discipleship

- Discipleship is a command, not a program.
- Discipleship is God's plan to grow people and the church.
- Discipleship is a process of measurable growth in the believer's lifetime in becoming like Jesus' character and obedience.
- Discipleship establishes worshippers who worship God in spirit and in truth—with their whole being, not just on Sunday.
- Discipleship builds strong people.
- Discipleship prepares people for service.
- Discipleship develops a biblical community of believers.
- Discipleship is active (see Matthew 28:19, NIV).
- Disciples make disciples.
- Discipleship requires commitment and priority on every level.
- Discipleship is an investment, not an expense.

We're afraid of getting too close to people. Somehow a wrong teaching has permeated ministerial ranks that the pastor should not make friends with the parishioners. Over the years this myth has damaged the process of discipleship in both the minister and the church members. It has often left the pastor standing alone, appearing aloof and uncaring toward church members.

Jesus had friends—close friends who were not His disciples (e.g., Lazarus). He set the example that healthy ministry stems from a healthy relationship with God and other people. One affects the other. Our ministry potential is greatly diminished if we are unwilling to be vulnerable and allow people to see us for who we are in every area of our lives.

IDENTIFYING THE FALLACIES AND MYTHS CONCERNING DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship will solve our church's problems and needs. It may not. It will, however, set the church on a course of building its members into viable ministers in the Kingdom. It cannot be a quick fix to remedy the needs and problems of the church, for this will result in a short-lived commitment and priority to the command and discipleship process.

Discipleship is a class. It's not a class but a process. Discipleship is more than giving information, memory work, filling out questions in a workbook, receiving a certificate upon completion of a class. Discipleship is a process of measurable growth in the believer's lifetime in becoming like Jesus in character and obedience.

Everyone will want to join in and succeed at once. To expect everyone in your church to join a class immediately and become a disciple when you start a discipleship program or process is an unreal expectation. Because of time commitments and other involvements, it is best to offer entry points in the process at different times of the year as people's schedules and hunger for Jesus change.

Discipleship is just for new converts and newcomers. It is for preachers and other mature Christians, too. Members of the Body should identify where they are in their Christian walk and process as a disciple and grow from there.

Discipleship is not my ministry. Discipleship must be for all—both ministers and laypeople. It is not a program, portfolio, ministry gift, or niche—it's a command (Matthew 28:19). Discipleship in the minister's life in the church should be like the hub of a wheel—all the spokes of ministry are connected and flow from that hub.

Ministers can accomplish discipleship from the pulpit and Sunday school. Much growth can happen in both places through anointed preaching and teaching; however, it is probably not accomplishing true discipleship. Growing disciples need to be taught how to interact with others through fellowship, accountability in their daily walk of obedience, and how to understand the Scriptures and doctrines of the church. They must be involved in ministry with their discipler and fellow

students, discover their ministry gifts, know how and where to use them, and learn how to disciple others and release them to ministry.

ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The church becomes a place where love grows— through selfless relationships and unconditional love demonstrated to believers and unbelievers.

Ministry is multiplied. Ministers make disciples who make disciples who make disciples....

Resources realized. Every church needs workers and financial support. The potential is unlimited workers and unlimited resources for the harvest through obedient followers of Christ through stewardship of time, talent, and finance.

The church has a mission and a purpose. The question of “why we do what we do” is answered with an intrinsic motivation driven by a love for Jesus and a biblical foundation. Ministry is not reduced to continual hype and promotion of extrinsic motivators for involvement and participation. Disciples are committed to involvement in an event or ministry because of its biblical principles and value in the Kingdom.

Release instead of delegation. Ministers don't just work themselves out of a job of the menial, mundane tasks that someone else can do or they don't want to do. Instead they build people and release them to a ministry. No task is beneath a disciple-making pastor; however, his or her mindset is to release the people to ministry and allow them to grow and develop as vital ministers in the church. The disciple-making pastor helps people identify their ministry gifts, facilitates involvement, observes growth of that ministry, gives encouragement to discover other gifts and talents that can be used for the Lord, and never stereotypes a person into one specific ministry.

Every member is a minister. Members find their individual ministries and are faithful and happy building the body of Christ and reaching the lost.

Groups are turned into ministries. Groups within the church turn outward to others to prevent having a separate church within the church. Groups become others-centered, and the group doesn't exist just for the group but for ministry to the church and to the world.

People excel in the basics of Christianity and become self-feeding. No longer will people


complain, “I'm not being fed.” Scripture comes alive in their daily devotions as they apply the Word. Sermons are burned into their hearts because the Spirit has been prompting them in their devotional life and accountability group.

Classes and published materials can assist in this process, but discipleship must be caught through a mentoring process.

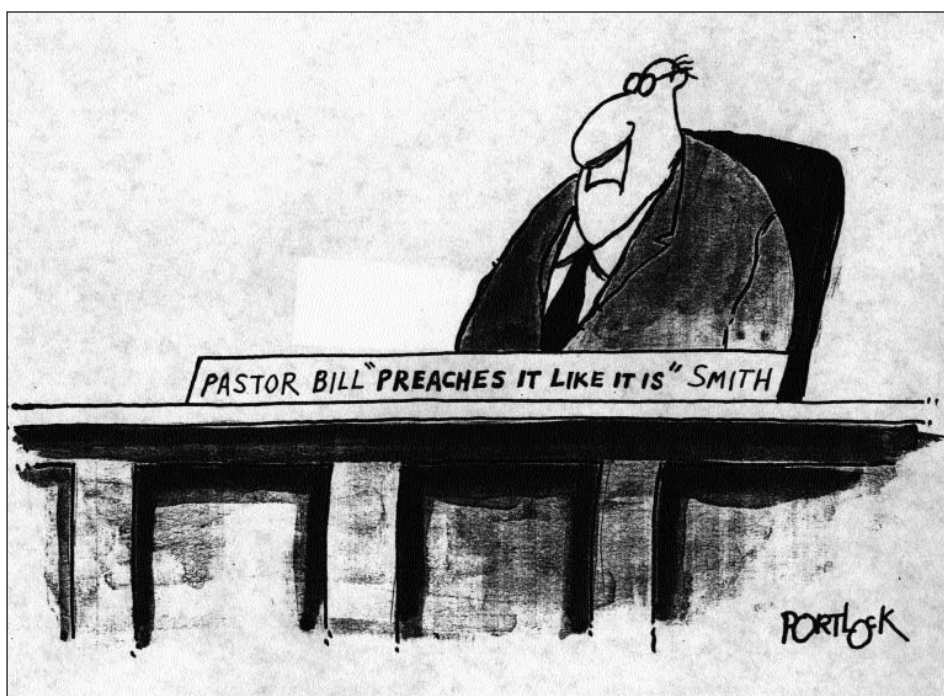
Evangelism becomes part of daily life for the believer. The altar call during the service becomes the secondary place during the week where people can find Jesus as Savior. Disciples take the good news to the marketplace where they live, work, play, and go to school. They become missionaries wherever they are.

The body of Christ is in need of committed members, committed workers, finance, facilities, effective evangelism and follow-up, godly leadership in the home, and support of the church's mission. The key is found in Jesus' basic commission to make disciples. Discipleship will be accomplished through



hard work, intense passion for God, and sharing with others in obedience to Jesus' command, “Go and make disciples.” 

Jeff Swaim is the discipleship coordinator for HonorBound and Men's Ministries.



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3. These churches emphasize disciple making as a spiritual dynamic. They see themselves as involved with God in the spiritual formation of lives. Disciple making, in their view, is not simply an educational task or another program that needs to be a part of the church's program. Nothing of eternal consequence will take place without the Holy Spirit's involvement.

Authentic Christian experience is critical to disciple making. No spiritual formation is possible without genuine, life-changing new birth. The baptism in the Holy Spirit provides the essential power base for victorious and fruitful Christian living for every believer. In addition, the Christian life ought to be characterized by continual, ongoing experiences with God that reinforce and vitalize daily Christian life.

The experiential side of Christian life, however, is not left without a counterbalance. All experiences must be evaluated by the clear teaching of God's Word, and no curricular tool is as important in faith formation as the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, people get involved in Bible study and offered electives, but the bottom line is, they always study the Bible. The Bible is truly the all-sufficient guide for faith and conduct.

4. These churches are involvement-oriented. It is nearly impossible to be a part of one of these congregations and not be deeply involved in Christian service. Contrary to public perception, Christianity is *not* a spectator sport. People are not allowed to simply occupy a pew or come for the show. Ministry is not simply a performance given by a few superstars in the

church; it is the responsibility of every believer.

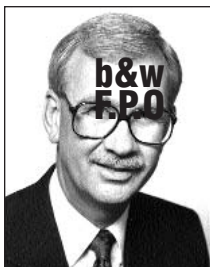
The apostle Paul delineated the responsibility of church leadership when he indicated their task was to "equip" (RSV, NASB) or "prepare" (NIV) God's people for ministry (Ephesians 4:11,12). These churches believe it is their responsibility, under God, to help people find their place in the body of Christ and fill it. Training for service is not only provided, it is insisted upon. Every member of the body of Christ is essential (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3-8). The corporate task of the church, the body of Christ, is representing Christ without distortion in communities and culture in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ministry is not simply a performance given by a few superstars

5. These churches don't leave disciple making to chance. Converts are not gotten and then forgotten. In disciple-making churches, people are accounted for and not allowed to fall through the cracks or slip out through the back door unnoticed. It's difficult to begin missing services in one of these churches without being noticed and contacted. Someone is assigned accountability for each new convert. Everyone becomes a part of a small group and is assigned a mentor. The objective is to help every new believer learn what the Christian life is all about and live it out victoriously. Every soul is treated as though it were truly worth "the whole world" in disciple-making churches (Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25).

In recent years the emphasis in many churches has shifted to celebration. Sometimes so much attention has been given to the Sunday morning worship experience that other essential issues have been neglected. In many locations the Sunday school and midweek service have almost died. On the other hand, some congregations have gone to the other extreme and put all emphasis on education, thus becoming inward-focused and stagnant.

Both errors are disastrous. Worship cannot be neglected. Neither can the proclamation of the gospel—it is absolutely central to the church's task. But just as important or critical to the church's continued vitality is the issue of discipleship. No question about it: The church cannot afford to neglect its disciple-making mandate. ■



Leroy Bartel is the Division of Christian Education national director, Springfield, Missouri.

Church Program Involvement

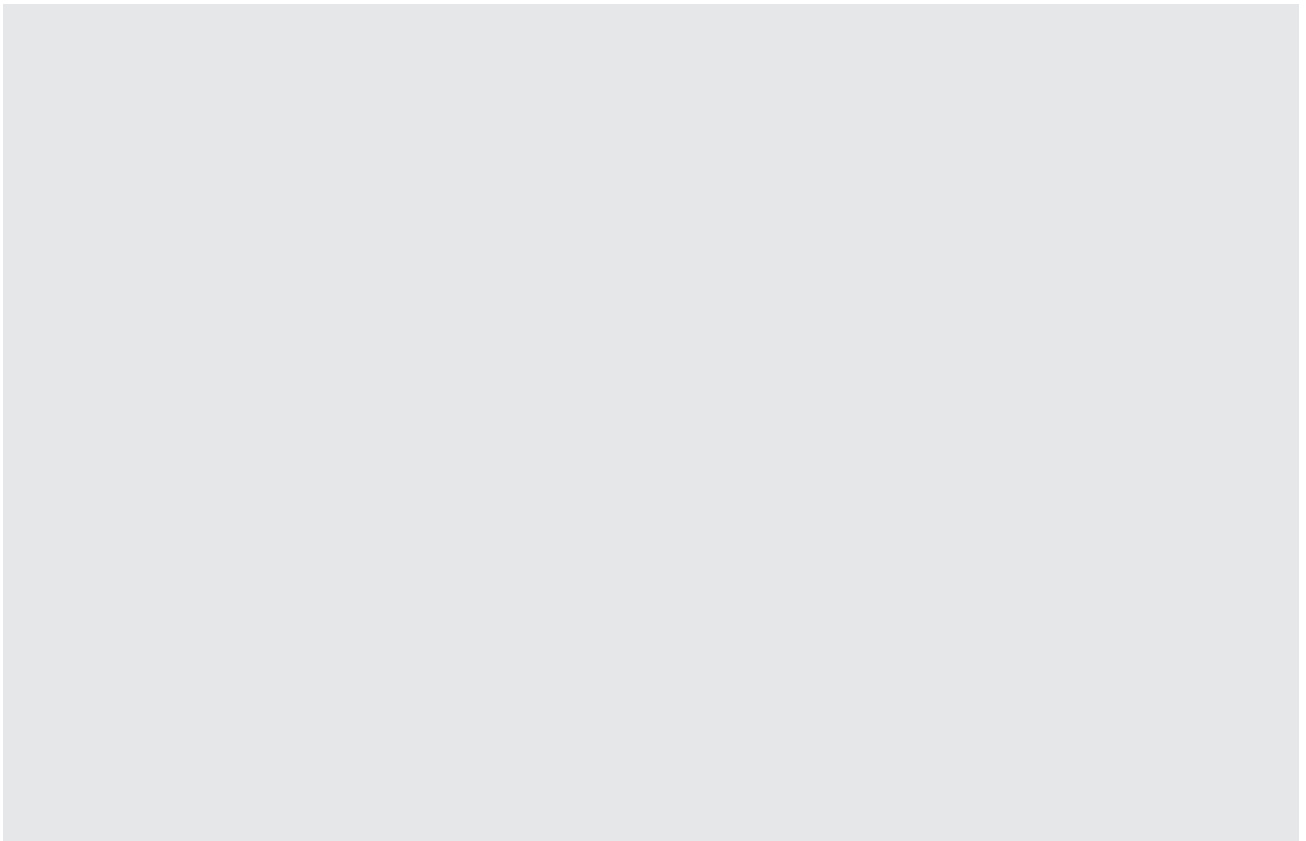
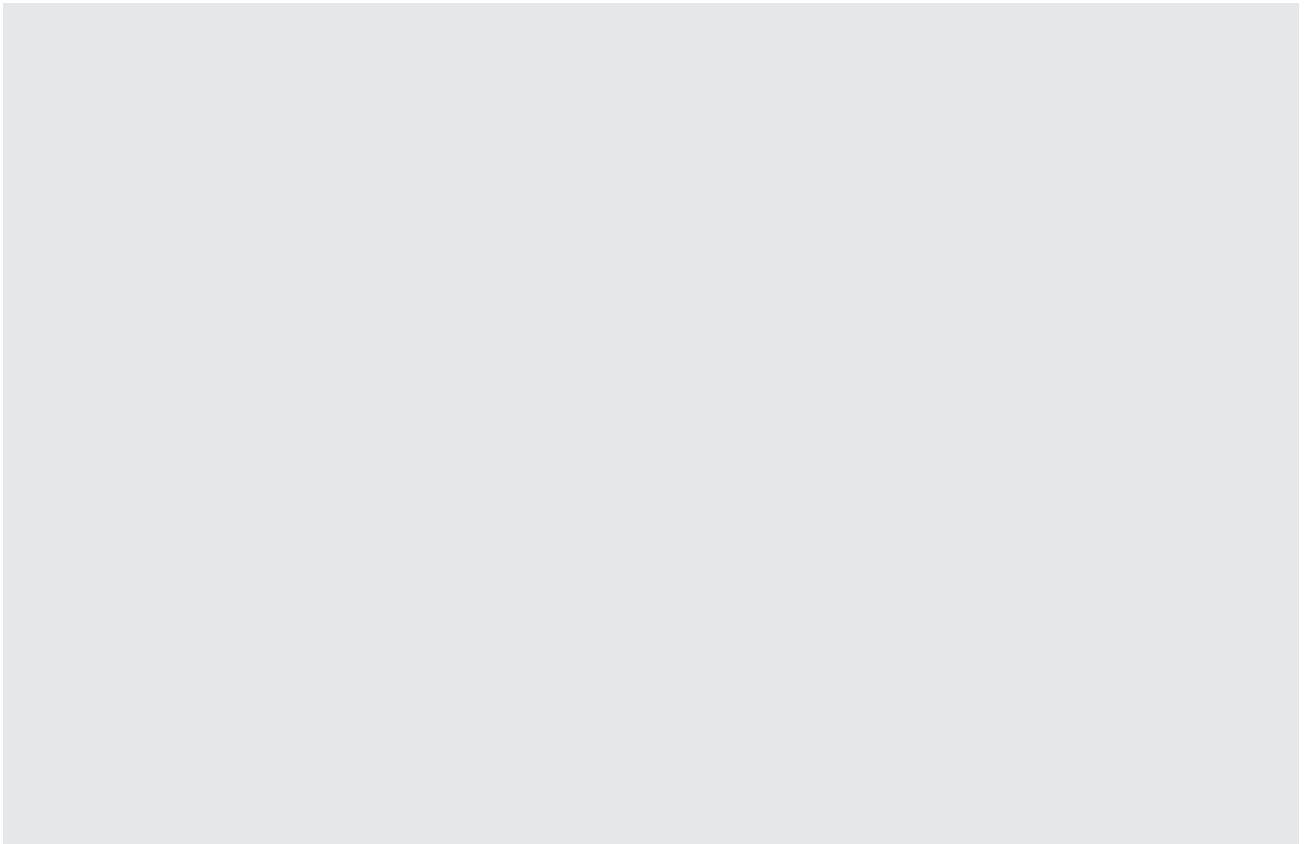
Adult Sunday school attendance is on the decline. One out of four adults (23 percent) attended such classes in 1991. The proportion has dipped to one out of six (17 percent) in 1995.

Christian education classes held on the same day as church worship services is a Protestant phenomenon. Three out of 10 adults (28 percent) associated with a Protestant church attend such classes on any given week. Less than one out of 10 Catholics do so.

Contrary to popular opinion, there is virtually no drop-off in Sunday school attendance witnessed during the summer months. For instance, during the winter of 1995, adult attendance was 17 percent; during the summer months, it was 16 percent.

During a typical week, one out of every six adults (17 percent) is involved in some type of small group that meets regularly for Bible study, prayer, or Christian fellowship other than a Sunday school class or 12-step group. This involvement is much more common among Protestants (25 percent) than Catholics (9 percent).

—George Barna, *The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators* (Word, 1996).



Discipling by

BY J. MELVYN MING

THE LEADER'S VISION

The word *send* and its derivatives are used frequently in both the Old and New Testaments. Concerning John the Baptist, John wrote, "There was a man sent from God" (John 1:6*). Jesus said, "I am the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21). Isaiah said, "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Four key concepts form the acrostic SEND as we consider making disciples. The first three are prerequisite to the fourth.

*We will never
be the kinds
of people who
impact this
world for Christ
if we don't
spend time
seeking God.*

S —DISCIPLE MAKERS MUST SEEK GOD.

For God to use us in making disciples, we must seek Him. Jeremiah said, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

We must spend time with God in prayer and Bible reading, take time to meditate on His Word, and let Him guide us. We will never be the kinds of people who impact this world for Christ if we don't spend time seeking God (Matthew 6:33). Our practical approaches must reflect God's desires for our churches, not just a copy of others. Being in leadership does not remove responsibility for spending time with God but, rather, increases it.

Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, said: "One of the reasons for spiritual sterility is a lack of communion with the living God." The world is tired of people who claim to be Christian leaders but live without transformation or divine direction. Before you embrace various practical approaches to disciple making, be sure you have spent time seeking God and sense His leading.

E —DISCIPLE MAKERS MUST EVANGELIZE.

In the Great Commission Jesus said, "Go...and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19). The Book of Acts chronicles the results of the disciples going and sharing the good news, for "about three thousand souls were added to them. The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 2:41,47; 4:33).

We will be His witnesses, Jesus said, as a result of the empowering of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Thus a Spirit-filled reproducer will be involved in evangelism. True Spirit-filled Christians are involved in evangelism and outreach. David Barrett, a church statistician, said "80 percent of those being won to Christ in the world today is through the Pentecostals and charismatics."

Before we can make true disciples of people, they must come to know Christ. A disciple-making program that does not embrace evangelism is a failure from the start. A person must become a Christian before he or she can be disciplined to be Christlike.

Design

GRAPHICS: THE ART SOURCE

N —DISCIPLE MAKERS MUST NURTURE.

Children must have adults' help. In most countries if parents abandon a child, they are sent to prison. Why? Because society recognizes the necessity and responsibility that go with having children.

The same thing is true for spiritual children. When people come to Christ, they are new creations—spiritual babies. Paul said we should be like a mother caring for her children or a father dealing with a son (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12). The tragedy is that many people who come to Christ are abandoned by their spiritual parents and the church.

Trotman said, "You can lead a soul to Christ in 20 minutes, but it takes from 20 weeks to a couple of years to get him on the road to spiritual maturity." Therefore, we must include new-convert training in our disciple-making ministries.

D —DISCIPLE MAKERS MUST DISCIPLE

William Barclay wrote,

"There are two great moments in a man's life: The moment he is born, and the moment he discovers why he was born." Discipleship helps people know why they were born.

The Great Commission leaves no question that Jesus intended for His disciples to teach. The Early Church actively worked at fulfilling Christ's commission, for the disciples devoted "themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42, NASB). They were so effective the Sanhedrin charged them with teaching the people and preaching Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2).

The greatest need I see in the church today is for Christians who have spiritual depth—people who know how to pray, whose thoughts are filled with Christ's thoughts, who have a passion for the lost, who reflect Christ in their relationships and actions. Disciple making will produce Christians with spiritual depth, but it will not happen without visionary leadership.

One of the great tools for disciple making and disciple-making ministries is the pulpit.

"You can lead a soul to Christ in 20 minutes, but it takes from 20 weeks to a couple of years to get him on the road to spiritual maturity."

—Dawson Trotman

By dealing with the great texts on discipleship, pastors can raise the awareness of the congregation for disciple making. Use illustrations and testimonies. Communicate the vision and passion to the people in concrete terms regularly. If a leader is not sharing the vision at least every 3 weeks, some business leaders say, the company has no vision. How much more this is true for a pastor. If the vision for disciple making is not being communicated at least every 3 weeks, the people will probably not view disciple making as important.

THE LEADER'S MODEL

In disciple making a tension exists between spiritual mysticism and spiritual programming. Some think discipleship is a mystical experience over which the leader has little if any control. Others move to the opposite extreme and think that if we find the right curriculum and delivery system, disciples will be produced automatically. The truth is somewhere between these extremes. A disciple is not an automatic result of a program, but evidence indicates that very few churches produce mature disciples without a planned approach.

THE LEADER'S APPROACH

For a church to be effective in disciple making, it is imperative to use multiple

delivery systems to accommodate the difference in learning style and lifestyle.

1. Use regular church services for disciple making. For example, at our church we recently adapted Rick Warren's "Discovering Spiritual Maturity" over 6 Sunday evenings. As a result, 156 people signed growth covenants committing themselves to: (1) a daily time with God (personal Bible reading and prayer), (2) a consistent tithe to God (giving the first 10 percent of income), and (3) a weekly time with believers (as part of a class or small group). We are currently going through Bill Hybels' "Becoming a Contagious Christian" series on Sunday evenings.

2. Use midweek services for disciple making. All three of the ACTS (All Church Training Series, available from Gospel Publishing House) Core Curriculum courses can be taught in a midweek service: "Our Church in Ministry," "Knowing Your Bible," and "Understanding Bible Doctrine." In addition, include "how to" courses on many subjects such as "How To Share Your Faith," "How To Pray Effectively," and "How To Have a Daily Quiet Time."

3. Use the Sunday school for disciple making. One advantage of this approach is that it involves all ages. Over the years I have used the Navigators' Design for Discipleship and

2:7 series as Sunday school classes in both the youth and adult divisions. In many ways the Sunday school is the core of an effective disciple-making strategy.

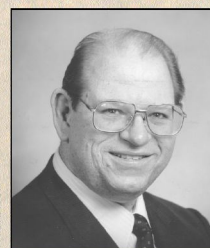
4. Use small groups for disciple making. Some use small groups primarily for evangelism or relationship building, but they can also be used effectively for disciple making. A great variety of curricular material is available for this purpose. Avoid the danger of a closed group by limiting the duration of the group to a specified length of time.

5. Use one-on-one relationships for disciple making. This allows the most personalized approach and the advantage of a mentor. It has been said we learn more by teaching than by listening. Mentoring involves many people in the teaching process, thereby increasing the learning for many.

6. Incorporate disciple making into nontraditional ministries. Currently we have discipleship as a key component of a health management class offered during lunch on Wednesdays. Each week includes memory verses, Bible reading, prayer, and spiritual journaling.

The key to disciple making is to have a strategy that continually moves people to deeper spiritual growth: the non-Christian experiences salvation and becomes a member of the church; the new member grows in spiritual maturity; the spiritually mature member develops in ministry; and those in ministry reproduce in others. [J]

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

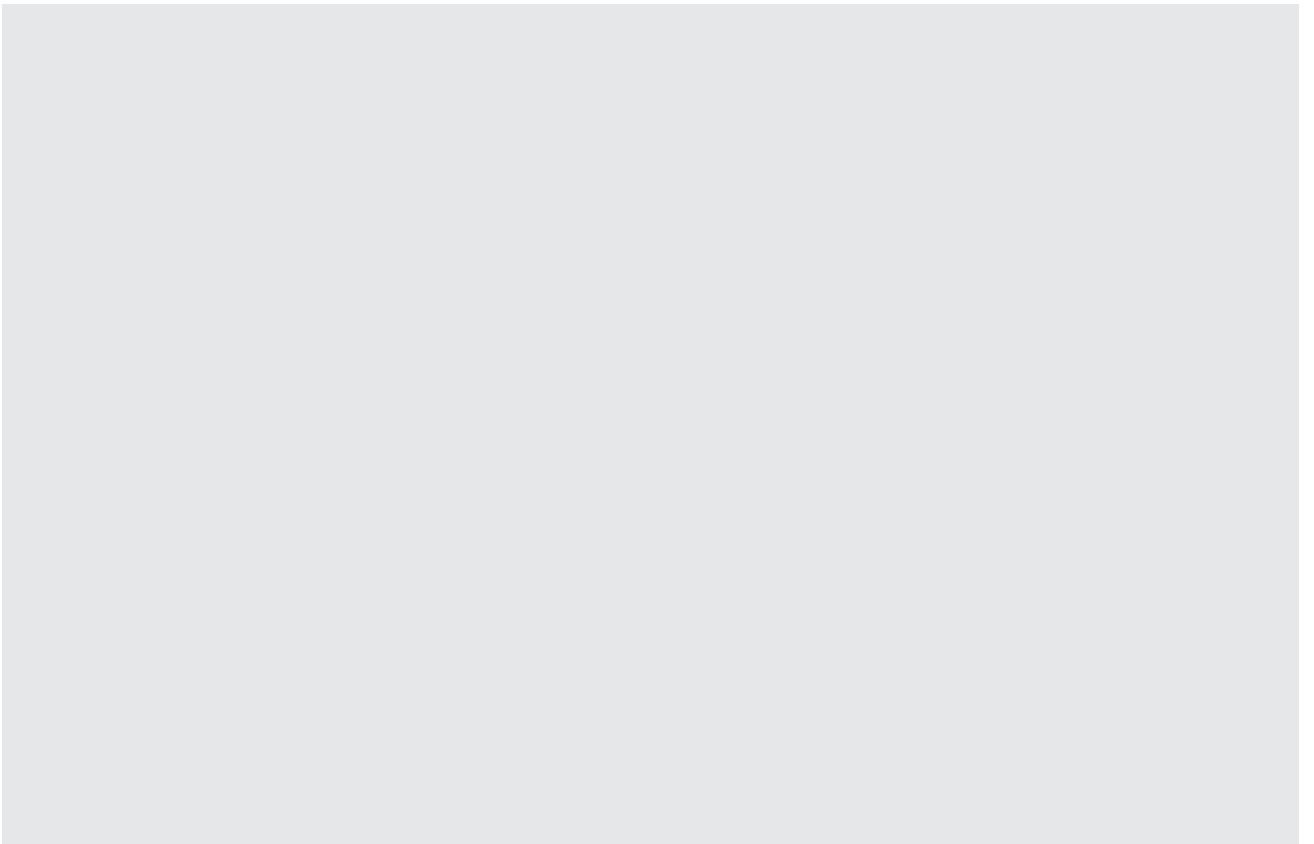
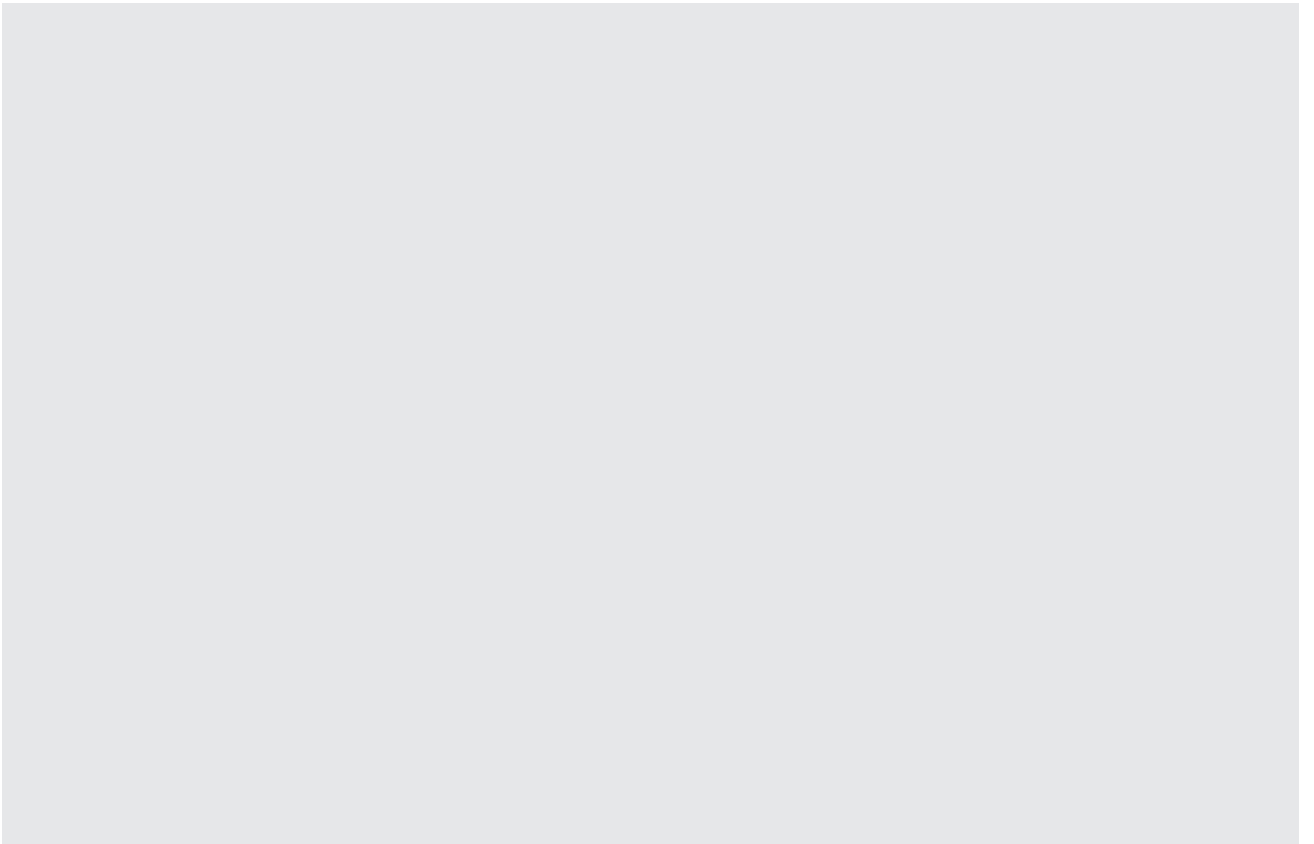


J. Melvyn Ming, D.Min., is senior pastor of Faith Assembly Christian Center, Richland, Washington.



"I suggest we begin our discipleship relationship by taking off our masks."

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God's Final

EXAM

for Church Leaders

BY STEVEN R. MILLS

What is true success in the church? How does God view our ministries? Do we define success the same way God does?

If God were to give church leaders a final exam, quite likely the exam questions would come from Ephesians 4:11–16. Let's consider six questions which will likely to be on God's final exam for churches and church leaders.



1. WHAT OF ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE HAPPENS IN EACH PERSON'S LIFE WHILE HE OR SHE IS IN YOUR CHURCH'S CARE? (VERSES 11-13).

Effective churches and leaders accept responsibility to cause people to want to become disciples. Jesus accepted responsibility to cause 12 men to want to follow Him in becoming disciples. For example, Andrew's life, during a short afternoon spent with Jesus, was changed forever. He came back excited and determined to follow Christ. Then he recruited his brother Peter.

What happens in people's lives if they spend a few hours exposed to your church's worship service and ministries? Are they touched by the people's love and warmth, or do they feel superficially accepted or even excluded? Are they touched by the genuine presence, power, and passion of a loving, just God? Are they moved toward God in their spiritual journey? When their spiritual journey takes them beyond your church's circle of care, will their lives have been influenced in a positive way eternally?

2. IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOUR MEMBERS MINISTERING? (VERSE 12).

Are your ministries preparing other believers for works of service, or are they providing ministry to a group of spectators? Are they helping to accomplish the overall purpose of the church, or are the ministries only activities that keep members busy?

The ministry of leaders is to equip and train others for ministry. A church becomes dysfunctional when it fails to help members discover and develop their unique, God-given gifts, abilities, and callings. Members conditioned to expect to be entertained or catered to rather than personally contributing to the cause and purpose of Christ and the church become frail and self-serving. It is destructive when Christians believe they can maintain an arm's-length relationship with Christ without entering into an intimate relationship with the Savior or serving the local Body.

Ministry in the church should be designed to help equip and mobilize other believers in ministry. Leaders must not minister alone but, rather, seek to mentor and train others for ministry such as taking someone on calls and visitation. Train and release people in ministry. Prioritize equipping and training in the weekly ministry schedule. This may involve re-focusing a traditional service time, such as the Wednesday night Bible study, toward leadership training. In most typical church schedules are many "sit and listen" meetings but few, if any, true training experiences for leadership and ministry. Teach those who serve in leadership or ministry that a major part of

their responsibility is to develop others in ministry rather than doing ministry for the people.

3. DO YOUR MEMBERS' MINISTRIES RESULT IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF FAITH, KNOWLEDGE, AND MATURITY? (VERSE 13).

Jesus is concerned about spiritual growth, faith, knowledge, and maturity. What is happening in the lives of those being ministered to? Are there spiritual results from each ministry? Are members' ministries contributing significantly to building faith, knowledge, and maturity? A church's ministry may accomplish some human good without spiritual good.

If a man says he is in the Mercedes-making business, but the end product is a Volkswagen Rabbit, he is not really in the Mercedes business but the Rabbit business. Similarly, if we say we are in the disciple-making business, but after people have gone through our process weekly without reflecting the character, habits, values, or lifestyle of a true disciple, then we aren't in the disciple-making business. We, too, are in the rabbit business—growing people who hop from church to church and fad to fad.

It is possible for people to be in our process, exposed to our ministries for years, and not grow in faith, knowledge, and maturity. Morning worship service, Sunday school, and Wednesday night activities are independent events that don't always work together to help people develop the habits, disciplines, and lifestyle of a disciple. Some hold to the myth that if people will just come to all church events, they will become good Christians. Wrong!

Nature illustrates that life does not develop through events alone but is woven together with events and processes—conception, gestation, birth, and growth. Providing ministries that do not enhance or develop faith, knowledge, and maturity in people's lives is not wise stewardship of time or resources.

It is unreasonable to expect people to commit to attending our events if the events don't fit together as a part of the process for adding spiritual value to their lives. We can't control their response, but we can become intentional in what to accomplish with the ministries provided. Many churches are doing far too many ministries. It is better to do a few with excellence than many ministries with mediocrity.

4. DO THE LIFESTYLES OF YOUR MEMBERS REFLECT THE CHARACTER AND VALUES OF CHRIST? (VERSE 13).

God cares more about how many people reflect His character than how many you have in Sunday morning worship. A Christian disciple is a learner and follower of Jesus Christ who reflects His teaching and lifestyle and is actively reproducing that pattern in others.

One evangelical church surveyed its members and discovered what we would likely find in our church if we did a

**The ministry of leaders is to equip
and train others for ministry.**

similar survey. By their members' admission, 25 percent never pray, 35 percent never read their Bibles, 60 percent never give to missions, 70 percent never assume responsibility in the church, 85 percent never invite anyone to church, and 95 percent never win anyone to Christ.

These results do not reflect the disciplines of a true disciple; rather, they reflect more of our culture than characteristics of Christ, and they are being culturally rather than biblically disciplined. The sign of growing Christians is their deep desire to please Christ. Three characteristics are normally found in growing Christians' lives: communion with God, denial of self and the flesh, and actively serving Christ and the church. They are developed through the practice of basic disciplines and habits such as Bible study, prayer, meditation, fasting, frugality, sacrifice, accepting spiritual authority, stewardship, willingness to be trained, and personal soul winning.

Contrary to what most believe, leaders don't get what they teach and preach but what they prepare for. When they prepare by helping people learn the "why" and "how" of these habits and disciplines, they will more likely see them develop as disciples.

A church will influence its community more by the members' character and commitment than by programs, ministries, or crowd size. What percentage of your members' lifestyles reflect that of a growing Christian?

5. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MEMBERS ARE EASILY SHAKEN IN THEIR FAITH AND ARE VULNERABLE TO DECEITFUL SCHEMES? (VERSE 14).

Fads, schemes, and erroneous doctrine and teaching abound. Many Christians don't have enough knowledge of God's Word or discernment to distinguish right from wrong or truth from error. Are your members vulnerable to fads, false teaching, and schemes? When they see or hear something on "Christian" television or radio, do they accept it because it is a "Christian" program? If so, you probably aren't building people and making disciples.

Ephesians 4:11–16 is very clear about why this happens.

CHURCH PRIORITIES

Pastors of Protestant churches indicate that the top priorities of the church for the coming year are: worship (mentioned as one of the three major priorities by 52 percent); evangelism (43 percent); Christian education (41 percent); youth ministry (28 percent); missions (18 percent); children's ministry (16 percent); community social action (12 percent); discipleship (11 percent); congregational care (11 percent); and small-group ministries (11 percent).

—George Barna, *The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators* (Word, 1996).

Teach those who serve in leadership or ministry that a major part of their responsibility is to develop others in ministry rather than doing ministry for the people.

When leaders properly train people in the Christian faith, the result will be discernment, accurate interpretation of Scripture, and stability in the Body. You may be having church week after week, but if people aren't learning and applying the principles and truths of God's Word, they follow blindly into a path of destruction (Hosea 4: 6).

The only way believers can stand against deceitful schemes and fads is with a strong foundation built upon God's Word. Worship-only attendees don't tend to be stable or committed. People need relationships with other believers where there is accountability and support. If we focus on the big events and the large-group experiences, people will not learn to interpret and discern the Word accurately.

Pastors must provide and promote a process like Sunday school and weekly Bible study where the Word is taught in a setting with accountability, loving relationship, and practical application. Seek to develop a people-building process that not only teaches God's Word but helps people actively apply its principles to their lives.

6. DO YOUR MEMBERS MUTUALLY EDIFY AND BUILD UP ONE ANOTHER? (VERSES 15,16).

Or are there discords and fightings within? Is there more tearing down than building up? A healthy Body edifies and builds itself up by encouraging one another. The climate and culture of the church attracts and grows a certain kind of life. If the climate is healthy, people will grow in the Lord, and it will be manifested by people speaking the truth in love—building up each other in the faith. When the Body is unhealthy, truth may be spoken but not necessarily in love.

Check out your church climate. How would you do on God's final exam for churches and leaders? If a question or two needs more attention, you have time to begin. On God's final exam it is building people, not churches, that counts.



Steven R. Mills is growth consultant and Christian education fellowship coordinator in the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.

Making Disciples



ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

The baseball diamond, with its bases and base paths, is a model for understanding the disciple-making process.

BY SYLVIA LEE

The crack of a bat and the excited crowd rises to cheer. A player trots around the three bases and turns toward home plate. Jubilant teammates wait to congratulate him. He has hit the game winner, and thousands share in the accomplishment.

Individual effort, developed by a coach and supported by a team, makes baseball the sport of choice for millions. The baseball diamond, with its bases and base paths, is a model

for understanding the disciple-making process. If we think of the members of the congregation as the base runners, we readily realize that a strategy is essential to moving them from first to second to third base and then home.

Although we focus on the person as the object of ministry, we emphasize the need for community. It is within a disciple-building community the person finds Christ, makes life-

The church is responsible to develop the persons won through its outreach into mature disciples who will disciple others.

changing relationships with other believers, matures in the spiritual disciplines, discovers the gifts Christ has entrusted, and finds a place to serve in the eternal plan of God.

Understanding *disciple* as noun and verb is integral to understanding the diamond model. It highlights (1) the decisions a person makes to become and mature as a disciple and (2) the decisions a church makes to disciple the persons entrusted to its care. The model is a means for tracing the development of the disciple and evaluating the church's effectiveness as a disciple-making community.

BECOMING A DISCIPLE

How does one become a disciple? The first step is to be *committed to membership*. At first base the person decides to be joined in relationship with Christ through salvation and to a local church through friendship. The model helps us to recognize when a person has reached this point. We know a person is committed to membership when he:

1. Knows what sin is and why mankind needs a Savior. This knowledge is personalized so that he realizes he is a sinner and comes to God seeking forgiveness. He further seeks to symbolize his conversion through water baptism.
2. Knows that the church is Christ's body that is to fill a threefold mission in the world—worship, edification, and evangelism. He recognizes the value of Christian fellowship and joins other believers in a consistent pattern of attendance.
3. Knows that the Bible is the divinely inspired, infallible revelation of God to man. He values and respects the Scriptures and uses them to investigate the claims concerning the Christian faith.

At base two the person becomes *committed to maturity*. We know he has moved to this commitment when he:

1. Knows that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all believers and that it brings supernatural power for life as a witness. In response, the person seeks for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and entry into a Spirit-filled life.
2. Knows that Christlikeness is the aim of the Christian life. He desires to live a Christlike life that is evidenced by love for God, love for others, and a consistent pattern of corporate and personal prayer and worship.
3. Knows that the Bible's principles and commands provide guidance in matters of faith and conduct. Because he wants to live by these principles and commands, he studies the Bible in a regular and systematic way.

The third base in our model is *commitment to ministry*. A person has moved on to this stage when he:

1. Recognizes that Christ has gifted each believer for service, and the church cannot function without everyone's participation. Consequently he recognizes his accountability as servant and contributes his time, talent, and material possessions to the ministry efforts of the local church.
2. Knows that greatness is measured by servanthood and, therefore, exhibits a spirit of humility and teachability in the service of others.
3. Knows that Christian service is done more effectively through united rather than individual efforts.

The ultimate goal of the discipling process is a *commitment to mission*. Here the disciple finds his place in the Great Commission and demonstrates this when he:

1. Knows that God has a specific mission for every believer and that it is the responsibility of the believer to participate in the Great Commission.
2. Knows that all acts of service must be motivated by a knowledge of and a love for God and must be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
3. Is burdened for the salvation of the lost and seeks opportunities to participate in the Great Commission.

It is within a disciple-building community the person finds Christ, makes life-changing relationships with other believers, matures in the spiritual disciplines, discovers the gifts Christ has entrusted, and finds a place to serve in the eternal plan of God.

MAKING DISCIPLES

The church's responsibility is to facilitate the person's progress through the stages of spiritual development. This means the church community must intentionally provide opportunities for the person to make the right decisions and to participate in the disciple-making process.

In our model the church's role is defined by the base paths. From home plate to first base the path is *include them*. At this point the church reaches out to the disciple-to-be and seeks to win him or her for Christ. The strategies include the more visible events of the church life (e.g., the worship service, evangelistic activities, and concerts) and the less visible activities (e.g., small-group Bible studies or fellowship groups).

Closely allied to the person's decision to accept Christ is his commitment to membership in the local church. Again the

church must respond with the appropriate ministry. This can include such things as adult fellowship groups, youth and children's activities, music and drama activities, and sports teams. These ministries assimilate the person into the life of the church and bond him to the local body through the relationships he makes. The disciple-making process has begun.

What happens to the people we win through our outreaches? Do they continue to grow as mature disciples of Jesus Christ, or does their spiritual development stall? Do some drop out of the game?

The answer depends on how effectively we have moved them from first to second base. The strategy is *instruct them*. The church's role is to establish the person in the Word and to help him develop a prayer life—the disciplines and character of a true disciple.

To move developing disciples from second to third base, the church must *involve them*. Here the church helps the person identify his ministry gifts and talents and provides training and opportunities for hands-on ministry—usually under the tutelage of a mentor.

The ultimate role of the church is to *invest them* in Great Commission service. The disciple is equipped and mobilized to find his place in Kingdom ministry. This may include a greater role of leadership within the local body or ministry that goes beyond the church walls. In our definition he has truly become a disciple who discipled others.

In our definition he has truly become a disciple who discipled others.

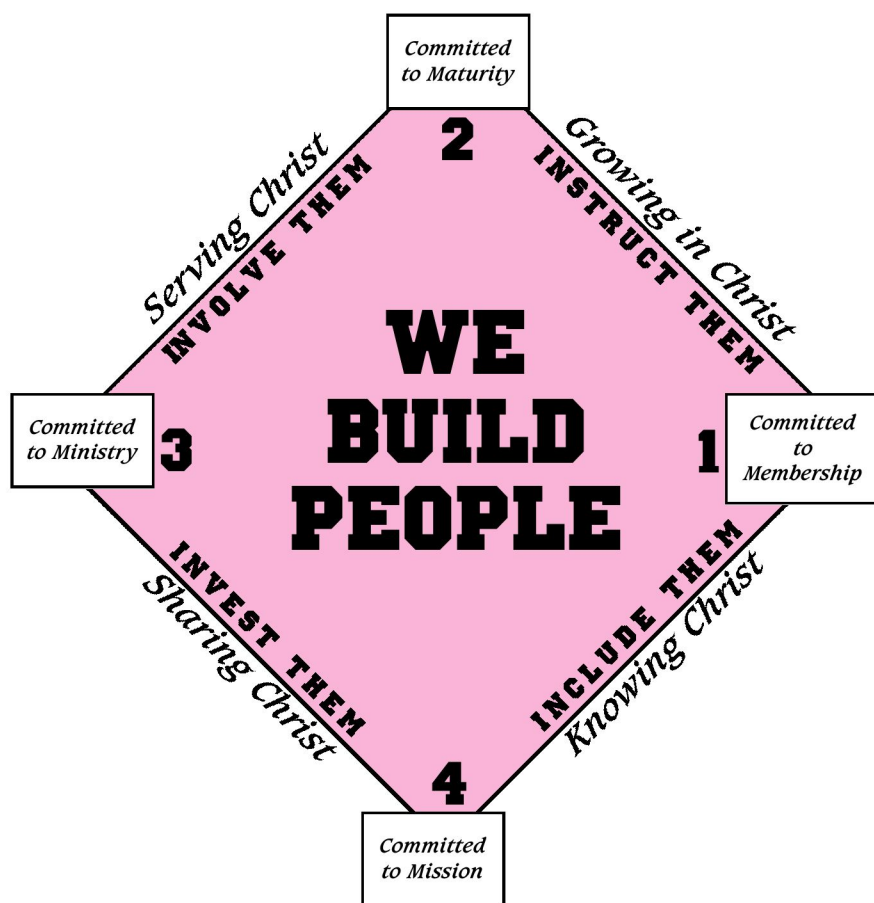
SUMMARY

To recap, the four decisions a disciple makes are to be committed to membership, to maturity, to ministry, and to mission.

The model of the bases helps us to see more clearly the decisions a disciple makes. Using the bases as touchstones, we can determine where the person is in his spiritual development and what the church must do to help him progress further.

The church is responsible to develop the persons won through its outreach into mature disciples who will disciple

New Vision Disciple-Making Model What We Do: "We Build People"



This illustration is adopted from materials developed by Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church for his book The Purpose-Driven Church, Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission, and is used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

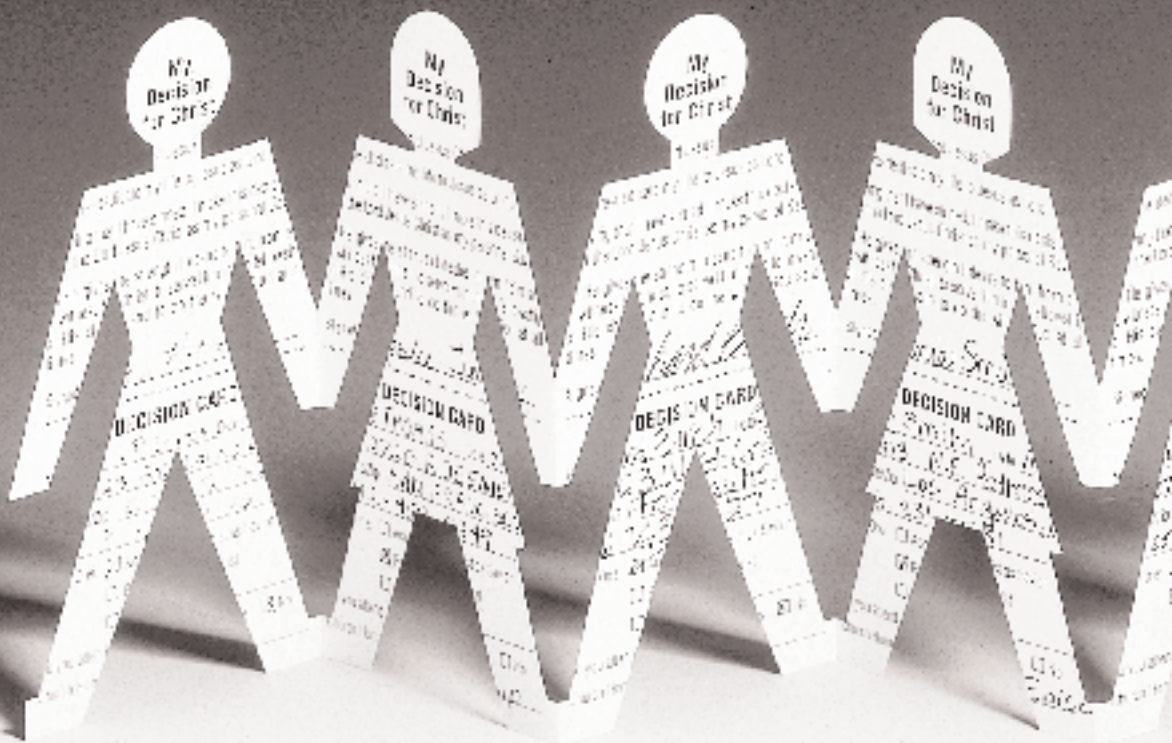
others. The church does this by providing a community that includes people in the church's life, instructs them in the spiritual disciplines, involves them in ministry within the body, and eventually invests them in the broader church mission.

The leader of a disciple-making church ought to ask several important questions:

1. Where am I in my development as a disciple?
2. What decisions do I need to make to progress further?
3. How effective is my church as a disciple-making community?
4. What strategies do we need to initiate? **GI**



Sylvia Lee is administrative coordinator for the Division of Christian Education and managing editor of Christian Education Counselor.



Decision Cards Can

BY MIKE CLARENSAU

THE OUTREACH IS OVER. The paper-strewn floor is the only evidence remaining from a week of successful evangelism. It seems hard to imagine that this was a place of bustling spiritual renewal only hours ago.

A stack of decision cards piled neatly on the edge of the altar reflect the meticulous care of an altar worker. Individually, the cards represent unique stories of grace and redemption; together they represent the fruit of months of prayer and preparation.

Now the work truly begins.

Discipling new converts is one of the special challenges Christ handed to the Church. Guiding new Christians through the early steps of their spiritual journey is no easy task amid the maze of existing structures and programs. Holding the decision cards, one can't help feeling that the twin targets of spiritual growth and assimilation into the body seem a long way off.

The apostle Paul latched onto a familiar portion of the physical life cycle when describing the early days of the Christian life. He likened new converts to "infants"—babies in the

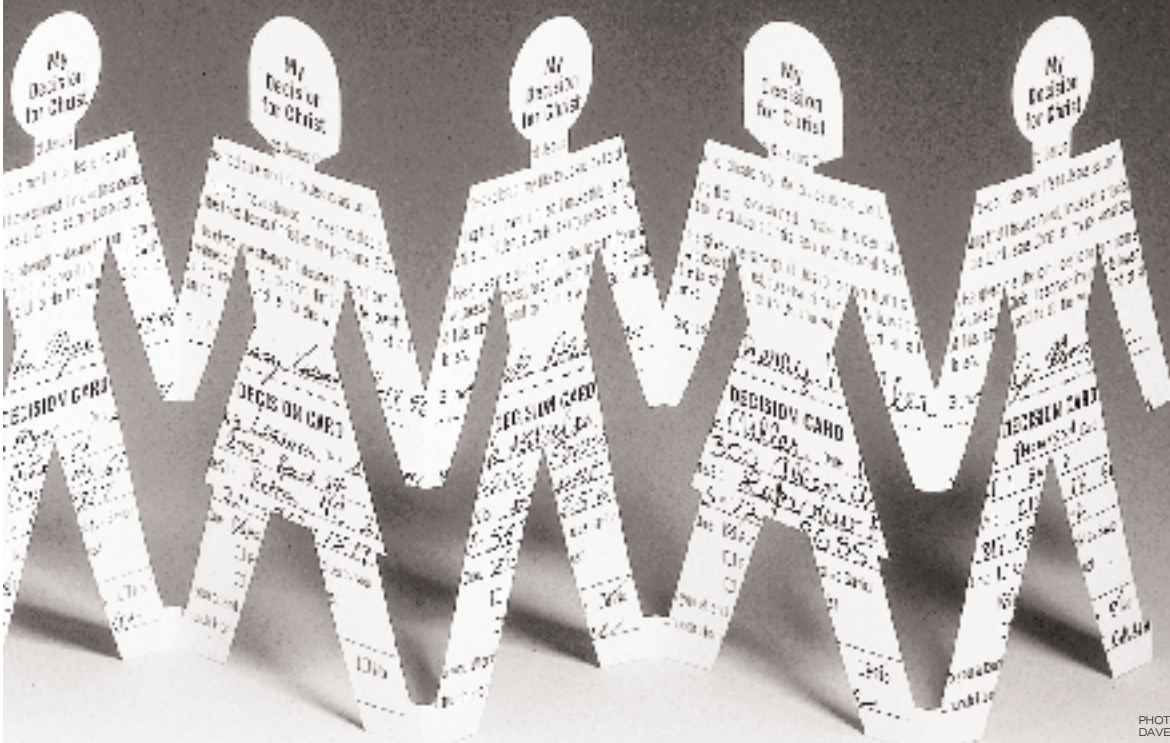
family of the church (Ephesians 4:14). While the analogy is not flawless, the idea of spiritual "infant" offers good principles and instruction for the spiritually formative years.

INFANTS ARE HIGH MAINTENANCE

Like physical babies, spiritual infants are high maintenance. The road is arduous for those who seek to grow these new ones in Christ. New Christians require more care than a couple hours of worship services each week can provide.

It was not by accident that Jesus' style of discipleship included virtually constant contact with His disciples. Every day they walked the Judean countryside together—Jesus and students—effectively teaching and learning the life of a disciple as they went.

Our modern culture functionally prohibits Jesus' first-century approach. One simply cannot spend 24 hours a day molding a new Christian, but the issue of time is instructive for us. To grow new converts effectively, a realistic division of labor is necessary. Mature Christians must be enlisted to help. Ideally,



PHOTOGRAPHY:
DAVE EDMONSON

Become Disciples

these spiritual mentors can each help lead two or, at the most, three new converts. Herding dozens into a new-converts class may meet instructional needs, but by itself such an approach would be comparable to a mass feeding in the baby nursery. Individual nurture and care must accompany instruction. Simply put, you need people.

INFANTS SURVIVE DEPENDENTLY

No one is more dependent on others' care than a baby. Issues of feeding, cleaning, and comforting all require others' attention. Through that attention, strong bonds are built between baby and caregiver.

Spiritual infants have the same experience. Those more mature Christians who invest themselves in the care of new converts find a high level of dependence and admiration emanating from their students in the faith. While the scenario has risks, it is not wrong or inappropriate. Such relationships are necessary for the early days of spiritual survival.

This issue does, however, place a high premium on the selection of quality Christians for

the work of discipling the new convert. The pastor or leader who haphazardly assigns these critical duties will soon wish he or she had been more deliberate. Infants need the best care available; therefore, we need our best people for the assignment.

INFANTS REQUIRE MEDICAL CHECKUPS

Within weeks of birth, the proud parents take their joyful bundle to the pediatrician for an essential checkup. Similarly, spiritual infants need a probe into their understanding and experience to detect any deficiencies. Unfortunately, many join the ranks of the converted having only heard and accepted a portion of Christ's call to be a disciple. Some, responding to an invitation to God's peace or joy, may not have been told of the issue of sin. Others who have sought God to avoid everlasting punishment may not be aware of a call to obedience in this life.

Like the pediatrician, the priority of addressing these infant deficiencies is our first agenda. Helping new Christians fully understand

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the supernatural transition they have experienced is the key to even fuller transformation.

INFANTS HAVE SPECIAL NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

Like babies, spiritual infants require special nutrition. Expecting a new Christian to feed on the helpings of the more mature is not unlike handing a buffet plate to a baby and telling him to get in line. *How* we feed our infants is as important as *what* we feed them.

The type of food is critical as well. Dissertations on advanced portions of doctrine are not digestible, but a healthy, balanced diet of scriptural principles and personal experience is quite satisfying.

One area of great importance in teaching new Christians is the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Jesus described the Holy Spirit as coming to be our guide, teacher, and comforter—essentially filling the role for us that He filled for His disciples (John 14:16,17). Imagine the fledgling disciples attempting to survive without contact or direction from Jesus. Even so, a new convert with no understanding of the intended role of the Holy Spirit's function on his or her behalf is equally at risk.

INFANTS FEEL THEIR NEEDS

Most of us relate to the image of the baby wailing in the darkness of night, depriving friends and family of much-needed rest. Though language is not yet possible, babies have a way of knowing what they need. As caregivers, we are responsible for interpreting their effort of communication.

This same principle is valid for the care of spiritual infants. Many new-convert programs focus exclusively on doctrinal understanding without regard to felt needs. Learning what we believe is invaluable, but our efforts to disciple must be balanced with time spent on the infant's agenda. In such times we can assist them in interpreting their experiences and anticipating new challenges.


INFANTS NEED INCLUSION IN THE FAMILY

Babies need special food, but we dare not hide them in another room during the family reunion. On the contrary, a baby is a focal point for such reunions.

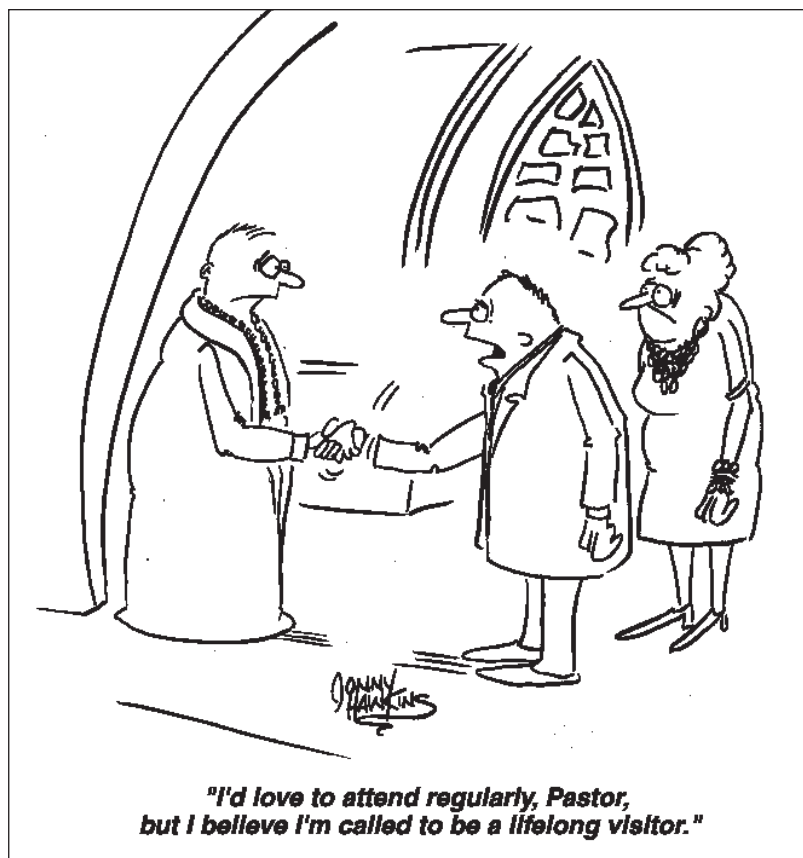
While their instructional and nurture needs are unique, spiritual infants must find inclusion in the life of the congregation. The open arms of the church family will provide the environment necessary for greater commitment and growth. Isolation breeds inwardness and fear. Inclusion opens doors to potential and births vision for the future.

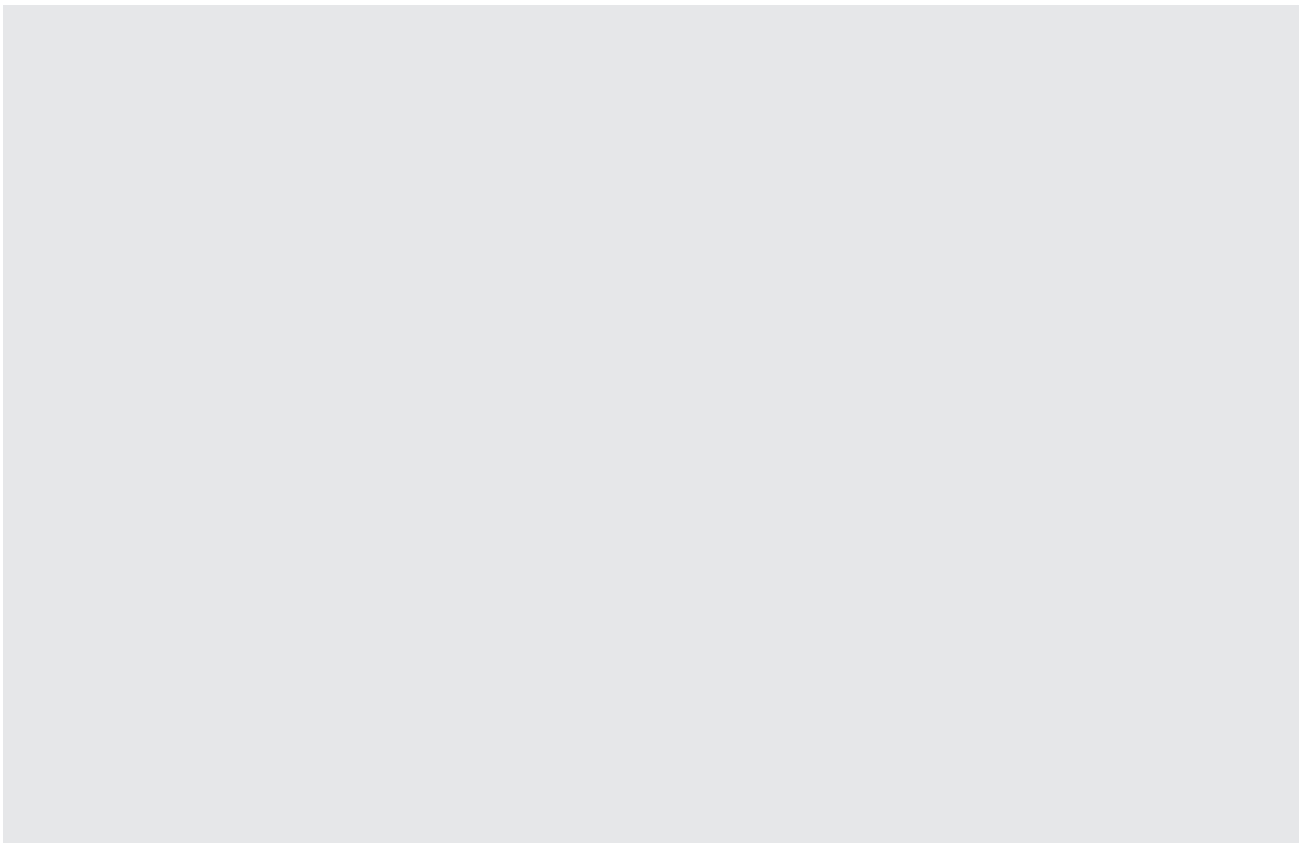
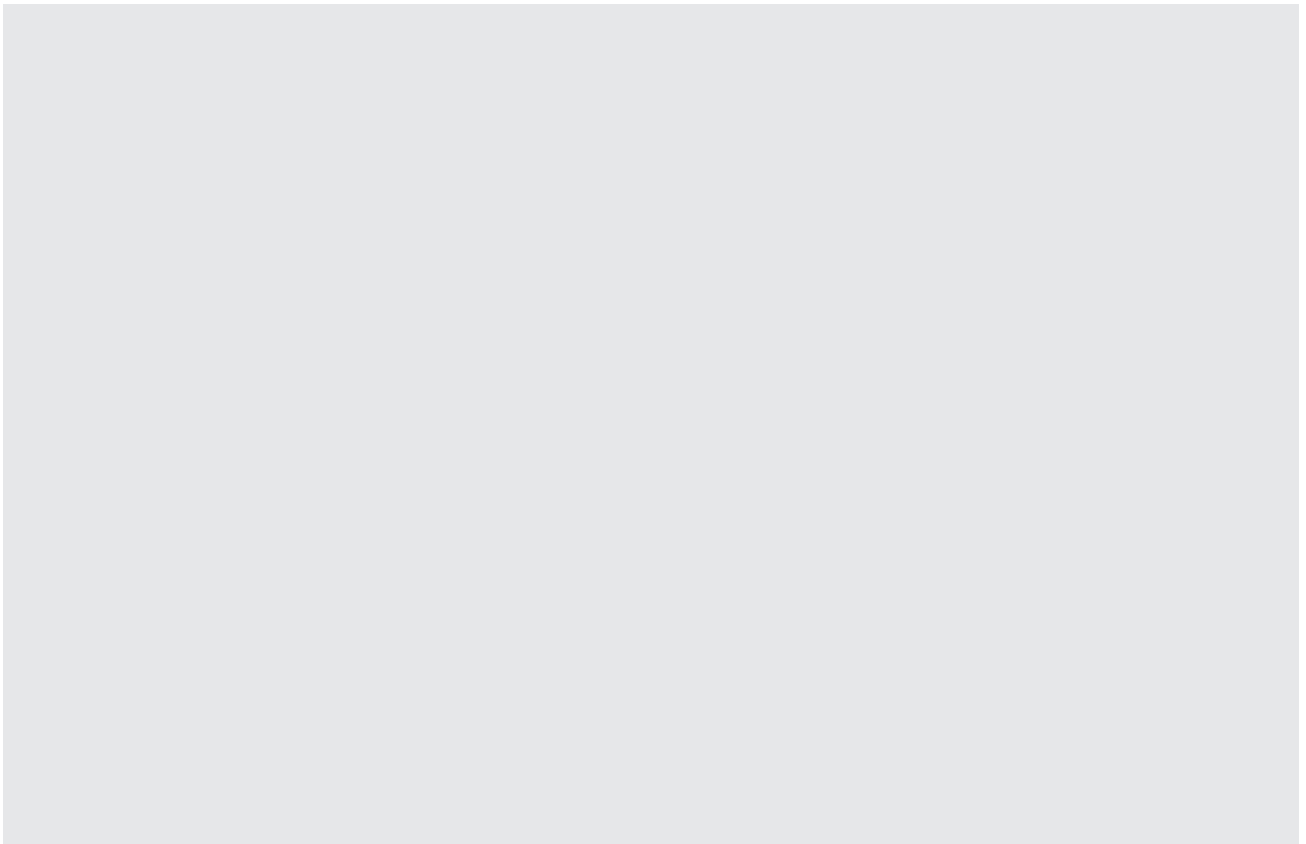
Each new convert needs a place of participation. Involvement in meaningful ministry gives an outlet to express love for God and an opportunity to learn to walk.

Every individual must be valued and the focus of our ministry. That's how babies grow. Quality parents wouldn't dream of an assembly line approach to child rearing. Neither should a disciple-making church settle for a hopeful but haphazard approach to its infants.

With adequate doses of inclusion, instruction, and involvement, decision cards can become disciples. 

Mike Clarensau formerly served as the youth consultant/district/college liaison for the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department. He was recently appointed editor of the Assemblies of God Radiant Life curriculum.





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**"Yessiree, sixty-eight miles to the gallon.
Of course, it's been towed a lot . . ."**

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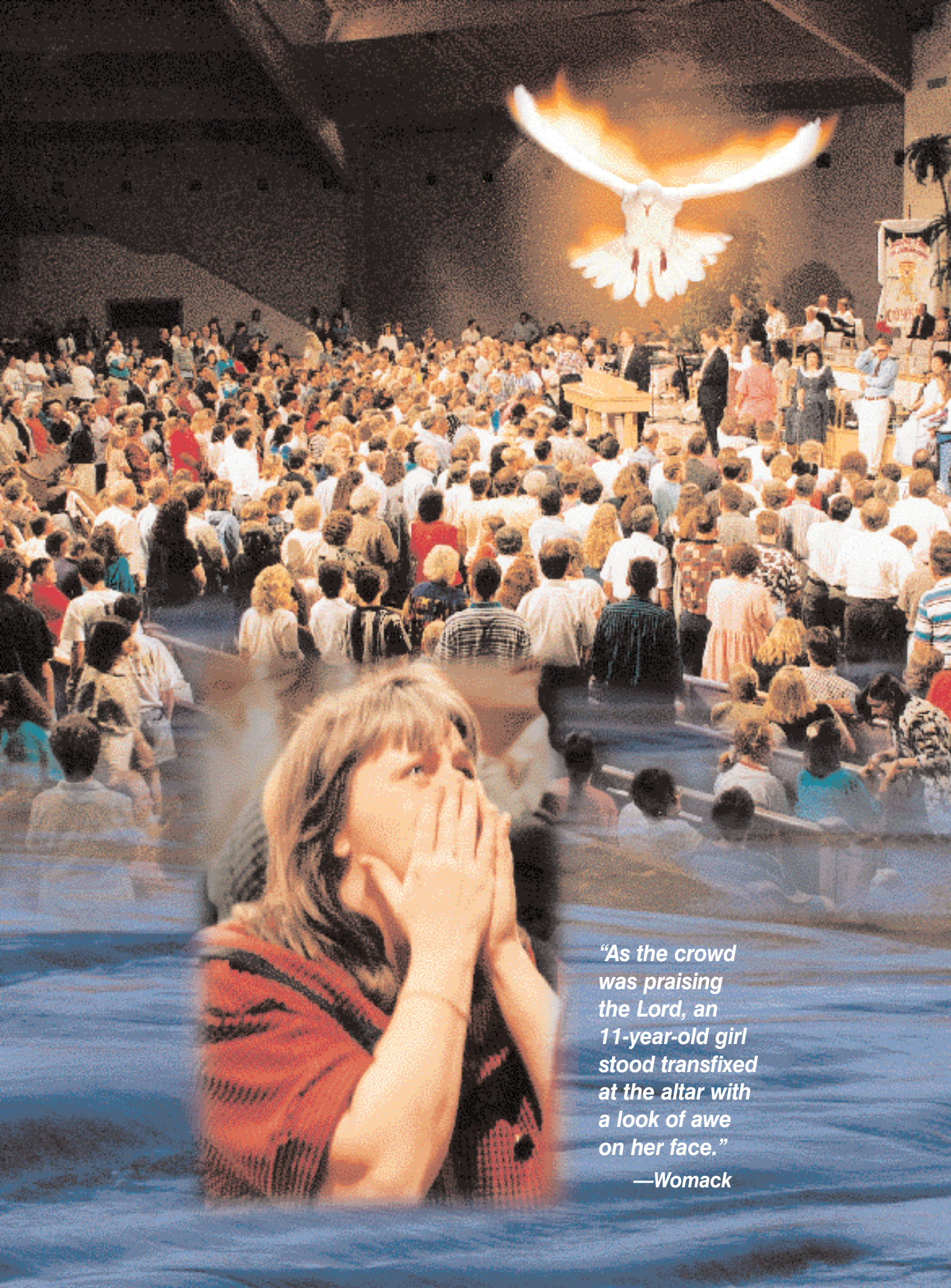
facilitate effective youth ministries, quarterly newsletters and resource packets, directory of campus ministries, and national training and local strategies.

Compiled by Gainsbrugh Resource Network, c/o First Assembly of God, 3500 Missouri Flat Road, Placerville, Calif. 95667-5218; tele.: 916-622-3231; fax: 916-622-5706; E-mail: JGM@CWNET.com.

We solicit your input on resources for future themes.

Please send resource information to the Gainsbrugh Resource Network at the address above. A theme bibliography will appear in each issue of Enrichment.

NOTE: Future topics include: (1) The Associate Minister (2) Evangelism (3) Small-Group Ministry.



*"As the crowd
was praising
the Lord, an
11-year-old girl
stood transfixed
at the altar with
a look of awe
on her face."*

—Womack

The Pensacola Revival

Today's Azusa Street

BY DAVID A. WOMACK

My introduction to the Pensacola revival was a deeply moving experience. As the crowd was praising the Lord, an 11-year-old girl stood transfixed at the altar with a look of awe on her face.

We learned later that she had seen the Holy Spirit as a dove flying over the platform with fire coming off its wings. She said the dove remained over Steve Hill and me for a long time with the fire falling onto us. We were the two preachers for that weekend.

Some 300 people came forward in that service, and on Sunday another 400 crowded the altar for salvation.

A SALVATION REVIVAL

People from all over the world are flocking to Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, to see for themselves what God is doing. Not since the revival at Azusa Street at the beginning of the Pentecostal movement have so many people traveled to one place to participate in a spiritual awakening.

The outstanding feature of the Pensacola revival is the emphasis on salvation. It began on Father's Day, 1995, and since then over 37,000 people have come forward to be saved.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Pensacola, a Navy town, might be the least likely place for such a revival. The Brownsville area is known for its bars, prostitution, and drugs. Yet, in this heart of spiritual darkness, Spirit-filled people dared to begin this church with a brush arbor revival in 1939. Today it is a strong Pentecostal church.

Pastor John A. Kilpatrick, too, has come through a long pilgrimage of preparation. Baptized in the Holy Spirit and called to the ministry at 14, he was strongly influenced by Raymond C. Wetzels, pastor of Riverview Assembly of God in Columbus, Georgia.

At an all-night prayer meeting during a particularly dangerous time of riots in Columbus, two powerful angels burst into the church and stood guard over the believers as they prayed. The folk all fell under the power of the Spirit and remained there for hours in perfect safety.

Kilpatrick always had a deep longing for revival. Yet, he pastored the Brownsville church for 13 years before the revival came.

Two and a half years before the Father's Day outpouring, God laid a burden of prayer on both pastor and church. On Sunday nights they would set up 12 banners embroidered to identify areas of need, and the people would gather around them to pray.

God also was preparing Missionary Evangelist Steve Hill by involving him in the Argentina revival. The Lord had mightily used layman Carlos Anacondia to bring blessing to that land. When Steve Hill came to speak at Brownsville, God was bringing together the elements that were to explode into the Pensacola revival.

A unique feature at Brownsville is the teamwork between John Kilpatrick and Steve Hill. When the revival broke, the pastor asked Steve to stay and help, and the Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions agreed to lend him to the church.

THE RIVER OF REVIVAL

I asked what happened on Father's Day that told them the revival was on?

Kilpatrick said, "Steve Hill preached that morning and said, 'Folks, God's going to touch you this morning. The Holy Spirit is here with a mighty anointing. I want you to come forward for prayer.'"

"As I stepped down from the platform to pray with people, I felt a current around my legs and ankles. I first thought it was the wind but then realized it was more like a river. I could feel the

"As I stepped down from the platform to pray with people, I felt a current around my legs and ankles. I first thought it was the wind but then realized it was more like a river. I could feel the actual current."

—Kilpatrick

actual current. I went back to the platform and had to have help because I could barely stand up. I told the church, "This is what we have been praying for. Get in!" People began to go down all over the sanctuary. I went down on the platform and was there until 4 in the afternoon."

Steve Hill told me, "Pastor Kilpatrick had just come through a grieving process at the death of his mother and had finished a building program. He was worn out. In fact, the days before the revival were the worst of his life. That was why on Saturday night he asked if I would preach the next morning. All I could do was let the people know the things I had seen—salvation, miracles, revival—and a thousand people came to the altar. We didn't get out until 4 in the afternoon. We started again at 6 and continued until 1 a.m."

Kilpatrick said, "Since the revival began, I have never walked out on the platform without feeling that river. And it's rising! It used to be down around the calves of my legs, and now it's up under my arms."

I said, "That's like Ezekiel's vision of the river of revival flowing out from the throne of God. First, it was to his ankles, then to his knees, and to his loins. You know what happens next? It'll be so deep you'll have to swim in it! Until now you've had your feet on the ground, but then it will carry you. And everywhere the river flows there will be life along the banks."

HOW TO PASTOR A REVIVED CHURCH

The pastor said, "Since the revival, my responsibilities have tripled. I carry on all my pastoral duties as I did before. I still have weddings, funerals, hospital

calls, a staff to run, and boards to attend, plus the new duties brought on by the revival."

Steve Hill agreed that all the normal programs of an Assemblies of God church continue—baptisms, disciplinary cases, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, Women's Ministries. Some 300 young people meet on Wednesday nights under the direction of Richard Crisco.

Kilpatrick said, "I give a lot of attention to our

prayer team. We emphasize that this is not just a local revival but for the whole community and beyond. A church is not going to see revival without prayer, nor can revival be perpetuated without prayer. We have about 300 intercessors in our prayer ministry, and while a service is going on we have 15 to 50 praying. God sent us Lila Terhume to head up this ministry."

The church's music director is Lindell Cooley. Every night there is a worship team. Some members rotate, and others are nearly always there. When I suggested the music was contemporary, Kilpatrick corrected me that it was "current." He said, "It's more of a camp meeting style, a mainline Pentecostal feel."

Asked about the ushers program, he replied, "The ushers are trained and led by Bill Bush, a retired Coast Guard officer. All I have to do is look at the ushers, and they know what to do. If something is not of the

Lord but drawing attention away from the work of the Spirit, the ushers will move the individual outside the building. We don't allow people to distract."

THE BEHAVIOR OF REVIVED PEOPLE

I asked, "What kinds of behavior don't you allow?"

"Well," he said, "we don't allow much laughing. Mostly, the laughter happens when we pray for people at the altar. But we don't allow it while the preaching is going on, during the altar call, or during Communion. The big difference between this revival and some others is that we have the same team in place every night. We monitor and pastor the revival."

I asked, "What about the dancing? It seems more graceful and more a personal expression of praise than what we have traditionally called dancing in the Spirit."

He replied, "We do have some of the traditional responses, but mostly what we find is that young people and little children move gracefully and respectfully before the Lord. It's almost like the children can see the Lord and are dancing before Him in reverence."

"Have there been any classes or planned choreography?" I asked.

"No, sir!" he replied firmly. "As this revival goes on, there's such an incredible breaking loose in the service that I find myself skipping like a little boy. At times I'm skipping with tears rolling down my face."

Pastor John A. Kirkpatrick



*Steve Hill,
Missionary Evangelist*

***"This is what we
have been
praying for.
Get in!"
—Kilpatrick***



ORGANIZED FOLLOW-UP

When people respond to the altar call, they come in waves. The first are often backsliders and first-time converts. As they come forward, the altar workers come in behind them. Then the evangelist tells people to turn to the ones next to them and ask if they need forgiveness. That's the second wave, and the people who bring them to the altar back up and allow the altar workers to get names and addresses.

"We don't make Brownsville Assembly the issue but encourage those who have a church to go home and take revival with them," Kilpatrick said. "We tell them if they don't have a church, they are welcome at Brownsville.

"We follow up the local ones with telephone calls and visits. I have the congregation divided into groups. Each deacon and his wife have oversight of 50 families, and under them they have captains to visit and fit people into the church.

"The next thing we do is have discipleship classes, taught by Dick Reuben, a Messianic Jewish evangelist. Since the revival hit, we've taken in 1,200 new members."

The sanctuary can seat about 2,500, the chapel seats 800, and the cafeteria another 400. Kilpatrick said the church is now planning a larger building to seat over 5,000.

SURPRISES OF THE SPIRIT

When I asked if he was surprised at some things that have happened such as the dancing, falling, jerking, jumping, visions of angels, a vision of a blue haze in the sanctuary, or his experience of the river of revival, the pastor said, "God is taking us from glory to glory, and this glory won't seem like the last glory. For most of what we experience I can take you to Scripture.


"On the Day of Pentecost the believers were staggering as if drunk. Peter stood up and said this was foretold by the prophet Joel. Much of what they were doing had come out of Joel's prophecy, but with one major exception—they

were speaking in other tongues. Joel never mentioned it, but they were doing it even though Peter could not give chapter and verse for it. It was a surprise!"

I asked, "What would you say to pastors who want revival?"

Without hesitation he replied, "The first thing is to ask the Lord to give you a hunger for revival and for His presence. Second, you have to have organized prayer. I don't know of any revival that has come without prayer."

Much as at Azusa Street, pastors and

laymen from around the world are coming to Pensacola and taking revival back home to their own churches. 



*David A. Womack
formerly served as
the Ministry
Resources
Development manager for the
Gospel Publishing
House,
Springfield,
Missouri.*

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

I Sacred Assembly II— Marching to God's Orders



***One of the dangers
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is to become so
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religious activity that
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divine energy.***

Assemblies of God. In 82 years we've grown from 300 people in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to over 30 million worldwide. That's unheard of in church history. The danger is that we become lulled into an attitude of spiritual pride. God wants us to walk humbly before Him, recognizing that without Him we can do nothing.

So the purpose of the first Sacred Assembly was to humble ourselves, to pray, repent of our wicked ways, and let a healing begin to take place within the church. Judgment must begin in the house of the Lord.

A Sacred Assembly II has been scheduled for March 11-13, 1997, at Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri. In this interview General Superintendent Trask talks about the significance of this holy convocation.

SOON AFTER YOU BECAME GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT YOU CALLED FOR A SACRED ASSEMBLY, AND THIS UNIQUE GATHERING IN 1994 HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON OUR FELLOWSHIP. WHY DID YOU CALL FOR THAT FIRST MEETING?

The Lord spoke to me clearly and distinctly that we as a Fellowship needed to come together for the purpose of repenting and humbling ourselves. God has blessed the

WHY ARE YOU NOW CALLING FOR A SECOND SACRED ASSEMBLY?

Many have thought we should have a second Sacred Assembly, but we must be careful not to have just another program or just another meeting. We must hear the voice of the Lord and be sure this is what He wants. In my spirit I feel the Fellowship is prepared for a second Sacred Assembly.

The emphasis, not only within the Assemblies of God but across many major denominations, is on prayer and fasting for the express purpose of waiting upon God for revival. A Sacred Assembly was right back then, and it's right now. Those who can will

***We must be careful
not to have just another
program or just
another meeting.***

gather. It can be a time of repentance and cleansing our hearts, minds, and spirits; a time of refreshing; of praise; of waiting upon God. Let's hear what God is saying to us and march to His orders, not ours, and be doing what God has called us to do in obedience to Him.

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND?

We will have no agenda except to wait upon God. We did that in Sacred Assembly I, and it was refreshing. Often when we come together everything is programmed and laid out with a tight agenda. If the Spirit wanted to move, He couldn't find a place in the program in which to move. There must be order, but in the Sacred Assembly setting, program, schedule, and agenda are set aside.

Sacred Assembly II will be a time of spiritual renewal—a renewing in the inner man. One of the dangers in the ministry today is to become so busy in


legitimate religious activity that we run on human energy instead of divine energy. Sometimes we just need to back up. Jesus did this. He took time to get alone to pray and wait upon God and hear from Him.

Sacred Assembly II can be a time of openness. One of my prayers for this solemn gathering is that there will be a need for confession. You can't make that happen, and I don't wish to do so. But when God moves, if there needs to be a confession, people will respond. The Word tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

***In my spirit I feel the
Fellowship is prepared
for a second
Sacred Assembly.***

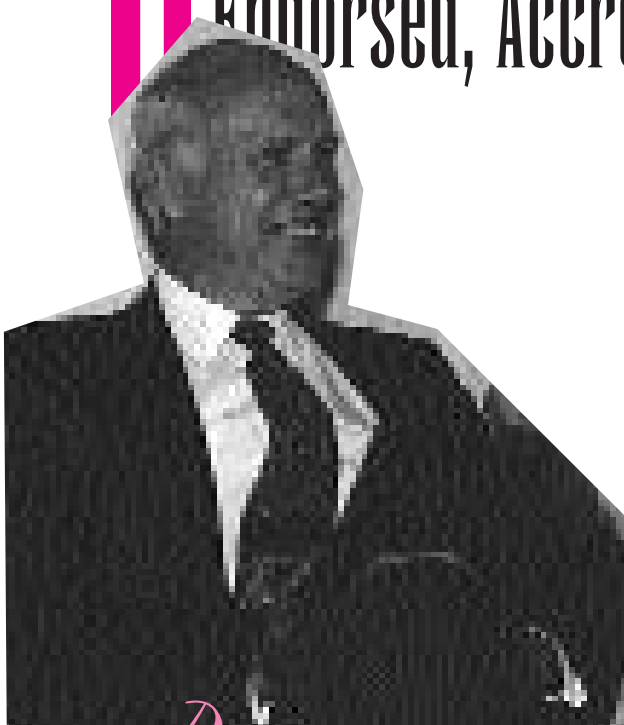
I don't believe God is speaking only to the unsaved. Confession is also for the believer. God has so ordained that we be accountable to each other. If someone is struggling with something, let's believe God that he or she will return home set free from that bondage—whatever it might be.

WHAT CAN OUR MINISTERS DO TO PREPARE THEMSELVES AS THEY COME TO THIS SACRED ASSEMBLY?

I would like to have the Fellowship begin to pray now. Don't wait until we get to Sacred Assembly II; begin to pray now. Testimonies from the first Sacred Assembly have been phenomenal. Many of our churches have never been the same. The reason: Our leaders and pastors are not the same. I pray that for everyone. 

INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE KRAISS

Endorsed, Accredited, Empowered



PHOTOS BY MEL SNYDER

Along with serving as the president of Southern California College in Costa Mesa, Wayne E. Kraiss is the commissioner of the recently established Commission on Christian Higher Education. In this interview he talks with Enrichment concerning his new assignment and where the Commission is going in Assemblies of God higher education.

HOW DOES THE COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION FUNCTION?

The Commission serves our 17 Assemblies of God endorsed colleges by helping coordinate them and their curricula, to expose our constituency to their benefits and curricula, and making our constituency aware of the need to support these colleges. It is hoped the Commission will help raise the visibility of the Assemblies of God colleges.

DOES A STUDENT ATTENDING A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE GET A NARROWER EDUCATION COMPARED WITH A SECULAR EDUCATION?

Not at all. As a matter of fact, a Christian college provides a broader education. More

subjects can be explored on a Christian college campus than in state universities. Faculty members in many state universities are prohibited from discussing anything about Scripture, God, creation, morals, and ethical values. These topics can be freely explored in our Christian colleges.

EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORMATION AND INFORMATION IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

Christian education must be both formative and informative. The methods of gaining access to information are changing rapidly. Libraries are becoming learning resource centers where connectivity, computerized systems of access, and linkage with the internet are tools in the search for information.

Formative education—more than access to information—involves the formation of ethical and moral values and the shaping of character. It is not clear how this can be done in front of a computer monitor, for it involves faculty and staff role models and times of prayer, worship, Christian outreach, personal counseling, and lifestyle issues which can and should be modeled by the faculty and staff.

Tragically, many young people are growing up in dysfunctional families where they have a limited exposure to biblical principles of family life. Thus it is vital for our colleges to do more than inform students—they must intentionally seek to form students into mature believers who have integrated faith with learning and living.

IS THE ACCREDITATION OF OUR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES OF THE SAME VALUE AS THE ACCREDITATION OF A SECULAR UNIVERSITY?

Yes, but accreditation varies. It can be regional, which is the most common form of accreditation, and professional. The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, for example, is

The development of a Christian mind is the most important thing that happens in a person's educational experience.

regionally accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and professionally accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) accredits several of the Bible colleges, and a number of the schools are accredited regionally. The regional accrediting agencies are the same which accredit many of the major universities in the United States. Accreditation helps facilitate transfer of credit from one institution to another.

We are preparing people in our colleges not only to serve this generation but to address the issues that will face succeeding generations.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION?

Basically, accreditation is a peer evaluation. Members of the academic community visit a campus, examine the curriculum, the faculty, and the student body and conclude that the programs offered on that campus are equal to the programs offered in the universities and other schools in that area. Thus the school's credits are accepted as equivalent to a similar course at a peer institution.

HOW HAS ASSEMBLIES OF GOD EDUCATION CHANGED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS?

The biggest change I have noticed in Assemblies of God higher education is that more colleges are moving into the area of liberal arts. Young people want a Christian education in liberal arts.

I have been on the administrative team of an Assemblies of God college for nearly 29 years. Initially, there was a fortress mentality—particularly in liberal

arts—that we are here to create a safe environment alone. It was defensive in its philosophy. Today we are also focusing on the development of a Christian mind and the integration of our faith with learning. The development of a Christian mind is the most important thing that happens in a person's educational experience.

We must teach young people to think as Christians so they will understand the difference between God's Word and man's word. We are preparing people in our colleges not only to serve this generation but to address the issues that will face succeeding generations.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AFFORD TO GO TO AN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD INSTITUTION?

Not enough. The largest, most difficult problem facing our students is the affordability issue—to afford an Assemblies of God college and then repay their education loans afterward. It is not uncommon for an Assemblies of God young person to leave college with a debt of \$15,000 to \$20,000 in loans. This often doubles when two students marry.

The church needs to make more of an investment in its youth through scholarship programs. Only 3 percent of the world missions dollar goes for Assemblies of God education in the United States. That says something to our young people about how much we value them and their desire to prepare to integrate God's Word with arts, sciences, and life. The local church needs a budget for higher education, just as it does for missions.

Our Fellowship has lost wonderful, talented young people because our colleges have not offered adequate scholarships. Other colleges—many are non-Christian—offer them full scholarships, which often causes us to lose some of our brightest and most promising potential leaders.


The Assemblies of God has no program that recognizes the scholarship, self-discipline,

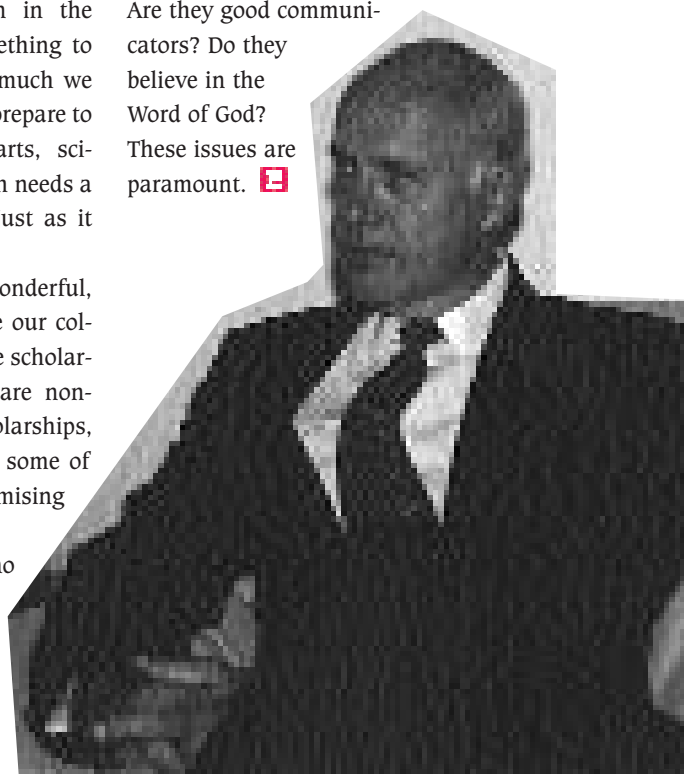
and excellence of a young person who is offered 20 or 30 full-tuition scholarships from major universities. Many of these young people do not return to our churches after studying at these institutions.

It is partly my responsibility as commissioner of Christian Higher Education to try to correct this situation and help preserve these talented young people for our church. The Great Commission Foundation, established to help build an endowed trust fund for Assemblies of God scholarships, is receiving enthusiastic support. But we need major gifts—major estates—added to that trust fund to provide the multiplied millions of dollars required for such scholarships.

Harvard has over a billion dollars in its endowment. The largest endowment of any Assemblies of God college is between \$5 and \$6 million. That is not enough to provide the needed scholarships.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS LOOK AT WHEN CONSIDERING A COLLEGE FOR THEIR CHILD?

While nice facilities and campus settings are important, the people whose fingerprints are going to be left on a son or daughter are more important. Parents need to know them. Do they have compassion for the lost? a contrite spirit? Are they good communicators? Do they believe in the Word of God? These issues are paramount. 



Pastoring in Rural America

BY BILL G. BATES

As the pastor of a church in a rural community of 14,000, it is my goal to become the pastor of the city. My church is more than just the building that houses my office and where meetings are held each week—it is the business, residential, and industrial areas of our city. The people I meet there are all part of my church—they just do not know it yet. The objective is to become acquainted with them so that, if there should come a time when they have a need, I will be the one they call.

A phrase common to many in the ministry is “urbanization of America,” defined as the movement of society toward the cities. Another way of looking at that would be to see the cities growing larger and the rural areas becoming smaller. While that may be true, the rural areas cannot be neglected, because they offer a wealth of excellent opportunities for ministry. A uniqueness about ministry in the rural areas of America can make it very fulfilling.

The greatest characteristic of rural America is a sense of loyalty—not often found in the big city. Whether it is sports or business, the people have a refreshing “my team,” “my business,” or “my church” mentality—not selfishness but supportiveness. For instance, one of my parishioners always buys his gas and has


his car serviced at the same station. Why? Because his dad did that, and his dad and the owner were friends; therefore, in true rural loyalty, that’s where he goes also.

While this sense of loyalty may be true in urban areas, it is on a smaller scale than in the rural setting. People in the city tend to be more transient and mobile.

Another quality unique to rural America is the closeness or how personable everyone is. Since everything is on a smaller scale, it affords an opportunity to become acquainted with more people. Whether it is the waitress in the local restaurant, the clerk at the auto parts store, or the newspaper carrier, relationships are built and friendships established outside the church.

These two factors help to create a faithful and warm atmosphere from which to preach the love of Jesus and to make an impact upon people’s lives.

Pastors preach often about being the light of the world or being salt to the people around them. Could it be that we ministers walk into restaurants or stores or businesses and make very little impression upon the people we meet? This is so much easier in a rural area because the same people work all the time.



Whether it is the waitress in the local restaurant, the clerk at the auto parts store, or the newspaper carrier, relationships are built and friendships established outside the church.

Here are some suggestions for pastoring in rural America to help us bloom where we are planted:

1. ALWAYS WEAR A SMILE.

Don't try to be phony or fake; just be friendly. Despite your natural disposition, you can smile and say hello. People notice.

2. INTERACT WITH THE CITY.

Don't be a recluse. In almost every city there is a ministerial association. Work to develop a closeness with these men and women. Out of those relationships come prayer support and valuable information about the city. With a little initiative one can find opportunities to get involved—from Little League, PTA, and service clubs to fitness centers. Each affords excellent avenues to touch lives. Erroneously, we think the city is just going to jump into our laps. You didn't see Jesus sitting around waiting for a following. He “went about doing good.”

3. HAVE AN OFFICE AT THE CHURCH, AND KEEP REGULAR HOURS.

With an office at the church you have to get out, and with regular office hours the people know you are working; it puts an element of accountability into your life. One also learns to recognize the difference between interruptions and opportunities. Sometimes we forget that people are our business—no people, no work. There are times to hide and study and times to be available—accessible.

People like to know where their pastor is or at least know they can get in touch with him if necessary.

A vital ingredient in pastoring rural churches is developing relationships, and relationships are difficult to develop with people if they perceive you are only out to get them.

4. BE LOYAL TO CERTAIN ESTABLISHMENTS.

Make some people your target. Names can be exchanged and valuable information gained by frequenting a certain business. Maintain a good name by paying your bills on time and not expecting a discount because you are a pastor.

5. REMEMBER NAMES AND SITUATIONS, ESPECIALLY FAMILY.

People are our business, and they have names; therefore, names must become our business. To say you are not good with names is to admit that you do not want to try. With a little effort memorizing names can become easy, and the benefits can be amazing. For example, a family recently moved into the area and visited our church. They decided to make it their church home because I remembered the children's names.

*People are our business,
and they have names;
therefore, names must
become our business.*

6. DROP HINTS OF WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO.

Yes, this means we have to be careful. Remember the concept of pastoring a city, not just the people who attend on Sunday. Someone once said, “The whole world is a stage.” This is especially true for pastors in a rural setting. For example, a friend in a nearby city had to stop taking his wife out to breakfast every Monday morning, for the people began to think he did so because she couldn't cook. Every eye is watching and every ear is listening.

7. DEVELOP MINISTRIES TO THE COMMUNITY.

Do it with the purpose of ministering to them, not necessarily winning them. A vital ingredient in pastoring rural churches is developing relationships, and relationships are difficult to develop with people if they perceive you are only out to get them.

Growth in the church will result from ministering to people and interacting with the community rather than large, full-blown crusades. Our church's outreach to the street people began to grow, and as it grew the decision was made to add a sermonette to the evening before the people could get their free meal. The numbers immediately dropped. The people we were attempting to reach saw too much of the hook exposed and left. They thought we just

wanted them in church instead of meeting their physical needs.

8. LONGEVITY IS A KEY.

Many are aware of the eros-phileo-agape stages of a marriage, the moving from sexual, physical attraction to the “I love you, period.” The same is true of the ministry—it just goes by different names: honeymoon-challenge-growth.

The 3-year average tenure of pastors in rural America demonstrates that ministers do not hold on long enough to see the more productive years. The rural church is also used as a stepping-stone to a larger ministry. That attitude undermines the primary characteristic of loyalty found in the rural church.

9. OCCASIONALLY WRITE AN ARTICLE IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER.

Most people in a rural community subscribe to the local newspaper. Since it is usually small, it is often read from cover to cover. The pastor should take advantage of this captive audience and write articles about social issues facing the city, appreciation for a recent council decision, or even a special during a holiday season. These and others will help the pastor become better known.

**Could it be that we
ministers walk into
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we meet?**

10. DEVELOP A STRATEGY.

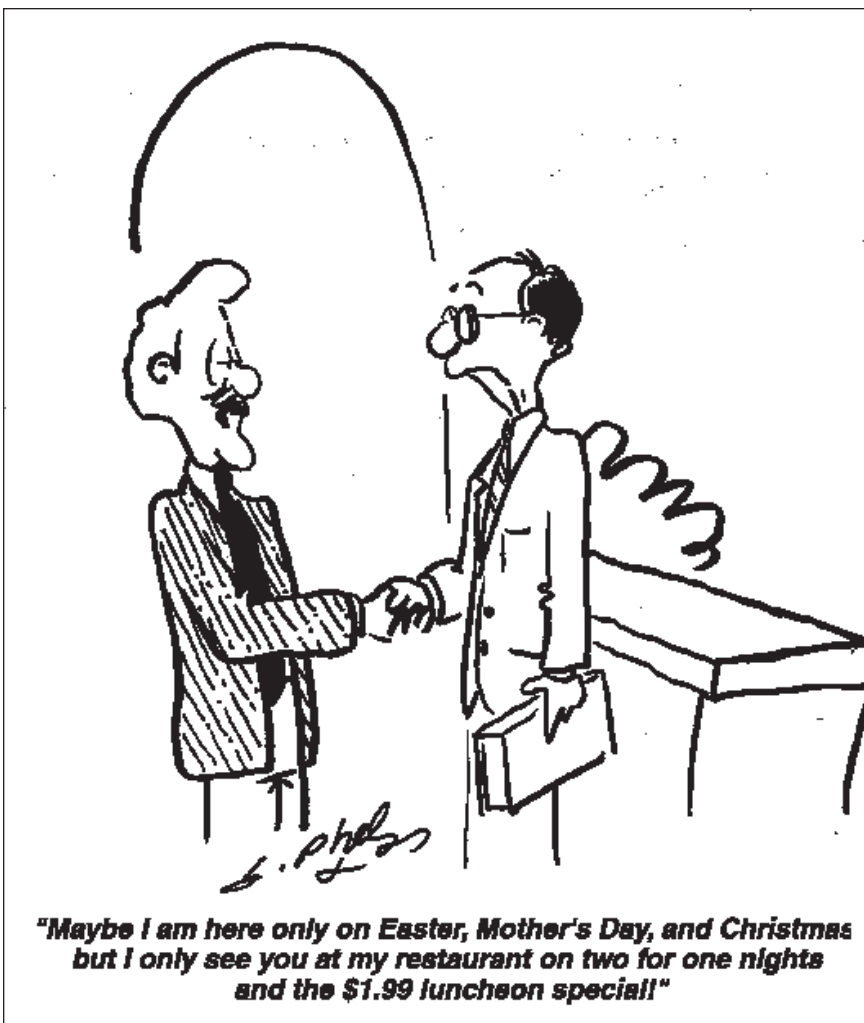
A tendency in the rural church is to take more of a laid-back, carefree view of ministry. This is a trap. The size of the city or the church is no reason for the pastor not to have a strategy, a plan, or a vision. Take the time to develop 1-, 3-, and 5-year plans; then begin to lead the church toward those goals.

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While this list is not complete, perhaps it will help you see my point. Pastoring a church in rural America is not to be taken lightly and is not to be considered second class. When I look at my church of 275 in a city of 14,000, I figure it would be a church of 950 in a city of 50,000 or 1,900 in a city of 100,000. Therefore, I have the best of both worlds: I have the privilege of pastoring a large church and still live in a relaxed rural setting with 2 acres, a creek, and pets. And I have friends in every store or restaurant. I am a thankful pastor in rural America. **E**



Bill G. Bates is the senior pastor of First Assembly of God, Centralia, Washington.



THE DILEMMA WE FACE WHEN PENTECOSTALS

BY GARY B. MCGEE

Pentecostalism, spiritual gifts, miracles, and evangelism have always been linked together. Omit one and Pentecostalism is redefined. Even so, Pentecostals have disagreed through the years over how the power of the Spirit may be experienced.

The worldwide blessing that the recent charismatic movement has brought to spiritual renewal, evangelism, and missions has intensified the debate over appropriate responses to the Spirit.

When Charles F. Parham visited the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, he denounced the fleshly manifestations he observed, saying, "We have no sympathy with nor do we countenance the gymnastic contortions of the Holy Rollers who throw fits, perform somersaults, roll and kick in the straw or dust or upon the floor of the meetinghouse.... When any of that class come to our meeting and begin throwing fits, we quietly have the attendants take them out." Although unduly harsh and racist in his judgment, Parham didn't consider the emotionalism in his own meetings to be excessive.

Though longing for an old-fashioned Pentecostal revival, many of the faithful today would probably feel ill at ease with the boisterous and emotional worship that characterized early Pentecostal meetings. In one case, when believers went from Azusa Street to nearby Pasadena to hold services, neighbors complained to the police about the loud worship that continued late into the night. Maria

ship that continued late into the night. Maria B. Woodworth-Etter, the famed holiness and healing evangelist who joined the Pentecostal movement in 1907, had already become well known as the "trance evangelist" because of the many people who fell to the floor "under the power" in her meetings. Anglo-Pentecostal church services are quieter and more predictable today.

In camp meetings and revival campaigns Pentecostals shouted praises to God, clapped their hands, and played tambourines and other instruments while singing gospel songs. Dancing and laughing in the Spirit, shaking under the power of God, singing in tongues, and walking around their tents and wooden tabernacles in Jericho marches were also common expressions of worship. Messages in tongues and interpretations as well as prophetic utterances often reminded them of the imminent coming of Christ. Leaders encouraged seekers to "hold steady" while waiting for the moving of the Spirit and then "take their liberty" in following His directives.

At times emotional demonstrations and spiritual claims became counterproductive when believers brought more attention to themselves than to Christ. Many Pentecostals recognized the need to balance the dynamics of Spirit-filled living with careful instruction: Spiritual manifestations would only be beneficial in a context ordered by the Word of God.

In part, this concern prompted the call for Pentecostal saints to gather at Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914, to form a fellowship of congregations to "recognize scriptural methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work and business for God, and to disapprove of all unscriptural methods, doctrine, and conduct...endeavoring to keep the unity of the

QUENCH THE SPIRIT

Spirit in the bonds of peace until we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and to walk accordingly....”

Even with the development of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, a long-standing tension between freedom and order has remained, prompting ministers to question the validity of spiritual claims lacking biblical warrant.

In a curious notice published in the *Pentecostal Evangel* in 1919, the editors announced that Warren F. Carothers, a leading minister in the Council, had received the “gift of weather forecasting” and offered readers a weekly weather column. It never appeared; extravagant claims were gradually ignored.

The worldwide blessing that the recent charismatic movement has brought to spiritual renewal, evangelism, and missions has intensified the debate over appropriate responses to the Spirit. In some cases unusual manifestations, though characteristic of earlier Pentecostal spirituality, have been discouraged by contemporary Pentecostals at the risk of quenching the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). How shall we resolve this dilemma that strikes at the very heart of our belief in the ministry of the Spirit and our own identity? While many suggestions could be made, the following are indispensable to safeguarding Pentecostal blessing in our congregations.

First, Scripture must remain the basis for the Spirit-filled life, the framework from which the discernment and testing of spiritual phenom-

na should be made (1 Corinthians 12:10; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 John 4:1–6). Jesus made it clear that when the Paraclete came, He would convict the world of sin, lead believers into all truth, and thereby glorify Him (John 16:5–15). Thus when spiritual manifestations in times of corporate worship draw more attention to individuals than to Christ, they should be corrected with gentle and loving admonition to help believers grow beyond carnality to spiritual maturity.

Love must reign over desires for spiritual power; as the source of empowered ministry, love always glorifies Christ and builds up the Church (1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 4:11–16). Noel Perkin, an earlier missions leader of the Assemblies of God, once described “those who are closely associated with God” as having a “beauty about their countenance which noth-

***How shall we resolve this
dilemma that strikes at
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ing else can supply.” When congregations of believers reflect the fruit of the Spirit, grow in the knowledge of God, and mutually submit to one another in love (Ephesians 5:17–21), their responses to the Spirit’s power will be “fitting and orderly” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Secondly, people react differently to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, depending on

Should the reputation of a church center more on emotionalism and sensationalism than on the redemptive power of the gospel in word and deed, then disorder has prevailed and the message of Christ is compromised.

their emotional makeup, past experiences, needs at the moment, and social standing. In other words, the human element is never absent. However, should the reputation of a church center more on emotionalism and sensationalism than on the redemptive power of the gospel in word and deed, then disorder has prevailed and the message of Christ is compromised.

Unity in the Spirit is enhanced by the

rich diversity within the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–16) and necessitates teaching, patience, and tolerance. For instance, while some have criticized believers who have engaged in holy laughter, the nature of this blessing might actually bring healing for joyless victims of malignant stresses in our modern culture. Is it heretical? Not unless it obscures the good news of Jesus Christ, distracts from the worship



of God, or becomes a new shibboleth of spiritual maturity. Joy testifies to the redemptive and healing work of Christ.

Finally, beware when some insist that all must be loud or quiet, fast-moving or slow-moving, old-fashioned or contemporary, hymns or choruses; that all must sing in tongues, laugh, dance, shake, or clap their hands. Legalism invariably short-circuits freedom in worship. External features of Pentecostal spirituality fade in importance when compared to knowing Christ.

While some have criticized believers who have engaged in holy laughter, the nature of this blessing might actually bring healing for joyless victims of malignant stresses in our modern culture.

Like other revival movements in their later stages, Pentecostalism has dug deep trench lines to protect cherished traditions. Unwittingly, constant attention to preservation may sidetrack believers from seeing and being a part of what the Spirit is doing in the world today. Paul's directive to the Thessalonian Christians still speaks to Pentecostals today: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire" (1 Thessalonians 5:19, NIV).

E



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them with a big commitment), it is important to start with whatever commitment they are able to give, regardless of how weak it may seem.

A barrier to spiritual growth for many people is not lack of commitment but overcommitment to the wrong things.

It is also OK to break big commitments into smaller steps and lead people gradually along. By using the baseball diamond as a visual illustration of spiritual progress, people can see how far they've come and how far they have to go.

Celebrate each time someone commits to moving forward to the next base. Create celebration events, like rites of passage, where you can publicly acknowledge that growth. This gives people a sense of accomplishment and motivates them to keep progressing. At celebration events, allow testimonies of how increased commitment has blessed their lives.

Baby boomer and baby buster generations expect to receive value equal to their commitments. They are desperately seeking something worth committing their lives to.

2. Help people develop spiritual growth habits. The most practical and powerful way to get believers headed in the direction of spiritual maturity is to help them establish habits that promote spiritual growth. Often called spiritual *disciplines*, we use the term *habits* because it is less threatening to new believers.

We are creatures of habit. If we don't develop good habits, we will develop bad ones. Ask yourself, "What are the minimum requirements? What are the core habits that give birth to all the others?" These usually involve habits that influence time, money, and relationships. If Christ's lordship is recognized over these three areas of life, then He will truly be in control.

Begin a class on "Discovering Spiritual Maturity" that focuses on how to establish four basic habits of a disciple: the habit of time with God's Word, the habit of prayer, the habit of tithing, and the habit of fellowship. These are based on Jesus' statements that define discipleship (see Luke 14:33; John 8:31,32; 13:34,35; 15:7,8).

After teaching the what, why, when, and how of these four habits, cover the practical steps to starting and maintaining other habits (see Nehemiah 9:38). At the end of this class everyone signs a maturity covenant. The signed covenant cards are collected, I sign them as a witness, we laminate them, and then they are returned so people can carry them in their wallets. Every year we renew our commitments and

issue new cards. An annual recommitment emphasis helps people make a fresh start.

Although they will struggle along the way, people leave the class permanently changed. It is always a very moving moment when each class commits their time, money, and relationships to Christ.

3. Build a balanced Christian education program. I mentioned earlier that there are five measurements of spiritual growth: knowledge, perspective, conviction, skills, and character—the building blocks of spiritual maturity. We've developed a key program to facilitate each level of learning.

Knowledge of the Word. To begin building a spiritual growth curriculum, ask two questions: "What do people already know?" and "What do they need to know?" A church that has grown primarily by biological growth (conversion of members' children) or transfer growth may have many members who already have a working knowledge of the Bible. But that is not the case in a church designed to reach the unchurched. You cannot assume your new members know anything about the Bible. You must start from ground zero.

At the knowledge level, regularly offer continuous "new believer" Bible studies and surveys of the Old and New Testaments. Our largest program to develop knowledge of the Word is a 9-month inductive Bible study course, written and taught by our lay teachers. It is called the WORD study—WORD is an acronym for the four activities of this Bible study: *Wonder* about it (ask questions about the text); *Observe* it; *Reflect* on it; and *Do* it! It is based on the methods described in my book, *Dynamic Bible Study Methods*. Each session includes homework assignments for self-discovery, lectures, and breakout small groups for discussion of the homework. The course begins in September each year and ends the following June. WORD for Women is offered twice a week, and WORD for Men is offered once a week.

Mature Christians
do more than study the Christian life—
they experience it.

While every book of the Bible is important, we want our members to study five core books before they branch out into other studies: Genesis, John, Romans, Ephesians, and James.

Perspective. Perspective is understanding something because you are seeing it from a larger frame of reference—the ability to perceive how things are interrelated and then judge their comparative importance. In a spiritual sense, it means seeing life from God's point of view. In the Bible, the words *understanding*, *wisdom*, and *discernment* all have to do with perspective. The opposite of perspective is *hardness of heart*, *blindness*, and *dullness*.

Knowledge is learning what God has said and done.

Perspective is understanding why God said it or did it and answers the “why” questions of life.

There are many benefits of learning to see everything from God’s perspective, but I’ll only mention four:

- (1) Perspective causes us to love God more.
- (2) Perspective helps us resist temptation.
- (3) Perspective helps us handle trials (Romans 8:28) and develops perseverance (James 1:3).
- (4) Perspective protects us from error.

Knowing what to do (knowledge),
why to do it (perspective), and
how to do it (skill) is all worthless
if you don’t have the conviction
to motivate you to do it.

What is desperately needed today are pastors and teachers who will clearly teach God’s perspective—about work, money, pleasure, suffering, good, evil, relationships, and all the other key issues of life (Ephesians 4:14). Perspective produces stability.

Conviction. Your convictions include your values, commitments, and motivations. Knowing *what* to do (knowledge), *why* to do it (perspective), and *how* to do it (skill) is all worthless if you don’t have the conviction to motivate you to do it.

Biblical convictions are essential for spiritual growth and maturity. The church *must* teach biblical convictions to counter the secular values to which believers are constantly exposed. Conviction helps us be diligent in continuing to grow spiritually. Growth requires time and effort. Without conviction about growth, people become discouraged and give up. When they develop Christlike convictions, they too will develop a sense of purpose in life.

People acquire conviction by being around other people who have it. This is a major reason we emphasize small groups as a part of our Life Development Process.

Skills. Skill is the ability to do something with ease and accuracy. Skill is developed, not by listening to a lecture but by practice and experience. Certain skills must be developed to become mature Christians—Bible study, ministry, witnessing, relational, and time management skills.

Skills are the how-to steps of spiritual growth. Knowledge and perspective are concerned with *knowing*. Conviction and character are concerned with *being*. Skills are related to *doing*. We are to be “doers of the word, not hearers only” (James 1:22).

Character. Christlike character is the ultimate goal of all Christian education. To settle for anything less is to miss the point of spiritual growth (Ephesians 4:13).

Developing the character of Christ is life’s most important task because it is the only thing we’ll take with us into eternity. This means the objective of all our teaching must be to change lives, not merely to provide information. Paul told Timothy and Titus that the purpose of their teaching was to develop character in those they taught (1 Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:1).

Character is never built in a classroom but in the circumstances of life. The classroom Bible study is simply the place to identify character qualities and learn how character is developed. When we understand how God uses circumstances to develop character, we can respond correctly when God places us in character-building situations. Character development always involves a choice. When we make the right choice, our character grows more like Christ.

When we choose to respond to a situation in God’s way instead of following our natural inclination, we develop character (see Galatians 5:22,23).

How does God produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives? By putting us in the exact opposite circumstances so we have a choice to make. He teaches us how to love by putting us around unlovable people; joy in times of sorrow; peace by placing us in the midst of chaos so we can learn to trust Him.

God is far more concerned with our character than He is with our comfort. His plan is to perfect us, not pamper us. For this reason He allows all kinds of character-building circumstances: conflict, disappointment, difficulty, temptation, times of dryness, and delays. A major responsibility of your church’s Christian education program is to prepare your people with the knowledge, perspective, convictions, and skills needed to handle these situations.

Here are five questions you need to ask about your Christian education program:

- Are people learning the content and meaning of the Bible?
- Are people seeing themselves, life, and other people more clearly from God’s perspective?
- Are people’s values becoming more aligned with God’s values?
- Are people becoming more skilled in serving God?
- Are people becoming more like Christ?

We continually work toward these objectives. Our vision for spiritual maturity is to bring glory to God by presenting Jesus Christ with as many Christlike disciples as we possibly can before He returns. **E**



—Abridged from Chapter 19 of Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

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Jesus: Superior to the Lawgiver

PART 3

TEXT: Hebrews 3:1–6, NIV

BY RICHARD L.
DRESSELHAUS

**Drawing
comparisons
is the key to
effective
communication.**

A captivating imperative: Fix your thoughts on Jesus.

1. The apostle
2. [The] priest → whom we confess

INTRO 1

A comparison of similarity: He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.

INTRO 2

A comparison of contrast:

Superior as the Builder

BODY: 1 *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.)*

Superior as the Son

BODY: 2 *Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house,*

BODY: 3 *testifying to what would be said in the future.*

BODY: 2 *But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house.*

CONCLUSION: *And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

A PREACHING OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION: 1. *Fixing your focus on Christ*

2. *Drawing the comparison—Christ and Moses*

BODY: 1. *Christ the “Builder”—Moses the “stone”*

2. *Christ the “Son”—Moses the “servant”*

3. *Christ the “Word”—Moses the “forerunner”*

CONCLUSION: *Responding as members of His house*

Drawing comparisons is the key to effective communication. Similes, metaphors, analogies, parables, allegories—they all make use of comparisons. It is impossible to imagine a world of communication without comparisons.

How do we judge athletic teams? rate stocks? evaluate generations? determine taste? describe the abstract and the intangible? Take away comparisons, and we find ourselves in a bland, meaningless world.

Consider the Bible, for example. The following comparisons are in Colossians 3:1–5—either implicit or explicit: The earthly and the heavenly; the living and the dead; the pure

and the impure. Each is set against the other. Contrast establishes the meaning.

This literary tool is used with incredible effectiveness in Hebrews 3:1–6 where Jesus is compared with Moses. Both the similarities and the contrasts are observed, and the impact is profound.

Imagine the shock. Here were Hebrews who held Moses in highest honor and regarded him as the special instrument of divine choice by which the sacred Law had been given. Now the lawgiver is being compared to another. Even the thought would have been previously abhorrent; but now, with a newfound faith in this One called Jesus, they could face with joy

the dramatic superiority of Jesus expressed in the comparison. Jesus is better—even when put up against the highly venerated lawgiver himself. The writer carefully chose the comparatives, and the message is powerful.

As you think of ways to develop this message, be sure to include some initial comments on the writer's literary technique. To do so will put in place the foundation upon which the message will be built. As you move into the body of the message, the element of comparison will strengthen each point. Jesus will emerge as awesomely superior.

Concerning the passage as a whole, this is not an easy text to develop. If you merely settle for a theme within the passage (i.e., “if we hold on to our courage”), the task will be relatively easy, but the results will be unsatisfactory. The key is to embrace the whole text and allow its parts to find their unique places in a composite which will reflect the full intent of the writer.

Look now at the analytical outline of the passage. You will see immediately how difficult it is to unravel the thought flow of the passage and set it forth in a form which will work in the task of preaching. The proposed preaching outline is an attempt to capture what might have been in the writer's mind as he penned these words. The effort is tentative at best.

***The builder of the building
has far greater honor
than the building.***

What is the theme of the text which will lead the way as you develop the message? It is simply this: “The superiority of Jesus over the lawgiver.” But how can you focus it for a powerful

response? Perhaps the opening imperative provides a clue. How about this as the summons for the sermon: “To call the listeners to an examination of the focus of their lives. Have they indeed fixed their thoughts on Jesus? Have they in reality established Jesus as the incomparable, superior Lord of their lives?” The Holy Spirit can use this theme with great effectiveness.

Be ready to look at the body of the message and the ways it might be developed.

***Moses was only a part of the building,
but Jesus is its Builder.***

CHRIST THE “BUILDER”— MOSES THE “STONE”

Admittedly, my knowledge of art is limited, but I can certainly enjoy an afternoon at the Louvre in Paris or the Vatican Museum in Rome. Not only do I marvel over the beauty of a masterpiece but speculate on the person who produced such a work of brilliance. Recently I visited the observatory at the top of Mount Palomar, 60 miles north of San Diego. When I looked at the sky with its myriad of stars, I was awestruck. Who has put those stars in place? What kind of a mastermind—genius of creation—could have done this? It was a wonderful moment of worship.

This is the mind of the writer of Hebrews as he penned this passage. He looked beyond the “building” itself to its “Builder.” The visible points to the invisible. In other words, the builder of the building has far greater honor than the building, just as the Creator of the stars has far greater honor than the stars themselves. One step further: Moses was only a part of the building, but Jesus is its Builder. What a powerful message for these new Hebrew Christians! They might have said, “No

**Put Jesus up against
any personality,
even the highly
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and Jesus is
incomparably superior.**

one has ever put it that way before.” True. This was God’s special revelation to His church at a critical moment in its history. Such truth would neutralize the assaults of a pagan society. These new Hebrew believers would have been greatly strengthened.

CHRIST THE “SON”—MOSES THE “SERVANT”

Sonship and servanthood are common themes in Scripture (John 15:15; Galatians 4:7). They are terms that establish status within relationships. It is one thing to be a “servant” in a household and quite something else to be a “son.” The differences include type of work, access to authority, and rights to property and wealth. A servant functions according to assigned duties, whereas a son enjoys a kind of deliberative autonomy. The differences are striking and real.

The story of the prodigal is based in part on these very distinctions. It was on the basis of sonship the inheritance could even be requested. And the prodigal’s return was predicated on his willingness to be a mere servant in his father’s household. However, the father’s acceptance was based on the fact of sonship. The relational stratification implicit in these two terms is clearly illustrated. The results are profound.

To the point: The writer to the Hebrews used these familiar terms to demonstrate Jesus’ unique superiority. It would have struck the original readers with incredible force. They could not have missed its significance. It meant that the gospel called for a new level of devotion and a different set of allegiances. The fabric of their newfound faith would have been greatly strengthened. It is a powerful use of comparisons.

For us the message is also profound. Put Jesus up against any personality, even the highly venerated lawgiver, and Jesus is incom-


parably superior. The analogy of sonship and servanthood make the point with striking clarity. But for us it goes further. Compare Jesus with any person, ideology, philosophy, technology, theory, or equation, and He is superior by far. In fact, any instrument of comparison falls away as inappropriate and entirely inadequate.

CHRIST THE “WORD”—MOSES THE “FORERUNNER”

While this third point may seem incomplete, it is well supported elsewhere in Scripture. Consider the statement in the text: “Testifying to what should be said in the future.” It is clearly a work ascribed to Moses. In other words, the writer saw Moses as the one who served as the forerunner (by testimony) of the One who later would be both the Word spoken and the Word incarnate. Rightly, Moses in this way becomes a type—a foreshadowing—of Jesus Christ.

Here again the impact on first-century Hebrew believers would have been most meaningful. No longer was Moses to be the final word but only the introductory word. His testimony, powerful as it was, was dwarfed by the One who fulfilled the Law in himself. “You have heard it said...but I say to you.” He who is the Word supersedes the one who only spoke of it from a distance.

Your final task will be to give an effective call that will prompt a meaningful response from your listeners. Back to the theme: Call your people to a renewed focus on Jesus Christ as the One who is superior to anyone and everything to whom He might be compared. Challenge every person to reflect carefully on the practical applications of this truth. Is Jesus really held as superior to all to which He might be compared? Is He regarded as the single and most valued priority of life? Is there an evident courage to hold solidly to deep personal convictions? Yes, here is a part of God’s Word which will challenge the diligent, but when the work is completed you will rejoice that God has revealed himself in so profound a way.

Focus your eyes on Christ. See Him as the incomparable One. And bow down before Him in humble adoration. 

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**...Call your
people to a
renewed focus
on Jesus Christ
as the One who
is superior to
anyone...**



Disciple

The New Testament usage of the Greek noun *mathētēs*, commonly translated “disciple,” is a key to understanding what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. The New Testament uses this word in contexts that give it new significance because of its association with Jesus. The word occurs with such frequency in the New Testament that our survey of its import will by no means be exhaustive. Rather, we will survey key aspects of usage that are foundational and definitive of a disciple of Christ.

Historically in the Greek language *mathētēs* referred to a “student” who would attach himself to a teacher (*didaskalos*) to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge in a certain discipline (e.g., philosophy, medicine, a trade). Likewise in the rabbinic tradition a *talmid* was a student of Torah who would attach himself to a teacher to learn the Scriptures and the traditions of the fathers. In both instances the pupil eventually would qualify to become a teacher in his own right with the authority to establish his own school, often carrying on and developing further the traditions of his master. (For a detailed description of this background see: *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1, 485-86; *Theological Dictionary of New Testament*, vol. 4, 417-28.)

In the New Testament the word is used in similar fashion with regard to John the Baptist’s disciples (e.g., Matthew 11:2; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33) and the Pharisees (e.g., Matthew 22:16; Mark 2:18). However, our primary interest is the use of the word to identify followers of Christ. This particular usage is not restricted to the Twelve; in fact, only a small percentage of the occurrences refer exclusively to the Twelve and then in exemplary fashion for the Church. By far the most common usage generally refers to followers of

Christ, and in these contexts there are similarities as well as some striking differences with the common usage of *mathētēs*.

“Disciple” cannot be defined apart from the teacher to whom the disciples in question are attached. Jesus presented himself publicly as a teacher and was well versed in the rabbinical traditions, even from an early age (Mark 12:18; Luke 2:41–50; 12:13). Although some in the religious hierarchy refused to acknowledge His authority (e.g., Mark 2:1–11; 6:2; John 7:15; 8:13–59), He was nevertheless recognized as a rabbi by His own disciples as well as the broader public (John 1:38; 3:2; Mark 9:5; 11:21). But His teaching and ministry were clearly unique, a fact that is demonstrated in the responses of the crowds who heard and saw Jesus, and recognized in Him an authority that was absent from the traditional rabbis (Matthew 7:28,29; Mark 1:27; Luke 4:32,36). At the heart of New Testament discipleship, then, is this Master with whom disciples are called to have a living relationship; the last Adam who became a life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45; cf., Ephesians 3:14–21; Philippians 3:10,11).

Following Jesus as a disciple meant that one was bound to live according to His teachings as well as to pass on His teachings to others. The link between discipleship and teaching is clear in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18–20. Moreover, in this text Jesus’ fundamental expectation of His disciples is evident—specifically, that His disciples will “observe all things...I have commanded you” (verse 20). Thus obedience to Jesus’ commandments is definitive of living as His

BY DOUGLAS A. OSS

Following Jesus as a disciple meant that one was bound to live according to His teachings as well as to pass on His teachings to others.

**The main element required
by the Lord of His disciples
...was the abandonment
of self-interest and this-
worldly concerns in absolute
commitment to Him.**

disciple. Also notice this pivotal statement is about moral and spiritual conformity to Christ.

While obedience to Christ's teachings is central to New Testament discipleship and well within the range of established contemporary usage of the word, New Testament usage is unique in the way it calls disciples to become participants with Christ.

Now consider three distinctive passages that focus on what it means to be a disciple-participant with Jesus.

1. *Matthew 10:1-42* (cf., *Mark 3:13*; *Luke 9:1*): The word *disciple* occurs four times (verses 1,24,25,42) in this text, but the entire passage is Jesus' teaching on what it means to be

a disciple. The main element required by the Lord of His disciples (and this was not restricted to the Twelve [cf., *Luke 10:1*]) was the abandonment of self-interest and this-worldly concerns in absolute commitment to Him (e.g., verses 9,10,16,32-39; cf., *Matthew 19:27*; *Luke 9:57*). This level of commitment was evident in a life of submission and obedience to Him and unconditional trust in Him (pervasive of the passage but see especially verses 19,20,22,26,27-31).

While the disciples shared in Christ's life of self-denial (e.g., verse 38), they also shared in His power and authority. Following the Lord meant they proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom as He had taught them, and they did so with the authority that He gave them (verse 1). Thus the Lord's disciples participated in His power over demons and disease. Moreover, the purpose of their participation in the Master's power was not to have power for power's sake but, rather, for proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom with signs following.

2. *Luke 10:1-24*: In fashion evocative of the sending out of the Twelve, Jesus sent out the 72 (the KJV records 70) other disciples to proclaim the gospel. They went forth with the authority of Christ (e.g., verse 16) into the harvest field. This passage is distinctive in its conclusion. When they returned, they rejoiced over the fact that even the demons were subject to them by Jesus' authority (verse 17). Jesus told them that the submission of demons was not a proper reason for their joy; rather, they should rejoice that their names were written in heaven (verses 19,20). This, then, is the focus of a disciple. Participation in Christ's power is not the end—it is a means. The eyes of His disciples are set on the eternal goal.

3. *Luke 9:46-50* (cf., *Matthew 18:1-5*; *20:20-28*; *Mark 9:33,40*). In this



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passage the disciples exhibited their orientation to the Kingdom in a dispute over who would be the greatest. Such a dispute displayed a worldly orientation in which position, power, status, privilege, and the like were

The purpose of their participation in the Master's power was not to have power for power's sake but, rather, for proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom with signs following.

important. But the Kingdom functions in ways that are in diametric opposition to the operating principles of the world. So Jesus instructed them that the least of the disciples is greatest in the Kingdom (verse 48)—a call to lay down self-interest for the sake of service to the Lord and others. In fact, welcoming children is more

important in the Kingdom than position (verses 47,48).

John recounted an incident (verses 49,50) that displays a proprietary attitude toward the work of the Kingdom. In attempting to stop a man who was not one of Jesus' inner circle from casting out demons in His name, the disciples expressed a desire to institutionalize the power of Christ within a limited and official group. Jesus responded by forbidding them to prohibit his activities because the man was on their side. This was simply another expression of the desire to be great. By restricting God's work to a select group, the disciples would confine greatness to themselves. But the kingdom of God is not about greatness, and God chooses whomever He wants to display His power and reveal His kingdom.

These perspectives are at the heart of New Testament discipleship. The disciple today is required to abandon the things of the world, enter into relationship with the risen Christ, and to carry His gospel to a lost world. 

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Choosing Those Who Work Alongside You

"One of those days Jesus went out into the hills to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them" (Luke 6:12,13, NIV).

BY WAYDE I.
GOODALL

Once it took several months before we found the associate we needed for the church I pastored. The board was beginning to wonder if I had difficulty making a decision about staffing. I reminded them that we needed to be cautious, not impulsive, in selecting key leaders and encouraged them to help me pray the right person in. We did, and the Lord brought the ideal person to serve in the needed assignment.

Someone said he believed one of the most important things we do in leadership is in the selection of staff—those who work alongside. I agree. Pastors can select their staff members before praying and thinking it through, but the following guidelines are helpful when choosing those who will carry the vision with us.

CRITERIA FOR NEW PASTORAL STAFF CANDIDATES

1. *Consider their strength of character.* Are they able to manage and lead themselves and their families effectively? The essence of ministry is leading others, and that cannot be accomplished if candidates are unable to lead themselves and their families.¹ When considering strength of character, ask yourself if the candidates are:

- **Disciplined**—devotional life, work time, habits, routine.
- **Hardworking**—initiator, willing to put in 55 hours per week.² (Ministry is hard work.)
- **Honest**—an absolute must for an authentic ministry.

- **Persevering**—Can they keep going when resistance is encountered, or do they tend to quit when the going gets tough?

- **Caring**—Do they have a heart for others and want to help others become all God intended, or are they looking out for selfish interests? What are the motives for ministry?³

- **Relational**—Do they relate well to peers, members of the congregation, friends, family? Do people like to work with them and want to follow?

- **Creative**—Are they willing to dream and believe God for more than just the usual?

- **Finance**—Are they able to handle personal finance without extraordinary indebtedness?

The essence of ministry is leading others, and that cannot be accomplished if candidates are unable to lead themselves and their families.

2. *Do they have a good understanding of their identity in Christ?*

- A lack of understanding here will come out under pressure.

- Those who are insecure will keep a lid on those around them.

- Those who are secure in Christ will lift those around them.

- Insecure people are overwhelmed or blown away by a strong evaluation.

- Secure people can and will learn from a strong evaluation.⁴

3. *Do they have an authentic spiritual life?* Ask about:

- **Prayer life**—What answers to prayer have you seen recently?

• **Quiet time**—Tell me about your quiet time—how often? what book? what is the Lord showing you? how long?

• **Evangelism**—When did you last share Christ with someone or pray with someone to receive Christ?

• **Discipleship**—Who are you currently pouring your life into—who is your Timothy?

4. *Are they a ministry fit?*


• Do their gifts and passion match the position? (Ministry won't be successful over time if we put a square peg into a round hole.)

• Get the kind of leader you need—if a leader is needed, get a leader; if a teacher, get a teacher, etc.

5. *Are they relational?*

• Do they understand they will be working with the team?

• Effectiveness is either enhanced or hindered by those with whom we work.

• Not everyone can or should be the same.
• The team should enjoy ministering together. 

Wayde I. Goodall, D.Min., is executive editor of Enrichment and coordinator of Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.

ENDNOTES:

¹See 1 Timothy 3.

²Concerning the long hours that many struggle with in the ministry, I feel that if I were a layperson, I would work my normal 40-hours-per-week job; then give 15 to 20 hours to the local church I attended. We should not ask more of laypeople than we ask of ourselves.

³See 1 Corinthians 4:1–5.

⁴See Proverbs 9:8.

⁵Main points taken from a ministry handout at Northwest Graduate School of the Ministry, Seattle, Wash.

**Do their gifts
and passion
match the
position?**

PROCEDURE FOR NEW STAFF HIRING⁵

1. Determine the Need

The need for additional staff usually comes from leaders or present staff; for example, the need for a youth pastor comes from those working with the youth.

2. Establish Staff Opening

The existing staff (or lay leadership) brings a recommendation to the personnel committee, along with a well-thought-out and definitive job description and salary range. After appraisal and approval, the personnel committee brings the staff opening as a recommendation to the official board, along with a timetable or projected date the position should be filled. (Note: The senior pastor should chair the personnel committee.)

3. Search

Usually this is done by the pastor—making the need known to a capable, qualified person with an invitation to interview.

4. Interview

The interview process should be in this order:

1. First with the senior pastor. (Department heads or leaders in the need area can meet the person at this time also.)
2. Personnel committee.
3. Official board. (If a board member desires to speak personally to the candidate, it will be done before the plenary board interview.)

Should the candidate prove to be unsatisfactory, the last interview would not be necessary. This should be determined by the senior pastor and the personnel committee.

5. Calling

The personnel committee will bring a clear, written recommendation to the official board for hiring the candidate. The senior pastor can add any personal comments and strong opinions on the person being recommended. Upon the board's approval the candidate will be notified that the leadership has approved him or her, and, barring any formidable objections from the congregation, a firm proposal is being made for employment. A public announcement will be made to the congregation through the pulpit and church publications.



Budgeting in the Local Church: Participation Counts

BY MICHAEL
COMER

More emphasis seems to be placed on the financial budgeting process in our demanding world, whether it is in a mega-church or a small rural church. In a survey of churchgoers researcher George Barna found that basic values are shifting. What used to be a given value of "trusting people" has shifted to "proven integrity" for church leaders. Church members are demanding greater accountability for moneys donated to the church. This accountability exists in financial reporting as well as the spending and budgeting processes.

SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

It is important to examine some basic budgeting concepts before examining the church budgeting process.

1. *Cash flow.* Cash flow is defined as the amount of cash available to meet obligations to creditors, loans, or long-term debt. The first, most basic concept in budgeting is the possible variance between budget and cash flow. This is also one of the first concepts taught in basic accounting. Although an item may be present in the budget and scheduled to be bought in a certain month, sometimes it cannot be bought due to lack of cash.

A wise pastor will budget large items when the giving trend is at a high level such as in December, which tends to be a high-giving month. Many businesses keep a budget and a separate statement estimating actual cash receipts and cash disbursements for the month (called a cash-flow statement). However, in the local church a simple monthly budget should suffice if giving trends are considered when a budget is conceived.

2. *Commitment.* Anyone who has established a home budget knows it is of little consequence unless everyone agrees to live within its parameters. Financial accountability is important in a church. It may take the form of monthly financial reports given to a church board or a weekly accounting of major income in the church bulletin. In the larger multistaff church, pastors and departmental leaders are given monthly updates of their spending and are accountable for keeping expenses within the budgeted amount.

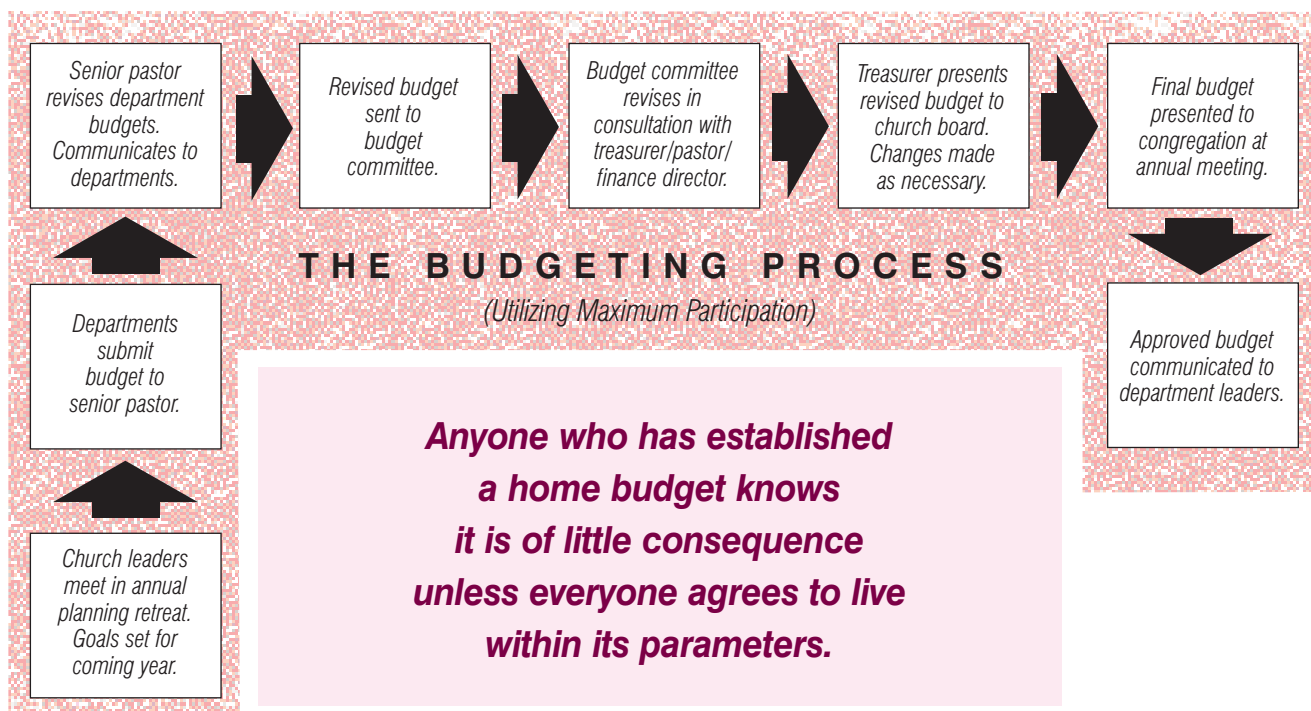
3. *Contingency.* Each budget should have a general contingency amount that is considered an emergency fund. That contingency is usually a percentage of the total budget and can typically be up to 5 percent of the total budget. Church leaders tend to think the contingency amount is available to be spent on unplanned items or items not directly connected to a yearly goal. However, the idea of contingency is for emergency items and should be allocated reluctantly. Once again it is important to distinguish between "budgeted" contingency funds and "real cash" contingency funds.

For example, a church may have a \$1,000 positive difference between budgeted income and budgeted disbursements; but because they spent more on disbursements, their actual cash in the checkbook may be \$500. The \$500 balance is "real cash" and should be considered the actual contingency amount.

4. *Congregational participation.* "Change management" is a watchword of the 1990s. Part of managing change in a corporation or in the church is having people participate in that change. Budgeting with participation means the congregation has active involvement in the budgeting process both in establishing the budget and in reporting budgeted spending.

Our church involves representatives from the congregation in a budget-committee structure. This committee reviews goals and

Church members are demanding greater accountability for moneys donated to the church.



budgets and recommends changes to the church board. We also provide financial reports to the congregation, primarily through our annual report, which shows the previous year's spending and the coming year's budgeted amounts.

5. *Communication.* Communication is the key in all phases of the budgeting process. If the budget is a departmental budget coming to the senior pastor, the need and the priority of the need must be communicated. The vision and overall yearly objectives of the ministry must be communicated from the pastor to the departments or persons preparing the budgets. Communication of the process and needs must be communicated to the congregation participants (through the budget committee, church board, and congregational reports).

ESTABLISHING A BUDGET

Most budgets are based on the previous year's giving and spending. If the church is experiencing a steady rate of growth, the budgeted

income may be increased based on that growth rate. However, if the income portion of the budget is increased, it should be based on realistic data. If the church experiences tremendous growth during the year, the income can always go over the budgeted amount. But if income is budgeted unrealistically, it is difficult to readjust spending and income estimates.

Budgets can be established using a "bottom up" or "top down" approach. The bottom-up budgeting approach allows departments (youth, Christian education, etc.) to submit the amounts they need to accomplish their ministry for the year. These amounts are compiled by the church treasurer, pastor, or church leader and usually presented to the church board or congregation for approval.

The top-down budgeting approach consists of a central leader (pastor, treasurer, finance director) who establishes overall spending amounts for each ministry area and communicates the amount to that department or

Budgeting with participation means the congregation has active involvement in the budgeting process both in establishing the budget and in reporting budgeted spending.

ministry area. Each departmental leader then determines how the overall amount allotted for spending during that year will be spent.

The top-down approach is often used in smaller churches where the pastor can determine amounts in conjunction with the church treasurer or board. As a church grows and has multiple staff, the bottom-up approach may be more advantageous since each ministry leader is more aware of the needs.

THE PROCESS

At First Assembly of God in Winston-Salem, we use a bottom-up budgeting approach. Based on the previous year's spending as well as future goals established at an annual retreat, each department gives an amount to the senior pastor. We attempt to base all spending on reasonable and achievable goals for the coming year. The process works like this (see graphic):

1. Planning meeting—spending tied to goals.

Each October the pastoral staff spends 3 days at a planning/strategic vision retreat. Each ministry is represented. The senior pastor sets the pace by reviewing the major accomplishments of the past year and the challenges of the coming year. Each pastor shares goals and how each ministry area fits into the overall vision of the church and the specific vision for the coming year. (These goals are reviewed quarterly by pastors through status reports at a biweekly pastoral staff meeting.)

2. Department/pastor submits budget to senior pastor—budget communicated.

After the goals have been analyzed and approved, each pastor submits a budget based on known ongoing items, previous costs, and events planned to accomplish the goals of the ministry. Ministry heads may meet with the senior pastor to describe thought processes, how costs were derived, or the priorities for their ministries.

3. Senior pastor prioritizes and reviews with finance director—budget tied to overall organizational goals.

The senior pastor reviews the budgets with the overall objectives of the ministry in mind and sets priorities based on what the church needs to accomplish during the coming year. These reviews often take the form of consultations with the church's finance director.

4. Changes discussed with departments—budget communicated again.

Changes that the senior pastor feels are necessary to the departmental budgets are discussed with departmental leaders. Sometimes amounts can be compromised, shifted to other areas, or planned for another year.

Communication is the key in all phases of the budgeting process.

5. Revised budget sent to budget committee—congregational participation gained.

In October the pastoral staff nominates four members of the congregation to serve on the budget committee. These people serve 2 years, and four of the eight members are appointed each year. The budget committee members usually are a combination of men and women who have financial backgrounds, have consistent giving records, and are active members. One of the committee members is a church board member. The church treasurer is an ex officio member.

The budget committee has three 2-hour meetings to review and revise the budget. The meetings are conducted by the church finance director with the church treasurer. The senior pastor is usually present at the last meeting to review the budget committee's recommendations.

6. Revised budget sent to church board—budget approval given.

The church treasurer presents the budget to the church board for analysis and updating.

7. Budget adopted by congregation—participation and questions encouraged.

During the annual business meeting, the senior pastor and the church treasurer present the board-approved budget to the congregation. Copies in the form of the annual report

are distributed. Questions about the budget are encouraged and answered during the forum.

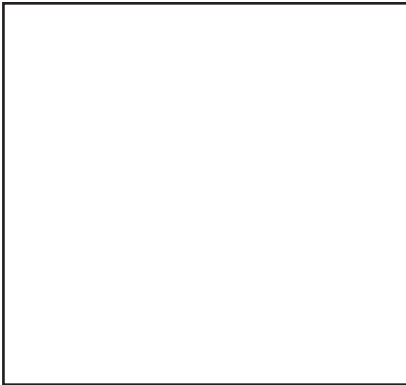
8. *Budget communicated to departments/pastors—more communication.*

The approved budget amounts are communicated through reports to each department—the official department budgets for the year.

9. *Budget tracked by department—accountability instituted.*

Each pastor or departmental leader is responsible for monthly spending within the budget. A purchase order is used to track how much money is being spent monthly and is essentially permission to spend the amount budgeted. The pastor or departmental leader completes a form (purchase order) with vendor information, the name and cost of the item(s), and a number that relates the item to the budget. The finance director uses the purchase order to reduce the budget as well as track how much cash is available for the purchase. All spending must have a budget-tracking number. For major items, cash flow is monitored before approval is given.

10. *Monthly report provided to church board—ongoing communication and accountability implemented.*




The finance director and senior pastor submit monthly updates of spending as well as next month's budgeted amounts to the church board. Spending is constantly monitored to ensure it is in line with the budgeted amounts.

Although the process is well defined at First Assembly, breakdowns occur—primarily with communication, planning the amount of time needed, and when to begin the process. Schedules with committee members frequently change, and department leaders must wait on cost estimates from vendors. Planning, participation, and two-way communication have been key success factors in our budgeting process.

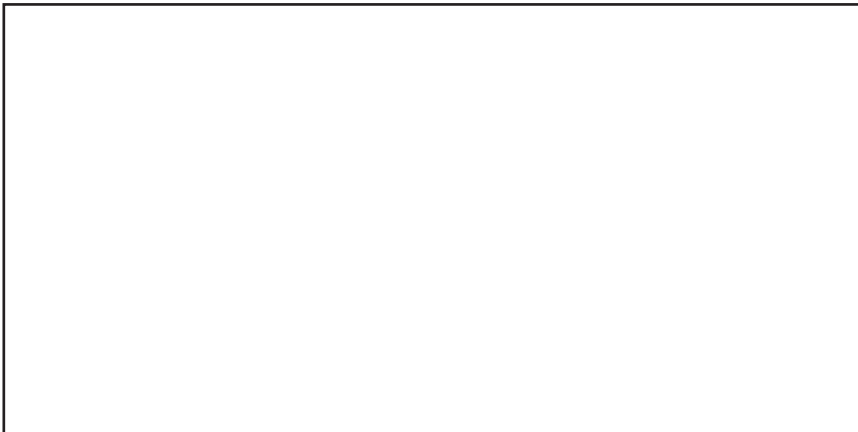
USING TECHNOLOGY

The budgeting process can be simplified through technology. Several budgeting packages exist for the church, both small and large. *Christian Computing* magazine lists numerous software packages for church finance.

Churches that are interested in updating their budgeting technology should contact a local retailer or computer consultant. Members of the congregation are often willing to use their computer skills and knowledge in the work of the ministry.

The financial stewardship of the church is an ongoing challenge for the pastor. New technologies, detailed processes, demanded accountability, and a heart for effective ministry combine to help pastors be faithful in ministry. 

Michael Comer, an organizational development consultant, serves as the assistant to the senior pastor at First Assembly of God, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



The budgeting process can be simplified through technology.

Dealing with the Death of Your Spouse

year—after your spouse's death. Don't sell your home, move closer to your children, get a job, go back to school, pay off your mortgage, etc., until your emotional roller-coaster has come to a stop or at least has leveled off.

WHOM DO I CALL?

- *Those to call immediately:* family, friends, and relatives; church and funeral home; executor named in spouse's will and/or trustee of spouse's trust—there may be funeral or other special instructions; whoever holds your spouse's power of attorney. (The power of attorney is no longer valid.)

- *Those to call/items to handle after the funeral:* church district office to check on benefits; Ministers Benefit Association to check on retirement or other funds; spouse's employer to check on wages, accrued and unpaid vacation time, sick pay, death and retirement benefits; Social Security office for benefits; insurance agents on policies and claim forms; banks, brokerage houses, and other financial firms for account status and ownership; trustee of any trust; Department of Veterans Affairs if applicable; lawyer to determine if a probate is needed (if living trust or nonprobate transfers occur, or in a small estate, a probate may not be necessary); credit card companies.

Destroy your spouse's cards. You may use



GRAPHICS:
THE ART SOURCE

BY RANDALL
K. BARTON

On the death of your spouse, your church friends and family will have plenty of well-meaning advice. However, it is important to avoid making important, irrevocable decisions for at least 6 months—preferably a

credit cards held in both your names, but the company may request a new application. Some credit card companies provide death benefits.

GATHERING DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

Have the following documents in a central location: will, trust, and letters of instruction; life insurance policies; retirement plans and IRA information; birth certificates; military discharge papers; marriage license; deeds on real property owned by your spouse; vehicle registrations for motor vehicles, trailers, and recreational vehicles; recent bank and financial account statements; recent tax returns; loan documents, including mortgages and other loans; list all outstanding debts, as of date of death, such as credit card bills and utilities. Copy the most recent bill received right after date of death; Social Security cards; financial statement or list of assets as of date of death.

PROBATING YOUR SPOUSE'S ESTATE

Probate is the legal process where a court determines if a will is valid or that no will exists and provides distribution of assets to beneficiaries as designated in the will or by law if no will exists.

You may not be required to probate your spouse's estate. Even if a probate isn't required, most states require you to file the will (with the probate court or the county recorder's office) within a certain number of days of your spouse's death. Call the probate court or contact an attorney.

Probate is *not needed* in the following situations:

- Property held in trust. (Many people today plan their estates to avoid the costs and delays of probate through a revocable living trust.

Property that has been conveyed and titled in the name of a trust need not be probated.)

- Joint tenancy with right of survivorship property (often bank and financial accounts and sometimes real estate) pass to the surviving joint-tenant free of probate. This is sometimes called "tenants-by-the-entirety" for a husband and wife.

- Payable on death (POD) arrangements. Financial accounts or other assets often pass automatically to a third party through a POD designation.

- Life insurance, annuities, and retirement benefits usually have a beneficiary designation which controls the distribution of that asset free of probate.

- Small estates—most states allow the surviving widow or beneficiary of a small estate to simply file a form affidavit.

If a probate is needed, contact an attorney who is familiar with probate law. He or she will guide you through the simplest and most cost-effective way to handle the probate of the estate.

PAYING TAXES

As a general rule, property you receive by inheritance comes free of income and estate taxes. A major exception is retirement funds in qualified plans, such as MBA accounts [403(b)] or IRAs. To avoid paying an immediate income tax on retirement funds, be sure to review your options to roll over or receive periodic payments.

The year your spouse dies, you still receive favorable joint return tax rates and standard deductions. If a probate is necessary, and the probate estate has enough income, an estate income tax return may have to be filed. If not, the income earned after date of death is simply reported by the beneficiaries of the assets.

An estate tax return has to be filed with the IRS if the estate (including probate and non-

As a general rule, property you receive by inheritance comes free of income and estate taxes.

probate assets) exceeds \$600,000.

Some states have an inheritance tax. Check with an accountant on the income, estate, or inheritance taxes and/or returns that must be filed.

PAYING BILLS AND BILLS YOU SHOULDN'T PAY

Before paying any bills, determine if it is your debt, your spouse's debt, or a joint debt. You are responsible to pay your debts and joint debts. You aren't responsible for your spouse's debt, since your spouse's estate will pay those debts.

Loan agreements you have signed with your spouse, credit cards held in both names or used jointly, property taxes on property you both owned, and household expenses are joint debts. Hospital bills, funeral expenses, and legal fees incurred because of your spouse's death are estate debts.

You should continue to pay your bills and joint bills. You may use your money, money held in joint accounts, and funds you receive directly without a probate to pay bills and to cover all living expenses. You should not dispose of or spend assets in your spouse's name that have to go through probate. Don't forget the \$255 one-time death benefit from Social Security. If you are short of income or assets because they are tied up in probate, once the probate begins you may be entitled to a monthly "widow's allowance" from the probate estate.

LOOKING AHEAD

While important decisions should be delayed after the death of a spouse, it's never too early to start looking ahead.

- *Estate planning.* Examine your will or trust. Perhaps you should consider a revocable trust so probate can be avoided at your death.


- *Disability planning.* If you become disabled or incapacitated, does someone have a durable power of attorney or durable power of attorney for health care to help you?

- *Financial planning.* Do you have enough income for now and the future? Should you take a lump-sum

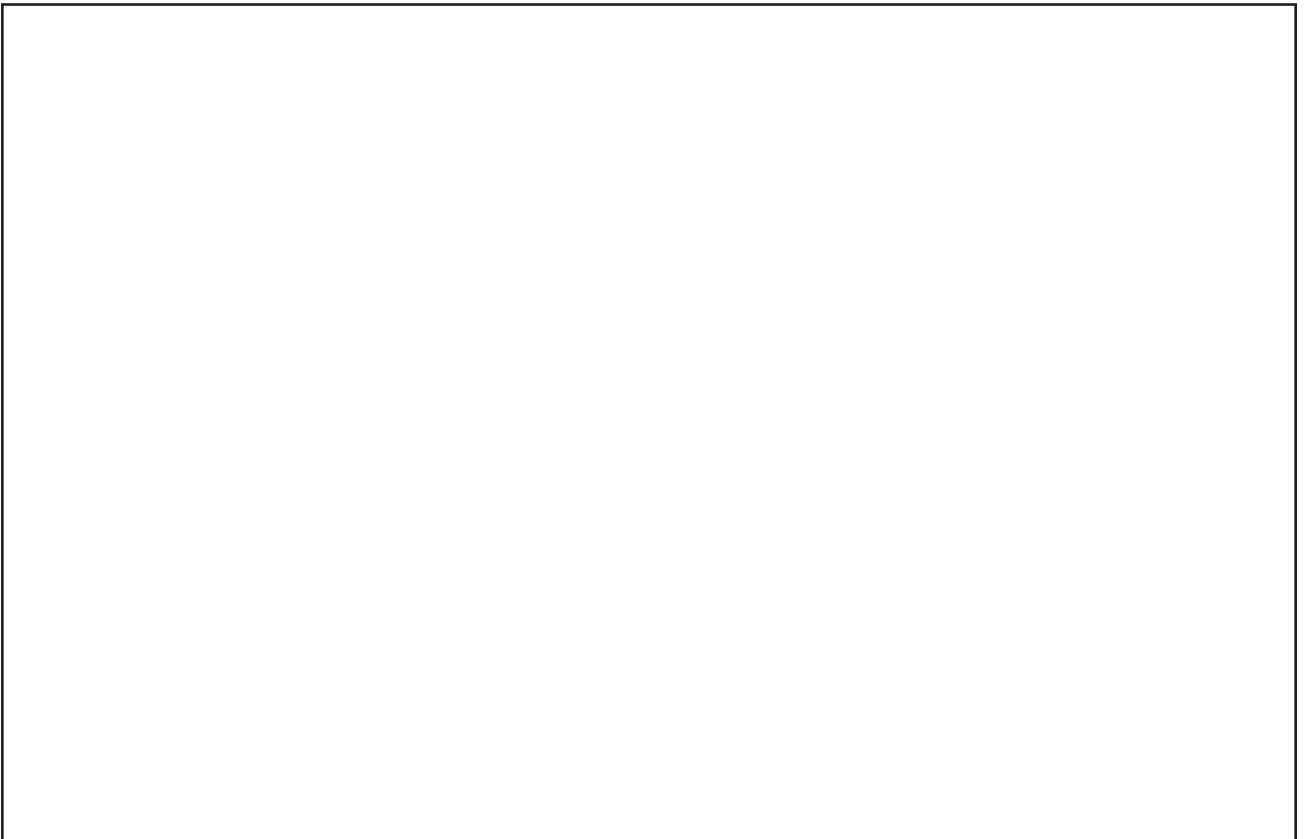
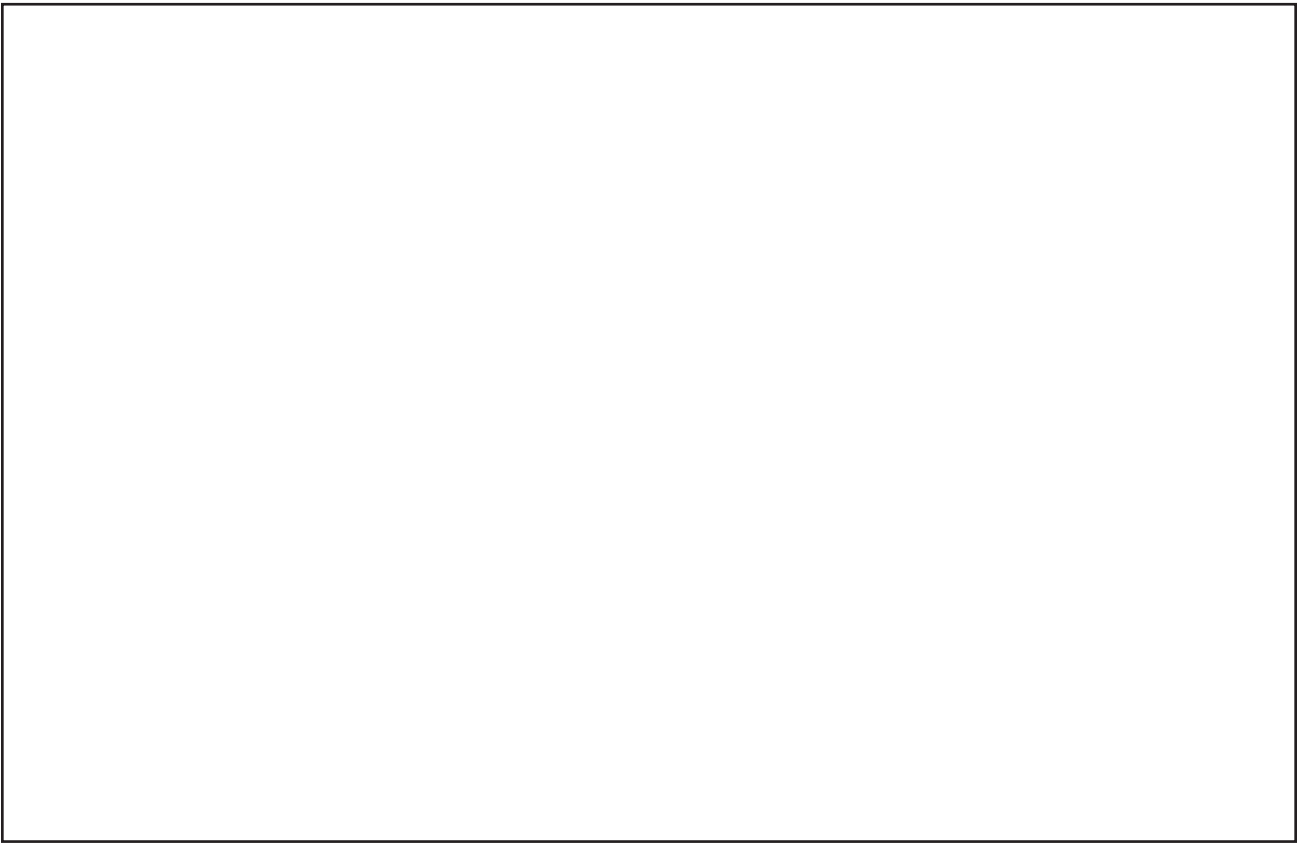
distribution of retirement funds or installment payments? Watch out for adverse income tax consequences.

The Assemblies of God Foundation provides counsel and planning options to help you reduce estate and income taxes while maximizing your ability to care for yourself. Dedicated Christian consultants are available to meet with you personally (at no charge) to help guide you in looking ahead. Unfortunately, millions of dollars are

lost by widows and widowers every day through unnecessary taxes, excess estate and probate expenses, litigation, poor investments, and con games.

In a multitude of counselors there is wisdom. On the death of a spouse, wise counsel is a necessity, not an option. 

Randall K. Barton, J.D., is president of the Assemblies of God Foundation, Springfield, Missouri.



RSC #8

Change: A Time for Laughter and Tears

BY PEGGY
MUSGROVE

Remember the story of Rip van Winkle, Washington Irving's fictional character who slept 20 years and woke up to a different world? His experience was only make-believe, but many pastors' wives feel as if they actually move to a different world in the transition to new pastoral assignments or from one type of ministry to another.

Change is all around us, for the 20th century has witnessed more changes than the 19 preceding centuries. Some sociologists believe more change will occur in the nineties than in the previous years of this century, making this the greatest era of change in human history.

Given this climate of change, when a minister moves from one congregation to another, his family may be moving to a totally different cultural environment. The minister's wife may be the one to lead the family through the adaptation to change. Her ability to cope with the change may be a key to the family's successful adjustment.

Many pastors' wives feel as if they actually move to a different world in the transition to new pastoral assignments or from one type of ministry to another.

Ministers' wives may be challenged by change early in their pastoral careers. Julie, an associate minister's wife, found her first adjustment to be from the laity to the ministry. Hers was an unusual situation, for she grew up in the church where her husband now served on staff. In a few short years she had to deal with the change from being "just a member of the youth group" to being a staff member's wife—from whom much was expected. Understanding the role change was probably her first step in coping. As she understood the role expectations, she adjusted more easily.

Kay's adjustment was experiencing a

different kind of change. Her husband had always served on a staff. She had found a place of ministry in the church with a certain amount of anonymity. Then her husband became a senior pastor, and everyone knew her. She had to relate not only to a congregation but to staff members' wives. More demands were made upon her as the wife of the senior pastor. Thus she experienced conflicts produced by the change.

Other pastors' wives report different experiences through their ministerial careers. Iris had always been a very active pastor's wife, using her educational degree in the church's educational ministries. Then came a pastoral change for her husband to a larger church. The new congregation did not need her active involvement. She had a choice—to react to the situation or respect the desires of the church. She must adjust to a change many pastors' wives experience—the differing expectations of the congregation.

Cross-country moves may bring radical adjustments for a pastoral family. Being far away from home may bring depression. A new church means new people, new doctors, new schools for the kids. Regional customs may be different, giving a sense of alienation.

However, new situations are not always negative. Shirley and her husband arrived at a new home to find a meal prepared and flowers on the table. In the living room was a rocking chair. "For you," they said. "You sit here and rock the baby. Tell us what to do while we unload the truck." Adjusting to that church was much easier for Shirley.

A change in ministry may bring different expectations from congregations.

What guidelines can a minister's wife follow to work through the maze of emotions and mental and physical challenges that accompany a ministerial change? Here are some suggestions:

AWARENESS OF THE RAMIFICATIONS OF CHANGE

Being mentally aware of what you might encounter helps greatly in dealing with any situation. A nurse prepares a child mentally for a shot by saying, "This will sting a little but not for long." The child then knows what to expect. Prepare mentally for your change by finding out as much as possible about your new situation before arrival. You will be better prepared for the next steps.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Some women fight depression following a move to a new pastorate. This can become a spiritual problem as they feel guilty for being overly emotional. Shirley admitted to struggling with this until, as she put it, "I had to say good-bye with my heart." The good-byes had all been said at the former church, but her heart was holding on to the old congregation. Relinquishing the past is a vital part of accepting the present.

ADJUSTING TO THE NEW CONGREGATION

"Finding my place in the new congregation was the hardest for me," Fran said. "Where did I fit? How could I relate?" Her adjustment came as she realized she did not have to be the previous pastor's wife—she could just be herself.

The present congregation does not want to hear about how things were done in a previous pastorate anymore than the minister's wife wants to hear about her predecessor.

Acceptance of the change, accompanied by a willingness to adjust to new and different ways, will make the transition smoother for both the congregation and the minister's family.


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APPROACHING THE CHANGE AS AN ADVENTURE

The ministry offers families many opportunities that do not come to persons in other professions. Approaching a change as an adventure will inject a sense of excitement into every new situation. New friends, a new home, new opportunities, new places to go, and things to see, if approached positively, can bring exhilaration which will overcome any homesickness or longing for the past.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE UNCHANGING GOD

"In every change, He constant will remain" is a line from an old hymn. A minister's wife may feel she left everything behind, but one thing she takes with her is God's presence. Nothing can bring stability to the heart like knowing that God, who called you to the new situation, will sustain the family in the move. No obstacles, adjustments, or challenges take Him by surprise. He knew what you would face and considered you equal to it...with His help.

"The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24, NIV). 

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



Everyone Has a Financial Dream

BY DENNIS R.
WUBBENA

We all have financial dreams of what we would like to do—for ourselves, our children, and others. Dreams come in different forms, depending upon our circumstances and the phase of life we happen to be in.

Newly married couples think of new beginnings, exciting challenges, and the prospect of children.

Those with children purchase replacement parts and deal with the transition from diapers to college.

Empty-nest households shift their attention to health care and maintenance of their standards of living through retirement.

Financial dreams are an important part of life and, while somewhat unique at each phase, are predictable and attainable when tempered with faith in God's provision, biblical financial principles, and wise counsel from those who have walked the walk before us.

This article is a blend of biblical principles and the counsel of several ministers in an attempt to help turn financial dreams into reality. The faith part is between each person and the Lord.

Why do so few people achieve their financial dreams? Primarily, there are two reasons:

1. It is difficult to *plan* for a financial dream when income is limited.
2. It is difficult to *achieve* a financial dream when others steal one's wealth.

Difficult but not impossible. God provides for all our needs all the time and often gives us excess income before a need arises. The key is to know how to balance current and future income with current and future spending patterns and to know what questions should be asked of others before making a decision to spend it.

BALANCING INCOME

To those who are just starting in the ministry, the advice of one minister of 30 years is: "Don't live beyond your means." Actually, this is good advice for everyone, regardless of how many times we've been around the sun, in or out of pulpit ministry. Unfortunately, living within our means involves the disciplined exercise of not spending all the money we have today so we can save it for the future



when we may need it more.

This is especially challenging for those beginning ministry with large school debts and limited income. To plan for a balanced income properly, we must consider the potential fluctuations of income and expenses throughout our life cycle and act accordingly.

When we choose to spend the excess funds of our early years on the present instead of saving it for the future, we make a decision that trades future needs for present wants.

We can expect to have fewer financial responsibilities prior to marriage and more financial responsibilities as we progress through marriage into family development. Therefore, it is best to save and invest money early in marriage when the responsibilities are fewer. Discretionary income loosens up after the children are grown and move out of the home, only to decrease again as we move into retirement. Therefore, it is wise to retire debt free, which must be planned well in advance of the event.

Good stewardship requires careful planning for predictable expenditures such as maternity costs, clothing, furniture, appliances, cars, a larger home, doctor bills, moving expenses, health care, burial costs, etc., many of which have uncertain timing but almost certainty in occurrence.

We plan for a balanced income by seriously considering our future and developing the dis-

ciplined lifestyle of spending less than we make. Two steps to follow are:

Step 1: Develop a budget based upon current income and necessary expenses (needs, not wants). Expect God to provide excess revenue to be saved/invested for the future. (Remember the ants.)

Step 2: Discuss future needs with your spouse and other godly counsel to identify and plan for those times in life when the expenses are expected to be equal or less than income, and there is no excess or savings for emergencies or unexpected repairs—a time when previous planning is critical.

DON'T ALLOW YOUR WEALTH TO BE STOLEN

A second important aspect of turning financial dreams into a reality is asking the right questions. Significant savings or earnings can be achieved even when you are on a limited budget.

- You can save thousands of dollars in interest simply by paying off an additional principal amount on your home mortgage each month (generally, \$50 to \$75 per month for the first few years). Low payments over a number of years may make the monthly expenses lower, but you end up spending your retirement by sending it to the banker in the form of interest.

The key is to know how to balance current and future income with current and future spending patterns.

<i>(After College)</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Couple/Kids</i>	<i>Older Adult</i>
DISCRETIONARY INCOME	Up	Down	Up then down
LIVING EXPENSES COMPARED TO TOTAL INCOME (no debt)	Down	Up	Down then up
LIVING EXPENSES COMPARED TO TOTAL INCOME (large debt)	Equal	Up	Equal then up

To those who are just starting in the ministry, the advice of one minister of 30 years is: "Don't live beyond your means."

- If you buy a car for \$10,000 on credit over a 4-year period, your car will have cost you approximately \$12,500. If you would save the equivalent to a monthly loan payment each month for 4 years, you would have \$10,000 cash to buy a car and \$2,500 to invest for the future. (See note below for the value of this savings.)

- Credit card late charges and cash advances can easily move an 18 percent interest rate over 30 percent, and the manner in which the interest is calculated (read the small print) can result in hundreds of dollars in unnecessary interest charges.

- You can earn more money on your savings account if interest is compounded more often and calculated using the

"actual balance" method. Have you asked your banker how calculations are completed? Ask him to explain the difference.

While some of the above examples may seem insignificant when looking at the small amount of money that can be saved on a monthly basis, when allowed to work in a 10 percent mutual fund, it can grow to be a significant life-cycle support.

- The \$2,500 one-time saving in the above car-loan example invested at 10 percent is worth \$113,145 in 40 years. Pretty significant when you consider that you might have handed it over to the banker in the form of interest and thought nothing of it. Since this is basically "free money," you might invest it in a higher risk fund at 15 percent and have \$669,640 in 40 years. Makes you want to pay cash for a car, doesn't it!

- Saving \$4 on lunch per week at 7 percent is worth \$9,067 over 20 years, and \$60 saved per month in gas/parking fees at 7 percent over 20 years turns into \$31,256.

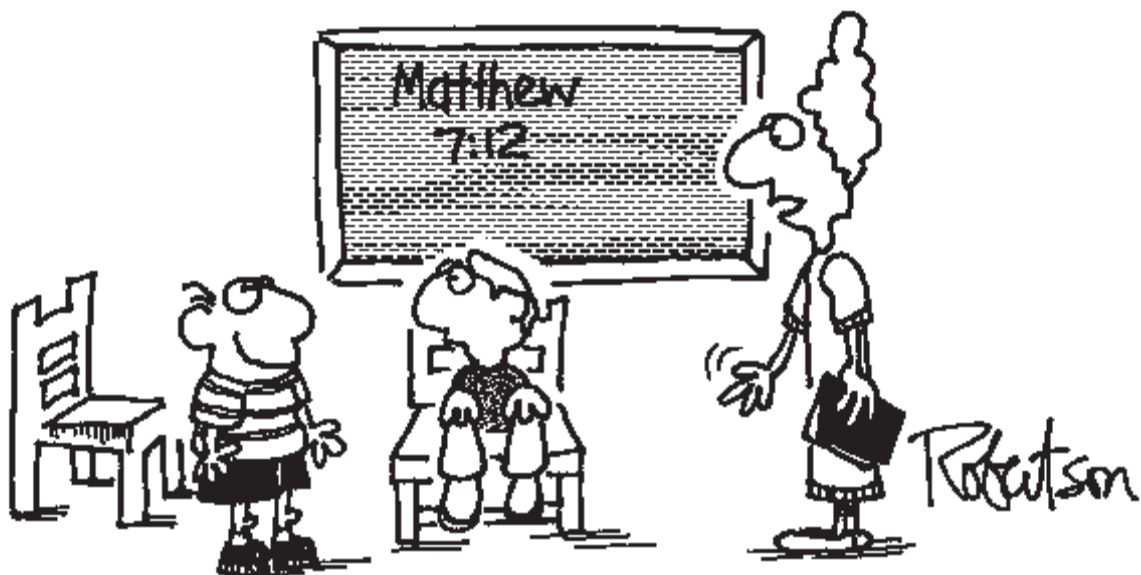
- Investing \$700 per year at a 15 percent interest rate (from ages 8 through 12) and leaving it in the fund to com-

pound in value can result in a retirement fund of \$1,264,119 at the age of 52. It may be too late for you to do this, but what an opportunity to help your children understand financial planning from a biblical perspective.

The common thread among the wise

To plan for a balanced income properly, we must consider the potential fluctuations of income and expenses throughout our life cycle and act accordingly.

counsel provided by pastors is encouragement to trust in the Lord with all your heart and plan as He has directed you to do. Many indicated, "God is faithful and will meet our needs. However, each of us has a responsibility to adjust our lifestyle to the level of income we have, while planning for the future."



NO, MILFORD, THE GOLDEN RULE IS NOT 'WHOEVER HAS THE GOLD MAKES THE RULES'!

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CONCLUSION

Jesus' teachings indicate we are to be good stewards of what He has given us


You can save thousands of dollars in interest simply by paying off an additional principal amount on your home mortgage each month.

and to consider the costs carefully. Proper stewardship includes tithing and balancing our income to our expenses as we pass through the stages of life. When we choose to spend the excess funds of our early years on the present instead of saving it for the future, we make a decision that trades future needs for present wants. Ministers identified three specific areas as times when proper stewardship is especially needed. For these times we must individually plan as well as look toward others to determine if a special need exists. These times include:

1. New pastors with excessive debt from Bible college and the responsibility of a new household and a new church.

2. Ministers in transition between churches, facing insurance costs, moving expenses, utility hookups, and delayed salary increments.

3. Ministers who are moving from semiretirement into retirement—those who have invested their lives in the ministry, who have sacrificed to give to others, and who are often faced with a retirement income below their basic needs.

Each of these times is a pivotal point in the life cycle of a minister and merits serious prayer and planning consideration—for ourselves and for others. 

Dennis R. Wubbena, Ed.D., is an associate professor of business at Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri. He and his wife are certified counselors and provide seminars on biblical financial planning.

Being There for Your Kids

BY CALVIN C. CARMEN

MY THINKING about the wholesome development of ministers' children always seems to start with the same principle of priorities: *Being there for your kids is the Lord's work.* The following is a thumbnail sketch of what I consider to be three essential components of being there for your kids in a significant way that humanizes and personalizes your relationship with them.

BEING THERE MEANS PROVIDING DISCRETIONARY TIME FOR THEM.

Many ministers and their spouses find it easy to complain about the busyness of their schedules, but many fail to consider that busy schedules are also flexible. It is a choice. A minister can take time off in an afternoon to be with a son or a daughter if doing so is a priority and he or she has planned carefully. Make time to be with your kids individually and jointly, to participate in their school events, and to support them in their special projects.

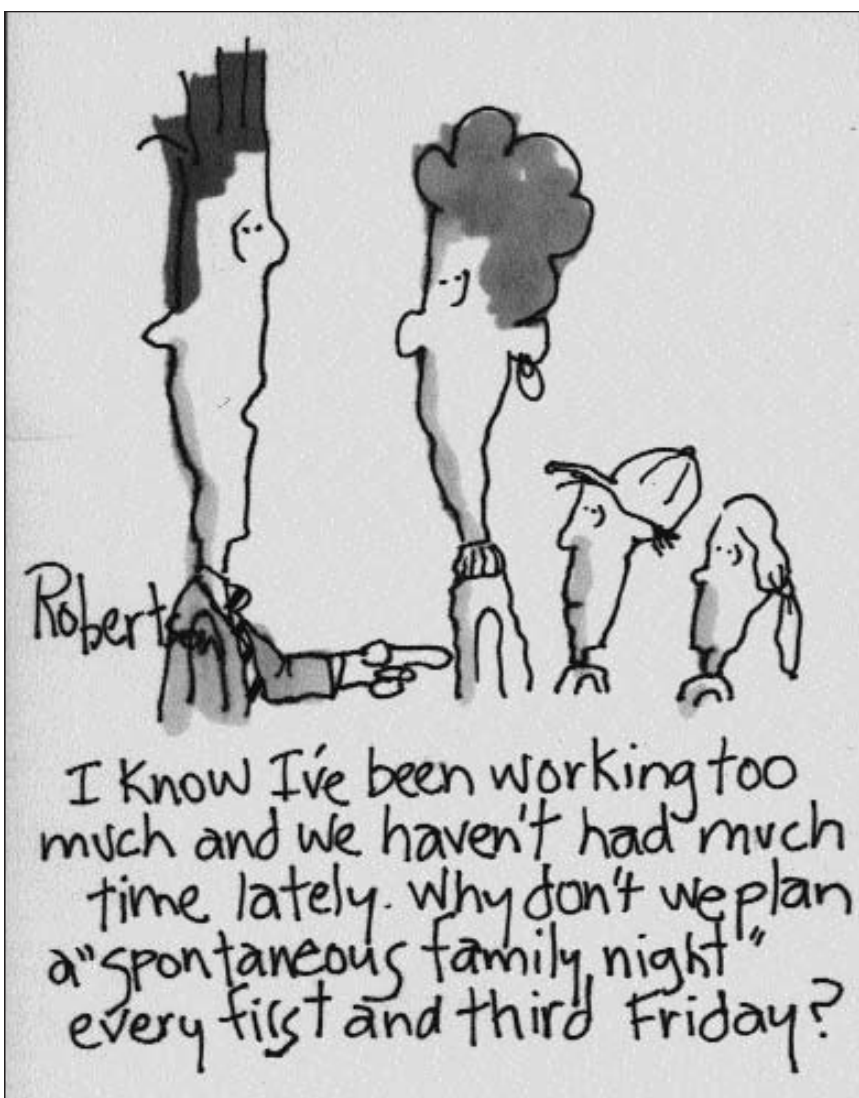
Recently, a pastor and his wife shared vivid memories of going to see a high school soccer game in which their daughter Karen was a participant. She accidentally kicked the ball into the opposing team's goal, scoring a point for the other team. The couple looked on helplessly as the insensitive girls on her team rushed back to where Karen was standing and yelled, "You jerk! You've lost the game for us!" Karen's team coach unwisely substituted someone else for her, compounding her feeling of failure and increasing her sense of

embarrassment. As she ran to the sidelines, Karen caught her dad's eye and veered in his direction. Burying her face in his stomach, she sobbed uncontrollably, "I didn't mean to do it." This pastor later left us with this dreadful cliffhanger: "What might have happened had we not made the time to be at Karen's game?"

But they were there and witnessed the

good and bad moments of the game. This pastor acknowledged that being there resulted from a carefully planned, flexible schedule.

Maintaining a family quarterly calendar in a prominent place in the home may prove to be a useful tool for projecting and developing discretionary time for your kids, who ought to be a high priority in your work for the Lord.



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BEING THERE MEANS SENSITIVITY AND ATTUNEMENT.

As a listening ear and heart are key to a good marital relationship, they are just as important in raising children in a minister's home. Children see their father or mother stand in the back of the church sanctuary, shake hands, smile, and listen to anyone who seeks him or her out. Do they feel they get the same treatment? In a home which is often in public view, it is extremely important to be attuned to open-window moments—times when a child raises the shade that is over his or her heart and lets you take a peek inside. Open-window moments are usually spontaneous and can come at rather unpredictable times.

When Ben, our college-age son, was 7 he burst into my study one evening. With tears coursing down his cheeks, he urgently declared, "Dad, we have to pray for God to do something right now!" Ben's urgent need for God to do something right now was based on the fact he had left his cherished Boston Red Sox baseball cap at a nearby ball field, and it was too dark and too late to go back and get it. Before I could suggest that we go find the cap together, Ben had grabbed my hand and was beseeching God to intervene by making the hat appear right then and there while we were praying. While he prayed for God to rescue his cap, I was mentally scrambling for a way to rescue God's integrity in view of my son's simple faith.

Hearing a quiet tapping, I looked up to see my wife Annette at the French doors to my study with Ben's baseball cap in hand. Someone obviously had brought the cap home for him. When

Ben finished his prayer and opened his eyes, I had the cap in hand, having motioned Annette to leave the room.

Ben's eyes were as large as saucers as in one smooth, practiced motion he grabbed the cap from my hand and jammed it on his head. I believe the Lord smiled and accepted Ben's next utterances as high praise. His eyes shot heavenward as though he would see the Lord incarnate through the tiles of the ceiling. "Praise You, Jesus! Thank You, Lord! Wow! How did You do that?"

Coincidence? I don't think so! A little boy in Pembroke, Massachusetts, went to bed that night believing God in heaven was personally interested in meeting his needs.

Many pastors and wives find it easy to complain about the busyness of their schedules, but many fail to consider that busy schedules are also flexible.

BEING THERE MEANS BEING REAL.


How approachable are you, Dad? Do your children experience a relationship with you in the multidimensional roles of fatherhood or as an unapproachable stained glass figurehead? Are you willing to put on an old pair of jeans and a sweatshirt and play catch with your son or daughter? With whom will your kids test their physical abilities and safely

learn good male touch if not from you? When your children are 12 or 13 years old, a time of identity validation relative to their sexuality and gender, will the rites of passage have been made easier for them through what you modeled not only as a man of God but also as their father and husband to their mother?

Being there for your kids in a real way means that, as pastor/minister, you will resist dehumanizing physical and emotional needs by overly spiritualizing them.

Some years ago, while vacationing in a remote area of northern Ontario, Canada, I was awakened in the middle of a stormy night by someone tugging on the blanket on my side of the bed. It was Ben. "Dad, I'm afraid of the thunder and lightning. I want to sleep with you and Mom." I assured him that he could go back to his bed and be safe while he slept because Jesus would be with him. Ben had a better idea: "Dad, why don't you crawl into my bunk with Jesus, and I'll just crawl into this bed with Mom!"

When our children see us as being transparently real, they become aware that we are just persons saved by grace who need ministry, too.

Unable to sleep one night, I found my way through the darkness to an easy chair in the den. I wondered where God was in the midst of the troubled ponderings of my heart. I was startled as my little 6-year-old daughter climbed into my lap and simply declared: "I love you, Daddy!" 

Calvin C. Carmen, Ph.D., is clinical director of Counseling and Diagnostic Services at Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Waxahachie, Texas.

Contemporary Parable of the Elk Hunter

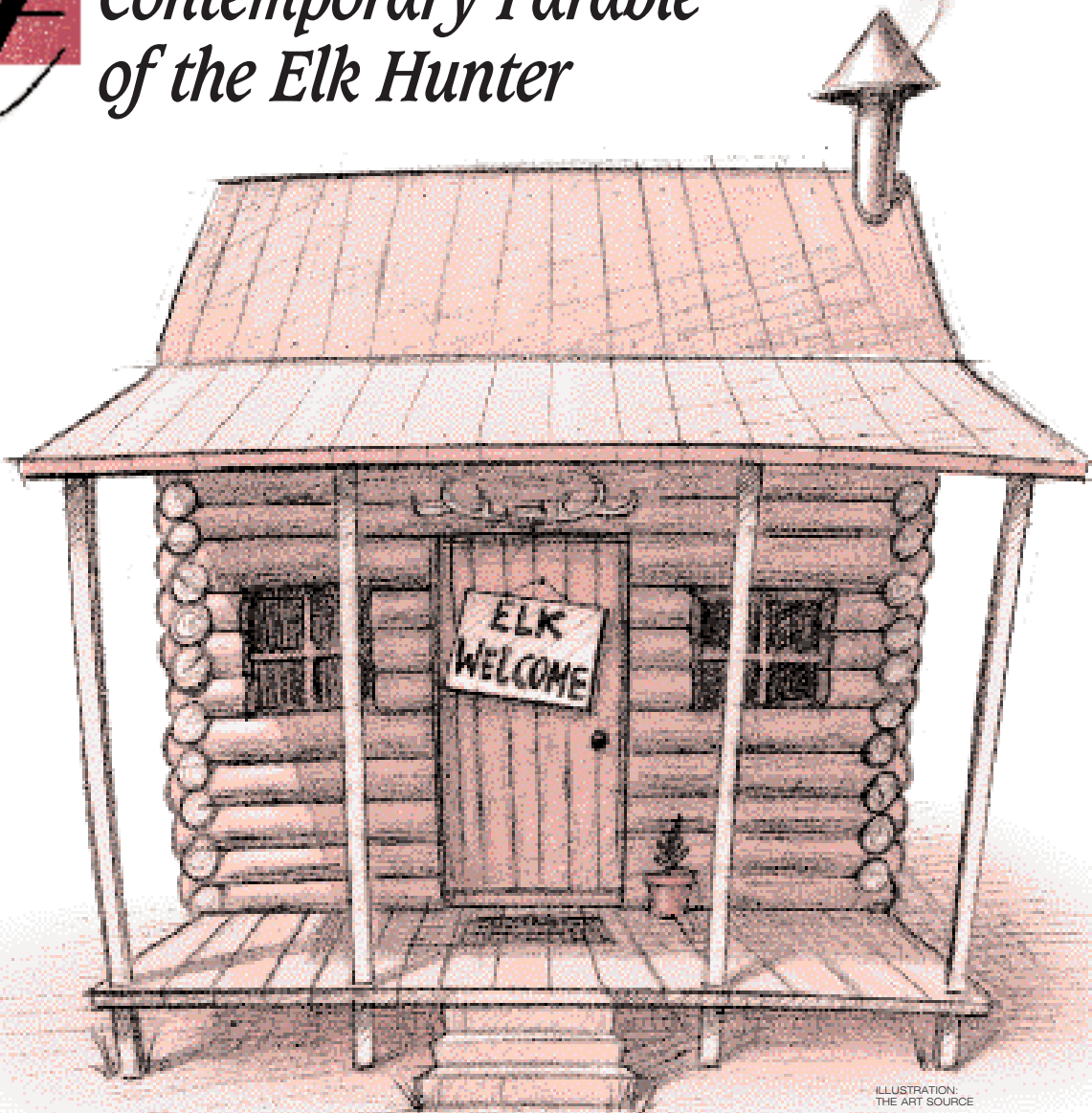


ILLUSTRATION:
THE ART SOURCE

BY DAVID MYERS

IT CAME TO PASS that a Bible-believing evangelical church in America was declining in membership and attendance and decided to hold a special meeting to consider their plight.

First, they spoke of their desire to win the lost and, as proof, discussed all the classes that had been taught over the years on how to lead people to the Lord. One of the elders offered further proof by recounting the numerous sermons pastors had preached on the need for lost people to come to the church. Another elder recounted all the study courses the church had offered on the characteristics of lost people.

A long-term member of the church recalled the times the people had gathered at the church to pray for the lost to come to the church. Finally, someone brought up how the inside of the church had even been remodeled to attract lost people and influence them to want to come to the church and join. In spite of all of this, however, the church continued to decline.

As they pondered their plight, a young man entered and asked if he might address the meeting. Though rather surprised by the young man's brash nature, the pastor allowed him to speak. Something different about the

young man caught the people's attention, for his face seemed to glow as he told this story:

"A young man living in the heartland of America decided to go elk hunting. Many of his friends hunted elk and constantly talked about the values and joys of it. After much thought and consideration, he decided he must become an elk hunter, too.

"His friends told him the first thing he must do was to purchase an elk rifle. Therefore, he went down to the sporting goods store to look at rifles and learn all he could about them. After much study and contemplation, he decided which rifle was the best for hunting elk and made his purchase.

"The proud owner of the world's finest elk hunting gun was then told he must prepare by learning all he could about elk—their characteristics, habitat, and distinctions. So, off he went to the library to study how to become an expert elkologist. In fact, over the months that he studied elkology he became such an expert that other hunters came to him with questions about elk.

"Now that he had the finest gun and was an elk expert, he decided to go where the elk were and bag his first one. After careful study and visiting with other experts, he determined that the Black Hills of South Dakota was the best place to hunt elk.

"At the appointed time our hunter went with his friends to South Dakota and rented a lodge. He noticed that none of his hunting friends had a rifle nearly as good as his, nor did they know as much about elk as he did, and he wondered how they would ever bag an elk.


"The morning of the hunt, the hunters were up early. At breakfast, our young man talked about elk, how excited he was to be hunting them, and how great it was going to be to bring one home that day. Returning to the lodge, the other hunters grabbed their rifles

and left for the hunt. Our young man, though, remembered the importance of preparation. While the others hunted, the elkologist cleaned and polished his gun, meditated on bagging an elk, and cleaned up the lodge.

"Now it was time to hunt. Our young hunter couldn't understand why the other hunters had left the beautiful lodge to go find elk to shoot. After all, didn't he have the best gun money could buy? Furthermore, weren't there elk all around where he was located in South Dakota? Finally, didn't he have a nice lodge for the elk to come to? These things being true, the elk expert concluded that elk would just naturally want to come to him.

"Thus he made a sign, "Elk Welcome," hung it on the lodge door, and waited for the elk to come to him. While he waited he thought how foolish the other hunters would feel when they returned from the hunt to see the elk waiting at the lodge.

"Our hunter waited and waited and waited. Near the end of the day, he still had seen no elk and began to wonder just what might be wrong. Maybe he needed a better rifle? a nicer lodge? a better, more professional looking sign? He was still pondering these questions when his friends returned from their hunt—loaded down with elk."

As the stranger finished telling the story, he abruptly stepped off the platform and headed for the outside door. People sitting near the aisle later recounted that they thought they heard him saying something like this as he left, never to be seen again: "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). 

David Myers, Ed.D., is pastor of Harvest Temple Assembly of God, Medford, Oklahoma, and founder and executive director of the Institute for Rural Church Development.



Unchanging Principles



In its infancy the Assemblies of God established certain formative principles as paramount. At the early gatherings of the General Council, participants clarified the church's vision and purposed that the Fellowship was to be an agency of God for evangelizing the world. The fulfillment of this purpose is still unfolding.

THE PRINCIPLE OF A GLOBAL VISION

The founding fathers of the Assemblies of God intended that all churches in the Fellowship should work in cooperation to reach the world with the gospel. Foreign missions is not an appendage of the church; it is a major mission.

In religious circles, people discuss at length the importance of being guided by a well-articulated statement of vision. The Great Commission is applicable to the Assemblies of God worldwide. Taking the gospel to unsaved billions around the globe is Christ's commission to the church and a foundational part of our purpose and vision.

THE PRINCIPLE OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER

The desired results of our vision will come to fruition only through prayer. The battle for lost mankind is not against oppressive governments, antagonistic religions, poverty, or disease. It is a fight against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Prayer pulls down strongholds. The Church is admonished to pray that the Word of the Lord "may spread rapidly and be honored" (2 Thessalonians 3:1, NIV).

We are authorized to use the power of Jesus' name in intercession. Through focused prayer in His name, people groups long resistant to the gospel are finding abundant life in Jesus Christ.

- A woman in Coffeyville, Kansas, felt impressed to pray for Mongolia. She knew nothing about the country or even where it is

located. At the same time, God was opening the doors to that previously closed country. Unknown to the woman, a couple in her church had sensed God's call to missionary ministry there. Today, in a nation where until recently salvation had never been preached, the gospel is gaining a foothold.

- The Masai people of East Africa were once considered totally unreached. But the prayers of God's people have broken down the walls of resistance. Churches are springing up across Masai territory as people eagerly accept the gospel. One Masai, Moses Ole Sayo, had such a burden of intercession for his people he often felt led to pray days at a time. Today he pastors a rapidly growing church that is planting new congregations.

- The world's Muslims are sometimes viewed as beyond the scope of God's grace. But a growing number of believers are joining a concerted effort to reach them with the gospel. As a result, God is moving, often speaking to Muslims through dreams and supernatural events. In spite of the consequences of converting to Christianity, former Muslims are embracing the gospel and resolving to risk their lives for His sake.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PRAYING FOR LABORERS

Jesus commanded us to pray for laborers in the harvest continually. I have the privilege of addressing every new group of candidate missionaries or missionary associates as they come to the Division of Foreign Missions office for orientation. I am quick to remind them that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 102

BY H.H. "SPUD"
DEMENT

The Long and Short of Missions

BY DON CORBIN

The rate of technological development over the last decade is best calculated in quantum leaps. Images of the world's remotest villages appear instantly in our living rooms via satellite and fiber optics. We hear, see, and sense world events—now.

Neither the church nor the world of missions has escaped the impact of such immediacy of information and accessibility of nations. Rather, these developments have spawned a new phenomenon in the church known as the "short-term missionary movement." By 1992, short-term trips ranging in length from 2 weeks to 2 years accounted for more than half of all evangelical foreign missionary endeavor.

In 1994 approximately 1,100 Assemblies of God short-termers served overseas. Of this number, 700 were on assignments of 2 weeks to 2 months; many of them were members of building or evangelistic teams.

It is not uncommon for churches to describe these trips as "our missionary outreach" and the participants as "our missionaries." Annual missions budgets often include sizable amounts to finance building teams or evangelism trips. In some cases, support for short-term personnel or teams from a local church is given priority over support for career missionaries. Explanations are usually something like this: "It works better for us to support our own missionary trips." Some are more pointed, saying, "We prefer the low budgets of short-termers. They give us more bang for our missionary bucks."

The rising popularity of short-term missions has stirred an active debate about its validity versus long-term, career missionary work. Just what is the *long* and *short* of missions in the nineties? Is the church faced with an *either/or* alternative, or can it be *both/and*?

THE LONG OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MISSIONS

In the fall of 1914, members of the Second General Council declared, "We dedicate ourselves to the greatest evangelism the world has ever seen." These early leaders took as a given that career missionaries would be the primary tool for fulfilling the church's missionary vision. Long-term workers have been and remain the foundation upon which Assemblies of God missionary ministry is built. They go to stay; identify with the people; learn their languages and cultures; plant solid, reproductive churches; and train men and women, guiding them to spiritual maturity.

Historically, the Assemblies of God has interpreted New Testament evangelism to mean church planting, the anticipated product of these three elements: *proclamation* (go preach), *persuasion* (make disciples), and *cultivation* (teach all things). By its very nature, such a definition implies:

- Long-term commitment of life, talents, and service.
 - Long-term credibility in relationships so vital in most of the Two-Thirds World.
 - Long-term continuity that allows sufficient time for a church to grow strong enough to be fully reproductive.
- This dedication to long-term missions

no doubt is the genius of the Assemblies of God vision. Established, self-supporting, self-propagating churches fully capable of reproduction are the vibrant source out of which nearly 150,000 local congregations have risen around the world. They are not easily produced in short blocks of time.

Advocates of short-term missions often cite Paul's ministry as their model. He remained briefly in most cities, yet left viable local churches. Granted, missionaries may stay too long in one place; yet one must remember that the people to whom Paul went spoke one language. Those who formed the core of the 14 churches he started were people who already believed the Old Testament Scriptures. As Robert McQuilkin points out:

"Today, in a world where language and cultural walls are high and often fortified, and where people often do not know and believe the Bible, the pioneer needs to follow the model of Jesus, the great apostolic missionary, who totally identified with those to whom He was sent. The conquest of the nations for Jesus will be accomplished by those who devote their lives to the cause."¹

With so many new open doors before us around the world, it remains a given that long-term missionaries are still God's primary tool for harvest. But to the exclusion of short-term volunteers? Hardly!

THE SHORT OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MISSIONS

Are short-term workers part of the Master's overarching plan for unprecedented harvest? Certainly! Granted, these evident concerns cannot be



ignored: minimal fruit, high costs, a substitute for full Great Commission obedience, the danger of creating a "missions for us" mentality, and the distraction of missionaries who host short-termers. However, several benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

- Short-termers receive unforgettable exposure, inspiration, and education that can be shared when they return home.

Some studies show that a volunteer's giving and prayer support for missions as much as doubles after a short-term experience.

- Short-termers enhance the ministries of long-term missionaries.

Buildings built, literature distributed, specialized services rendered, people trained, and churches planted are welcome contributions that the usually too-busy career missionary cannot find time to accomplish alone. Seth Barnes writes:

"We need both.... They [the long-termers] are like the ship's rudder, providing direction, steering the course. Short-term missionaries can be the wind in the sails, giving thrust and velocity to the enterprise. They bring resources, a prayer base, and tremendous enthusiasm."²


- Short-termers provide a positive example of servanthood for national believers and leaders.

A short-termer who takes his or her vacation time and money to travel to Equatorial Guinea, Albania, Mongolia, or Cambodia to build, witness, pray, or train children's ministers becomes a challenging model of giving and involvement.

- Involvement places short-termers in a greater position to hear God's call.

Some estimates show that as many as 90 percent of Assemblies of God missionaries had short-term missions experience.

During hands-on missions work, the Holy Spirit stamps a new imprint of Christ's passion on the soul of the short-termers. He or she will never be the same. Short-term ministry may be our most effective means of developing a new generation of missionaries.

Long- and short-term missions is not an *either/or* situation. God is calling for both *long-* and *short-*termers today, in proper balance, to move the harvest closer to closure. 

Don Corbin is Africa field director for the Division of Foreign Missions.

ENDNOTES:

¹Robert McQuilkin, "Six Inflammatory Questions," Part 2, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (July 1994): 259.

²Seth Barnes, "The Changing Face of the Missionary Force," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (October 1992): 381.

WORLD LINK

UNCHANGING PRINCIPLES
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 100

they are answers to prayers.

As God's people pray, an increasing number of workers are experiencing His call upon their lives. Many missionaries testify of receiving their calls to the harvest at early ages.

- A missionary to the Dominican Republic was called to missions as a 12-year-old. In a vision he saw dark-skinned faces of people speaking Spanish. Then he saw himself teaching them in their language. At that point he never questioned his call to be a missionary.


- A mother in Michigan prayed earnestly that one of her children would be a missionary. God honored her desire. Her daughter sensed God's call to missions at age 12. Today she and her family serve in Japan.

- A 13-year-old girl was called to full-time ministry while attending youth camp. The following year she made a monthly missions pledge. The seeds of missions grew, and today she and her family are missionaries to Benin.

A PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Every church has the privilege of nurturing God's call upon the lives of its

children and youth. Educational ministries wonderfully complement the implementation of God's purpose in individual lives. Each outreach promotes witness, intercession, and ministry to human need.

At every opportunity our Lord's mandate to global responsibility must be stressed. We as church leaders must continually be motivated by the lostness of mankind and the urgent task of the harvest. May we give ourselves to His call to go, to send, and to intercede. 

H.H. "Spud" DeMent is secretary of foreign missions relations in the U.S., Division of Foreign Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

*F*ocus on America

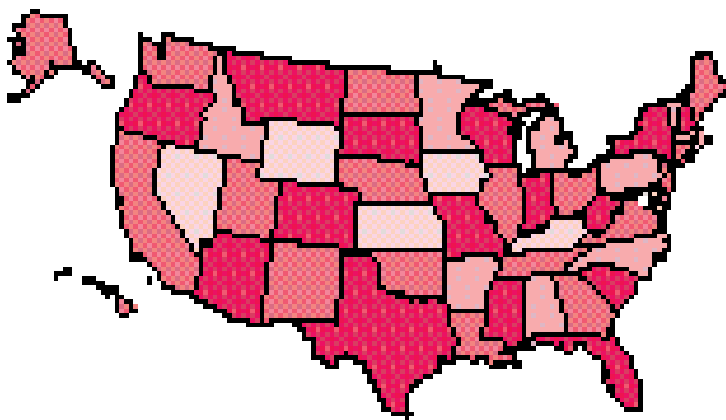
I was startled by the tight security as the pastor drove me to a well-known motel in one of our major cities. Only one entrance was open, and it was manned by an armed guard who called the front desk to verify my reservation. Later I stood in my room and looked out at a city of over 3 million people where sin seemed to be in complete control. I thought of the many races, cultures, languages, and the crime, drugs, hatred, and violence that made up that city. A sense of hopelessness filled my heart.

No one knows what to do. The educators, politicians, businessmen, and religious leaders do not have the answer. No one saw this coming. Society is perplexed, and we are totally unprepared for the horrendous mess we have in our cities. No committee can ever be assembled that can devise a plan to turn it around.


But the spiritual needs of the cities are neither a shock nor a surprise to God. The Trinity is not baffled by these problems. God knows what to do about the cities. He has a plan, a key, and a solution. He saw this coming—the immigrants, cultural clashes, crime, and drugs. And He had a plan in place before there was a need. He is not just the God of rural America, He is the God of the cities. He is not waiting for us to devise a strategy; He is waiting for us to get His strategy, and it comes by prayer and fasting.

God is going to raise up people who will have the key to America's cities. They will not be interested in turf wars, swapping sheep, or consumed by materialism. They will be people of prayer who are Kingdom-minded and have a love for all races and colors. Most, if not all, will be unknown and burst upon the scene like Moses or Paul.

Are we ready for the harvest? If we cannot handle the trickle we now have, what will we do when the flood comes? It's going to happen



with or without us. God is not going to delay the harvest while a select group gets ready. He will use whoever is available whether they fit the religious expectations of the day. Many will be like John the Baptist. They will not be welcomed in the synagogues, but they will draw large crowds by the river. They will have a fresh word from God that will electrify and captivate the lost. Supernatural events will be daily occurrences in their ministry, and they will invade and liberate territory now held by the powers of darkness. It will not be a religious or denominational thing but a Holy Ghost shaking that will culminate in a last-day harvest that will sweep millions into the Kingdom. God said He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh in the last days. This is happening around the world, and it is coming to America.

I have purposed in my heart to be one of the people who will march with God's army in this last-day battle. I cannot afford to be left standing on the sidelines. 

*BY CHARLES
E. HACKETT*

Charles E. Hackett is executive director of the Division of Home Missions, Springfield, Missouri.



THANKSGIVING—MORE THAN A HOLIDAY

Luke 24:52,53; Acts 27:33-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:18

INTRODUCTION:

Thanksgiving was a way of life for the early Christians. We should follow their example.

MESSAGE:

1. **Thanksgiving in worship** (Luke 24:52,53).

a. Thank God for a risen, ascended Savior.

b. Thank God for fellowship with other believers.

c. Thank God for His inherent glory and

majesty.

2. **Thanksgiving in trial** (Acts 27:33-36).

a. Giving thanks in the midst of trial encourages others with less faith.

b. We should thank God because, even in storms, He works all things together for our good.

c. We should thank God for His intervention that keeps our trouble from being worse.

3. **Thanksgiving in all things**

(1 Thessalonians 5:18).

a. Since it is God's will that we give thanks in all things, this obviously plays a

part in our spiritual development.

b. Sometimes we must thank God even when we do not feel there is a reason to be thankful.

c. Giving thanks to God in all things is our recognition that He is sovereign in our lives; that nothing comes to us He has not permitted.

CONCLUSION:

A thankful spirit is conducive to spiritual health. It keeps us looking for the good instead of the bad in every situation.

—Kenneth D. Barney
Springfield, Missouri

THE JOY OF HARVEST

Isaiah 9:3

MESSAGE:

1. **What is the joy of harvest?**

a. It is more than rejoicing when one sees the reward of toil.

b. It is great joy over assurances of God's faithfulness (Genesis 8:22).

c. It is the joy of expectation.

(1) The husbandman experiences joy as he waits for his harvest.

(2) We experience joy as we look for our Lord of harvest to come.

2. **What joys for the believer are as the joy of harvest?**

a. The joy of salvation.

b. The joy of answered prayer.

c. The joy of overcoming temptation.

d. The joy when we have been rendered useful.

e. The joy of fellowship with the Lord.

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon (adapted from The Congregational Beacon)

THANKSGIVING

Psalms 92:1

MESSAGE:

1. **The why of thanksgiving—"It is a good thing."**

a. It is God's will for us (Psalm 50:23).

b. To have much in common with God's people, past and future, we must make praise a large part of our lives.

c. Praise prepares the way for a fuller

revelation of God (Psalm 50:23).

2. **The measure of thanksgiving—"Giving thanks always for all things"** (Ephesians 5:20).

a. Temporal blessings (compare the first Thanksgiving with the abundance of material blessing we enjoy).

b. Spiritual blessings (2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 1:3).

3. **The secret of a life of thanksgiving.**

a. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with praise (Ephesians 5:18-20).

b. "Bring my soul out of prison that I may give thanks unto thy name" (Psalm 142:7).

—John A. Hubbard

MARY'S CHRISTMAS EXAMPLE

Luke 1:35

INTRODUCTION:

Mary's submission to the Holy Spirit and her Spirit-led life are examples for us to follow.

1. **Mary allowed the Holy Spirit to form Christ within her** (Luke 1:26-38).

a. She served an essential role in God's plan as she yielded to the Spirit.

(1) She shows the heresy of docetism which taught that Jesus only appeared to be a man.

(2) She prevents the confusion of the

Incarnation and theophany, the idea of a passing manifestation of God.

(3) She keeps us from the deism of the philosophers which advocates religion based on human reason.

(4) The reality of Christ's birth through Mary safeguards us against keeping God at a distance.

b. We too are to let the Holy Spirit form Christ within us (Romans 8:29) so we will be more like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18).

2. **Mary was a Spirit-led person.**

a. She meditated on the things of God

(Luke 2:8-19).

b. She called others to obedience to Christ (John 2:1-5).

c. She participated in the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 1:14; 2:1-4).

CONCLUSION:

We can learn from Mary to "believe more purely, to discern the Spirit more clearly, to listen to the Word more intently, and to await more creatively the hour of the Lord's coming" (George Montague).

—E.S. Caldwell, York, South Carolina



PRAYER

MESSAGE:

1. Jesus prayed.

a. For strength in the midst of the pressures of His ministry (Mark 1:32–35; Luke 5:15,16).

b. In times of decision (Luke 6:12,13).

c. With thankfulness (Mark 6:41).

d. In times of deep joy (Luke 10:21,22).

e. With faith (John 11:41,42).

f. In times of deep anguish (Mark 14:33–42).

g. For others (Luke 22:31,32; John 17:1–26).

2. The early Christians prayed.

a. To strengthen/support one another in their confusion and uncertainty as to what lay ahead (Acts 1:12–15).

b. As part of the fellowship they shared with one another—their growth as Christians (Acts 2:42–47).

c. In the face of danger, praying with faith and expectation (Acts 4:23–31).

d. In times of decision (Acts 13:1–3).

e. In the face of persecution choosing

to pray rather than worry (Acts 16:22–25).

f. For one another (Ephesians 3:13–21; Philippians 1:4).

3. Prayer in our lives today.

a. When (Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

b. Why and for what.

(1) To praise God (Psalm 63:3).

(2) For our needs (Ephesians 6:18).

(3) For help in overcoming worries, for peace (Psalm 55:22; Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7).

(4) For guidance and direction (James 1:5–8).

(5) For help in daily tasks (Psalm 37:5; Colossians 2:6).

(6) For freedom from guilt, forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

(7) For others (Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; James 5:16).

(8) For those in government (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

(9) For our nation (2 Chronicles 7:14).

c. How.

(1) In assurance (1 John 5:14,15).

(2) Expectantly (Matthew 7:7,8; James 1:5–8).

(3) In faith (John 14:13,14; 15:7,16).

(4) Free from anger and resentment (1 Timothy 2:8).

(5) Together (Psalm 34:3; Matthew 18:20; Colossians 3:16).

(6) Persistently (Luke 11:5–10; Colossians 4:2).

(7) In line with God's will (Ephesians 6:18; 1 John 5:14,15).

(8) With thankfulness (Philippians 4:6; Colossians 2:7; 4:2).

4. Promises.

a. "And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you" (James 4:8, *Living Bible*).

b. "He is close to all who call on him sincerely" (Psalm 145:18, *Living Bible*).

—Marlene J. Bagnall
Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania

THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22

INTRODUCTION:

The first manifestation of the Spirit-filled life is *love* (Galatians 5:22).

Love has many meanings: *Eros* means sexual love. *Phileo* is the kind of love you have for your friends, etc. *Agape* means unconditional love manifested by God to us or by us to our families—unearned, unreturned, whether the person deserves it (e.g., Romans 5:8, "...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us").

It is this *agape* love that we are talking about—the 1 Corinthians 13 love and the Galatians 5:22 love. It comes from spiritual maturity and gives of itself to benefit others.

MESSAGE:

1. It may cost some time, some money, some work, but it is worth it (Galatians 5:13).

2. It is more costly when *agape* love is withheld.

a. When love is withheld in the *church*, the congregation pays the price of:

(1) Disunity (1 Corinthians 1:10,11).

(2) Jealousy (1 Corinthians 3:3).

(3) Immaturity (1 Corinthians 3:1,2).

(4) Favoritism (James 2:1–10).

(5) Judgmentalism (Romans 14).

b. When love is withheld in the *family*, the members pay the price of:

(1) Anger (Ephesians 6:4).

(2) Insecurity in the children's lives (Colossians 3:21).

(3) The parents' unanswered prayers (1 Peter 3:7).

c. When love is withheld from *others*, there is a price to pay.

(1) One's spiritual life is affected.

(2) Fellowship with God is broken.

(3) Emotional life is upset.

(4) One becomes tense and irritable.

(5) Eventually a person feels guilty.

(6) A person soon develops physical symptoms (e.g., ulcers, sleeplessness).

d. What began as a conscious decision not to manifest *agape* love affects the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical life. Yes, love is costly, but not to love is devastating.

3. Love has rewards.

Love begets love. To receive love, one must give love. Enter a church where love is present and flowing and your own love flows. Enter a church where friction and division are present, and they stop the flow of love.

The same is true in a home and a family.

4. Love confirms in our lives that we are children of God.

a. A loving person demonstrates and proves his relationship to God (1 John 4:7,8).

b. A loving person demonstrates that he is a disciple of Christ (John 13:35).

c. A loving person demonstrates that he is in fellowship with God (1 John 2:9–11).

CONCLUSION:

It is only as we live in love that we can fulfill the will of God for our lives. We must be love-inspired, love-driven, and love-mastered. Without it we are just a lot of noise (1 Corinthians 13).

—James R. Swanson
Costa Mesa, California



WAIT ON THE LORD

INTRODUCTION:

At times we hinder the progress of the Lord's work by our activity. We need, instead, to wait for His timing, His enablement, and His guidance.

MESSAGE:

1. **Wait on the Lord—He will strengthen you** (Psalm 27:14).

2. **Wait on the Lord—He will exalt you** (Psalm 37:34).

3. **Wait on the Lord—He will not disappoint you** (Psalm 62:5,6).

4. **Wait on the Lord—He will save you** (Proverbs 20:22).

5. **Wait on the Lord—He will sustain you** (Isaiah 40:31).

6. **Wait on the Lord—He will enable you**

(Acts 1:4,8).

7. **Wait on the Lord—He will come from heaven** (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

CONCLUSION:

Lord, give me patience to wait on You so I will not, as Saul, "force" myself to move ahead of Your will. (See 1 Samuel 13:12.)

—H. Paul Holdridge, Plainview, Texas

THE BIRTH OF A KING

Micah 5:2

MESSAGE:

1. **The place of His birth**

a. Speaks of His provision for man's need—Bethlehem ("house of bread")

b. Speaks of His power to meet man's

need—Ephrathah ("place of fruitfulness")

2. **The purpose of His birth**

a. To be the obedient Servant before God—"shall he come forth *unto me*"

b. To be the omnipotent Sovereign over man—"to be ruler in Israel"

3. **The Person who was born**

a. He was preexistent—"whose goings forth have been from of old"

b. He was eternal—"from everlasting"

—James T. Dyet

THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS

Luke 1:26-38

INTRODUCTION:

The entrance of God into human history as a man is the greatest subject that can occupy the human mind.

MESSAGE:

1. **He shall be great** (verse 32).

a. God's message was a paradox, for Christ was born in a manger, grew up in an obscure village which had a bad reputation, and was executed by His enemies at an early age.

b. Bethlehem was only the place of His human origin; He was great because He came from heaven on the greatest mission in history.

c. His greatness was foreseen by the

Old Testament prophets and is the subject of many prophecies. Great men do not arrive unannounced.

2. **He shall reign** (verse 33).

a. David's throne has been empty for centuries, but God promised that it should have a permanent occupant.

b. "Forever...no end" are the expressions the angel used in describing the duration of His kingdom.

c. This promise is a confirmation of the prophecy of Psalm 2:6: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

3. **He shall be called the Son of God** (verse 35).

a. Only by incarnating himself could God provide man with a perfect sacrifice for sin.

b. "How shall this be?" was the natural inquiry of the human mind. The Virgin Birth was a miracle incomprehensible to natural reason.

c. The entire Godhead was involved in this miracle: (1) the Holy Ghost; (2) the Highest—the Father; (3) "that holy thing"—the Son.

CONCLUSION:

It is not enough to be amazed at the miracle of the Virgin Birth. To enjoy the right relationship with God, we must accept as our Savior the God-man who came to Bethlehem as a baby.

—Kenneth D. Barney
Springfield, Missouri

RICK HAS A NEW HEADLINE TO PUT IN HERE

Put new article in here.



CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

America is comprised of many colorful cultures. We should be concerned to reach them all for Christ.

God wants to bring people together from all walks of life, economic backgrounds and levels, and ethnic strains to make up the Church. Churches should be global in outreach in both foreign and home missions, including the local community.

The past few years we have scheduled a special Sunday night service each December to accent the Christian ministry groups in our congregation. We begin with the chorus, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," while spotlighting a world globe or a large world map.

Church families featured included a Filipino man, his wife, and their three daughters; all were dressed in native holiday formal wear. They performed a short skit, reading the Christmas story in Tagalog, the main dialect in their native language.

In native dress, a lady from Nigeria told about Christmas customs and sang a Christmas song in her native language.

A German native shared Christmas traditions in Germany.

A family in native dress from Puerto Rico sang lively Latino-style Christmas songs accompanied by guitar, tambourine, and other percussion instruments.

We concluded with color slides of our missionaries whom we support as well as military personnel from our church family.

Services like this are of interest to the local newspaper editors. They ran a full-color page Christmas Day featuring photos of our "Christmas Around the World" service.

Why not go global for your next Sunday night service?

—Douglas R. Rose
Belleville, Illinois

COUPLES FELLOWSHIP

Young couples grow best when they are surrounded by other couples. Within the church, a couples fellowship provides a place to socialize, share, and grow together spiritually. It can also be fun and informative if plans are organized ahead of time.

First, decide the theme of a given time of fellowship. An insurance agent could discuss the importance of life insurance. A CPA could introduce budget ideas. An area pastor could speak on God's design for marriage. Other get-togethers could be relaxed with a few table games.

Second, decide what food you will have. If you plan to eat at a nice restaurant, ask these questions: Does the restaurant have a private meeting room? Is it within the financial reach of each one? Does everyone know where it is? If you have a potluck dinner, decide whether to go Mexican, Italian, or some other theme; assign each couple to bring a specified dish. For a little flair have the men serve at one of the fellowships.

Third, arrange for some trusted youth from the church to watch the couples' children. Finding baby-sitters is often a problem for couples.

Fourth, make sure everyone is invited, both inside and outside the church. This is a wonderful way to break new families into the mode of the church family.

Fifth, have a good time, avoid serious discussions, and don't do any marriage counseling. The more they enjoy and benefit from the couples fellowship, the more they will return.

—Jim Laudell
Watts, Oklahoma

THE MERCY TENT

Frustrated by the lack of nonbeliever attendance during previous church-sponsored tent meetings, House of Praise Ministries decided to add a little twist, a mercy tent.

Many of the people in the neighborhood where the meetings were held had low incomes, so the church decided to meet not only spiritual but physical needs. We purchased a 20- by 30-foot auxiliary tent to serve as the distribution center for food and clothing for those in need. After the tent service each evening, they had the opportunity to receive a free bag of food and free used clothing at the mercy tent.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MERCY TENT

1. *Begin early.* It is imperative to begin collecting donations early. Starting at least 3 months before your event will give

enough time to collect the necessary food. Each evening we gave out approximately 30 bags of food and numerous pieces of clothing.

2. *Look outside your congregation.* Many local supermarkets were happy to donate damaged nonperishable items and day-old bread. Most of them only required a letter written on church letterhead requesting the items a few months before the event.

Church-operated pantries may also donate food to your tent. Local authorities can help you obtain the information necessary to purchase food through your local food bank.

You may want to contact local retail and consignment clothing stores to see if they would be willing to make donations. This past year we found a local clothing store willing to donate certain returned or slightly damaged clothing.



3. *Be specific.* Clearly communicate to your congregation and organizations the items you need and specify perishable or nonperishable. This will depend on the amount of freezer storage space you have.

Make a weekly inventory of collected items. Collect enough variety to provide a quality bag of food each evening to those in need. Observe the same guidelines for collecting and inventorying specific clothing.

4. *Recruit volunteers.* Volunteers will be needed to help organize, inspect, and inventory items collected. Each evening you will also need volunteers to help transport and distribute the food and clothing.

5. *Keep control.* An organized and well-planned distribution method will assure that all receive the help they need.

We have found that the food distribution works best when one bag of food per family per evening is made available. Each

bag contains enough food for approximately 1 day.

Clothing distribution has worked best when a selection of men's, women's, and children's clothing is in place each evening. Those in need are then allowed to take what clothing they need.

6. *Follow-up.* Meeting people's physical needs only brings temporary relief to their inward pain and hardship. Use this avenue of ministry to give them the true Bread of Life. An effective follow-up is a food-and-clothing voucher. The voucher is a 3- by 5-inch card that requires the recipients to give their names, addresses, and phone numbers. While some will give false information, others will fill out the vouchers correctly. This will help you follow up visitors who attend your event.

The mercy tent is a great way for churches of all sizes to share Christ's love—an aspect of evangelism that encourages everyone's participation.

—Bob Hulett, Jr.
Castleton, New York

EVANGELIZING THE OLD YOUTH GROUP

Our church is not unusual in that we became good at scheduling activities for

our kids, but once they turned 18 we labeled them adults and forgot about them.

Many went off to college. Some got married. Others got into trouble. And most of them dropped out of church and fell away from God.

Disturbed by this, our pastor asked my wife and me to consider starting an outreach to those we'd lost touch with over the years.

I was not optimistic. We told the pastor we'd work it for 3 months, then evaluate; but in spite of me, the group has flourished.

We contacted our former youth pastor for names of those who had been in the youth group 10 years before. In developing the list we discovered that about 80 percent were unchurched.

Four were still part of our church and knew how to reach many of the others. Parents of others were still in our church and thrilled when we asked for their son's or daughter's address and telephone number.

These young men and women had some hard feelings about not having a place to plug in after leaving the youth group and returning from college and



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military service.

We sensed it would be difficult to get them through the church doors again. The psychological barrier might keep them away, so we had our first Sunday meeting at the McDonald's near the church. It was less threatening and a relaxed atmosphere to get reacquainted with old friends.

Invitations went out through the mail, by telephone, and a one-page newsletter. One young woman was so excited when we called, she couldn't stop talking.

It wasn't long before they started opening up to the group and telling each other what was going on in their lives. Some had deep hurts, and though their problems were manifested in different ways, the bottom line was, they were lonely and needed their Christian friends and God.

They named themselves "Unplugged," because it described their status in life and the church. Most hadn't been living for the Lord and had developed friendships with the unsaved. From the outset, young men and women who had never been in church were introduced to Christ.

It is amazing how far they have come. These people love each other, pick each other up when another is down, and are always looking for opportunities to share the love of the Lord. All they needed was a place to get plugged in.

—Barry Copeland, Springfield, Missouri

REACHING YOUTH: MODERN METHOD

God began to birth in my heart, as youth pastor, a vision that would serve a twofold purpose: (1) be a place Christian teens could hang out, and (2) present the gospel to the unsaved in an uncompromised, yet fresh and innovative way. It would use relevant methods (drama, video, lights, music) to communicate the life-changing truth of Jesus Christ in a language teens speak—fast-paced, intense creativity. Thus *The River*—a party with a purpose—was born. Meetings can be held weekly, biweekly, or monthly—depending on your schedule, available help, and level of creativity.

As teenagers pull into the parking lot, several youth with flashlights serve as our CPAs (car parking attendants) to direct them to available spots. The doors open at

8 p.m.—not a minute before. Those who arrive early form a line down the sidewalk to the parking lot. When the double doors open, ushers collect tickets as the teens enter. Prior to the event members of the youth group pass out tickets to their unsaved friends at school or elsewhere. Scalpers are on hand to give tickets to anyone standing in line without one. (Teens stand in line for concerts, movies, etc. Why not for a life-changing event? Of course, our tickets are free, but each person must have one to get in.)

The auditorium is dark except for the larger-than-life video projected on the wall. Music plays from the sound system as teens mingle and find seats. The doors close, lights go out, and the night begins. The live band kicks in as the youth pastor takes the stage to welcome everyone. After a couple of giveaways, teens settle in their seats to focus on the night's theme, "Do You Have Reservations?" We have a couple of *Saturday Night Live*-style skits and a hilarious homemade video illustrating different circumstances that require reservations (e.g., restaurant, airline terminal, health club).

The worship leader leads the teens in a time of intense worship. The youth pastor

again takes the stage. No hype. No loud music. No silly skits. It's time to get down to business. He begins talking about reservations based on Revelation 21:27. The altar call is given, and those who respond are led to another room where they meet one-on-one with counselors who explain the plan of salvation, lead them in prayer, and get information for follow-up.

We have seen God move tremendously through this outreach. The local news ran a story on *The River* as an "alternative to keep kids off the street." It is exciting to see God move in young people's hearts and to see them impact their world for Christ.

—Scotty Gibbons
Springfield, Missouri

GETTING ACQUAINTED IN A NEW PASTORATE

A new pastorate means learning new faces, names, family relationships—everything.

Upon assuming a new pastorate, I immediately scheduled one-on-one interviews with individuals and entire families in my office.

A special confidential form was designed that covered such areas as



addresses; phone numbers; employment; spiritual backgrounds; family information—names, ages, birthdates, anniversaries, etc.; and ministry positions held.

Questionnaires were sent to everyone before our joint session. In the process, individuals were able to ask me questions, and important pastor-parishioner relationships were formed.

Almost everyone made an appointment to meet the pastor. Naturally, I went to the homes of shut-ins and others who were unable to come to the office.

This activity greatly enhanced bonding in my new pastorate. For churches of less than 200 this method for becoming acquainted with the membership works.

—Roger Loomis
Burton, Ohio

WRITERS GUILD

Mirroring the purpose of a medieval trade guild, a church-sponsored writers guild offers opportunities to practice and develop skills necessary to the specific craft of writing, as well as opportunities to use and share that gift in a variety of ways.

A writers guild can be started by anyone who is interested, loves words, and

has something to share—a teacher, librarian, businessperson with unusual family stories to tell, a person of any age with a testimony to share, etc. Since some structure helps a group function more efficiently, a writers guild needs a facilitator or perhaps cofacilitators who set meeting dates, times, topics; secure related materials such as information on Christian markets, writing magazines for Christian writers, review of writing basics (grammar, punctuation, etc.); how to submit manuscripts, etc.; and invite local writers to present topics of interest to your group.

When group members are comfortable doing so, they might choose to share their writing in a writers workshop format that emphasizes strengths of writing and, in a very nonthreatening, positive way, offers suggestions for writers. The key is to provide what writers need: an interesting, supportive, and positive environment without rejection.

Our writers guild has not only provided the activities listed above but also put together booklets of Christmas devotions (December 1 through January 1) written by guild members and others in the congregation. Each provided a Scripture reading, a devotional or testimony, and a prayer.

One booklet, entitled “Risen with Healing in His Wings,” contained testimonies of miracles God has performed in our church members’ lives.

The guild has also sponsored weekend writing workshops featuring respected editors, writers of Bible study materials, local reporters, etc. These events were open and publicized to all churches in the central Iowa area as well as to all Assemblies of God churches in our district.

Maybe you’re looking for a good way to share letters from missionaries. The writers guild could assume that responsibility on a regular basis (monthly, every other month, once a quarter, etc.). Perhaps you realize that church activities would run more smoothly with better communication, but you just don’t have the time or the staff to put out a regular newsletter. A writers guild could put a newsletter together on a convenient basis; if postage is a problem, the newsletter might go out every other month or mailed only to shut-ins—the church family could pick up their copies the last Sunday of each month.

Possibilities are endless. Going beyond the usual announcements, your writers might focus on one Sunday school class, Wednesday night activity, regular church activity, etc. Include information about the class content, the leader, and how teaching/leading the activity benefited that person; a summary of a visit to the class; comments from class members, etc. Each issue might contain a church history column. The newsletter could be a means of introducing new families, helping people get to know deacons and other leaders, etc.

—John M. Palmer
Des Moines, Iowa

MINISTRY IDEAS WANTED

Enrichment will pay up to \$50, depending on the length, for each published account of a ministry idea. Send your ideas, along with a detailed description, to: Ministry Ideas That Work, *Enrichment*, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to Enrichment@ag.org.



SPECIAL DAYS

With the holiday season and choir musicals approaching, I am reminded of the music director who congratulated his pianist for her sacrifice in never missing a rehearsal for the Christmas musical. The pianist responded, "I thought it was the least I could do, since I will be unable to attend the performance."

—*The Pastor's Confidential*

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

How does one explain the greatness of the Man whose birthday we celebrate each year on December 25? Let's make a humble attempt:

He was born in a stable, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in an obscure village; worked as a carpenter until He was 30; and then became an itinerant preacher for 3 years.

He never went to college.

He never wrote a book.

He never held an office.

He never owned a home.

He never had a family.

He never had a lot of money.

He never traveled farther than 200 miles from His place of birth.

He never accomplished any of the things that usually mark greatness.

He had no credentials but himself.

Although He spoke with great authority, taught with unusual wisdom, and was widely accepted by the people, the religious leaders of His day opposed Him. While He was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. He was betrayed by a friend, abandoned by His associates, and turned over to His enemies. He was falsely accused, endured the mockery of a trial, and was unjustly condemned to die.

He was crucified between two thieves, and while He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth—His clothing. When He was dead, He was buried in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race, and the cornerstone of world progress.

And all the armies that ever marched;

And all the navies that ever sailed;

And all the parliaments that ever sat;
And all the kings that ever reigned, put
together...

Have not affected the life of man upon
earth as has that one solitary life!

—*Phillip Brooks as adapted*

by George Clarke Peck and printed in

Moments for Christmas

© *New Leaf Press, 1993.*

LOVE THAT ABSORBS SUFFERING

A supposedly true story from the time of Oliver Cromwell in England tells of a young soldier who had been tried in military court and sentenced to death. He was to be shot at the "ringing of the curfew bell." His fiancée climbed the bell tower several hours before curfew time and tied herself to the bell's huge clapper.

At curfew time, when only muted sounds came from the bell tower, Cromwell demanded to know why the bell was not ringing. His soldiers investigated, found

the young woman cut and bleeding from being knocked back and forth against the great bell, and brought her down.

Cromwell was so impressed with her willingness to suffer in behalf of someone she loved that he dismissed the soldier, saying, "Curfew shall not ring tonight."

—*Selected*

I SEE LOVE

In a tropical country where many Americans were living several years ago, a terrifying eye disease struck. Primarily it affected children. American children were more vulnerable because of a deficiency in their immune systems. The signs were unmistakable. Five days after the first symptoms appeared the child went blind. Parents were understandably terrified.

One morning one of the American mothers awoke to see all the symptoms of the dreaded disease in her little girl's eyes. She took her to the doctor only to be told



that there was no hope.

Holding back the tears, the mother took her daughter by the hand and walked her to a nearby field. She picked up her child and held her. Again and again she told her to notice the sunlight and how it lit up the landscape.

Then they knelt among yellow flowers. The mother picked one, smelled its perfume with her daughter, and carefully examined the lovely, complicated structure that only God could make.

She then held the little girl up to her face. "Look at me," she commanded gently. "What color is my hair?"

"Black, Mommy. Black and pretty."

"And my eyes—look at them. What color are they?"

"Blue, blue like the sky," she said, patting her mother's face with a childish affection.

The mother drew the little girl closer to her breast and held her tightly. Then she looked into her daughter's eyes. "Now, Sweetheart, what do you see in my eyes?"

"Love, Mommy. I see love!"

Knowing that blindness was inevitable, the mother wanted her precious child to remember forever three of God's most lovely gifts: light, beauty, and love.

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LOVE

George Crane, newspaper columnist and minister, tells of a wife, full of hatred toward her husband, who came into his office. "I not only want to get rid of him; I want to get even," she said. "Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has hurt me."

Crane suggested an ingenious plan: "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him."

With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful! Beautiful! Will he ever be surprised!"

And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if" for 2 months, she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing.

When she didn't return, Crane called her. "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?"

"Divorce?" she asked. "Never! I discovered I really do love him."

Her actions had changed her feelings. Motions resulted in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often-repeated deeds.

—As cited in *Leadership*, 1983

FACING YOUR FEARS

Max Lucado narrates a legend from India about a mouse that was terrified of cats.

The mouse met a magician, who agreed to transform him into a cat. That settled his fears until the cat met a dog. He returned to the magician and asked him to turn him into a dog. The magician granted his wish.

The mouse-turned-cat-turned-dog then met a tiger. He returned to the magician, and again the magician granted his wish to become that which he feared—a tiger. But when the tiger returned to the magician to complain he had met a hunter, the magician refused to help. "I will make you into a mouse again, for though you have a tiger's body, you still have the heart of a mouse."

If we allow fear to take hold of us, we will become that which we fear the most.

—Max Lucado,

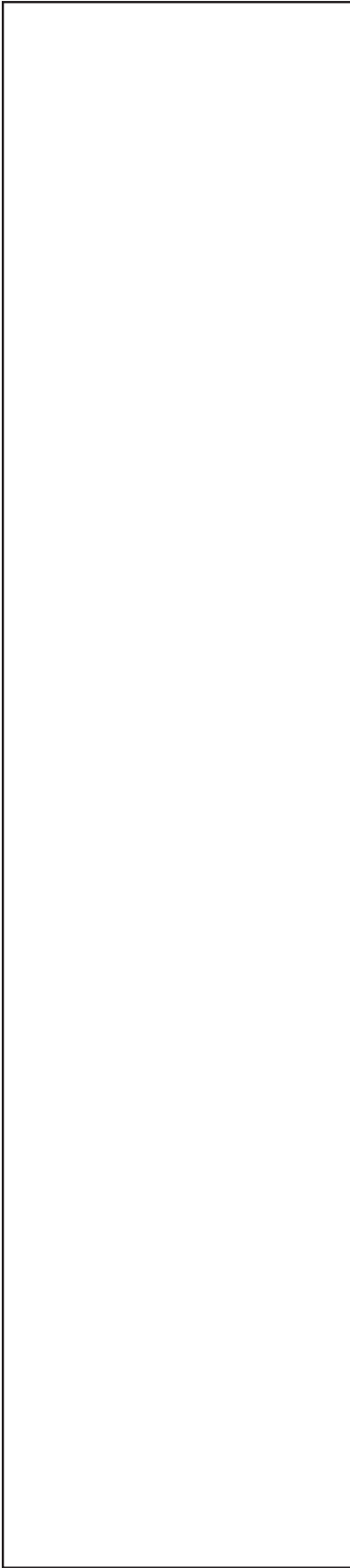
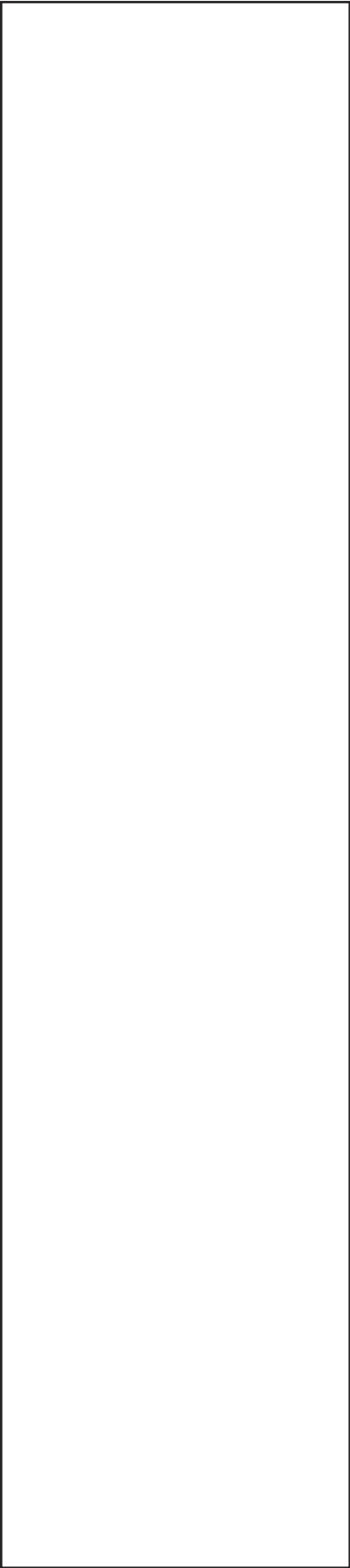
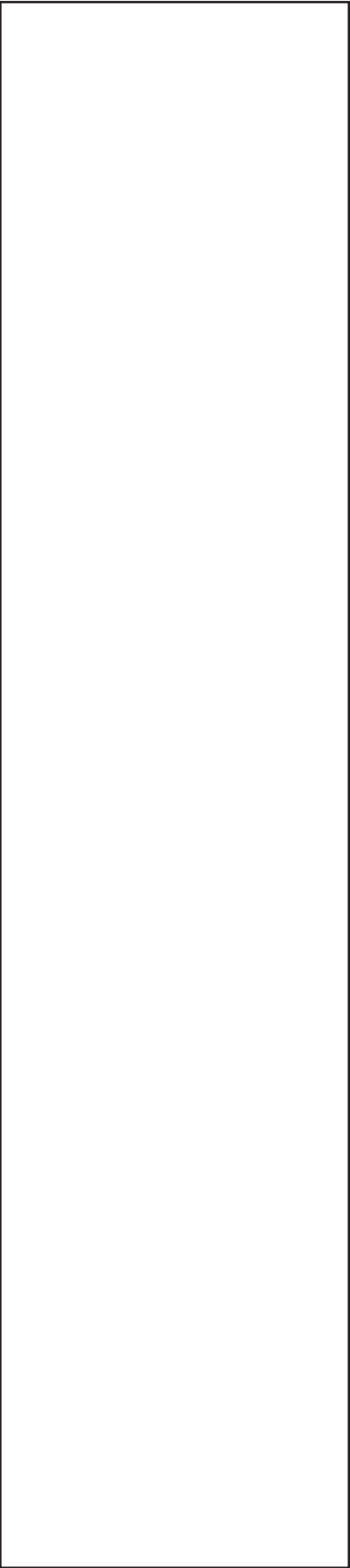
Applause from Heaven,
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SURE, TAKE IT WITH YOU

Everyone knew Old Man Jones was a miser. His fellow church members, his pastor, and his wife all tried to counsel him. "You can't take it with you," they told him. But as he neared the end of his life, he couldn't bear to think he would have to leave behind everything he had worked for all his life.

Finally he came up with a scheme. He withdrew all his cash and bought gold

RSC #11





coins, which he sewed into the pockets of his black suit.

"When I die," he told his wife, "be sure to lay me out in my black suit."

His wife followed his instructions.

When Jones, wearing his black suit, opened his eyes in heaven he immediately checked the pockets. To his delight he found his pockets full of shining gold coins. "You can!" he shouted. "You can take it with you."

Two nearby angels looked at him with puzzled expressions.

"That's great," one replied. "But what will you do with a pocketful of pavement?"

—End-Time News and Prophecy,
September 1993

OLYMPIC RACE

In 1968 Tanzania selected John Stephen Akhwari to represent the country in the Mexico City Olympics because he had proved he was the fastest marathon runner in Tanzania. With dreams of winning the gold medal in the marathon, a race of endurance, Akhwari went to Mexico City.

Along the race course he fell and injured his leg. However, shattered dreams did not hinder his determination. With his

right leg bloody and bandaged, he entered the stadium more than an hour behind the winner. When asked why he didn't stop along the course, he said: "My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race—they sent me to finish the race."

One might easily have asked Jesus why He didn't stop when His dreams were wrecked. His reply would have been, "I was not sent just to start a work but to finish it." He did that as He cried to His Father, "It is finished!"

—Tommy Winstead, Stafford, Virginia.

*Illustration based on article
in Sports Illustrated,
February 26, 1996.*

CHRISTMAS EVERYWHERE

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!

Christmas in lands of the fir tree and pine,

Christmas in lands of the palm tree and vine,

Christmas where snow peaks stand solemn and white,

Christmas where cornfields stand sunny and bright.

Christmas where children are hopeful and gay,

Christmas where old men are patient and gray,

Christmas where peace, like a dove in his flight,

Broods o'er brave men in the thick of the fight;

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!

For the Christ child who comes is the Master of all;

No place too great, no cottage too small.

—Phillips Brooks

THE PUSHY CHURCH

Just a few days before Christmas two ladies stood looking into a department store window at a large display of the manger scene with clay figures of the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Wise Men, and the animals. Disgustedly, one lady said, "Look at that—the church trying to horn in on Christmas!"

—Selected

A DIFFERENT VIEW

A few days before Christmas two next-door neighbors decided to go sailing while their wives went Christmas shopping.

A storm arose while the men were sailing, and they had great difficulty controlling the boat. As they maneuvered toward land, they hit a sandbar. Both men jumped overboard and began to push and shove the boat, trying to get it into deeper water.

Standing almost knee-deep in mud, with the waves bouncing him against the side of the boat, one man, with a knowing grin, said to the other, "It sure beats Christmas shopping, doesn't it?"

—Illustrations Unlimited

ILLUSTRATIONS WANTED

Enrichment will pay up to \$25 for each illustration we use. If the material has previously been published, please indicate the original source. Send your contributions to: Illustrate It, *Enrichment*, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to Enrichment@ag.org.

21 Ways to Continuously
Improve the Content of
Your Ministry

Benchmarks of Quality in the Church

NORMAN SHAWCHUCK
& GUSTAVE RATH

*Norman Shawchuck and
Gustave Rath (Abingdon,
165 pp., \$14.95)*

RICK WARREN THE PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH

Growth Without Compromising
Your Message & Mission

*Rick Warren (Zondervan,
400 pp., hardback,
\$19.99)*

B O O K R E V I E W S

Benchmarks of Quality in the Church: 21 Ways To Continuously Improve the Content of Your Ministry

*Norman Shawchuck and Gustave Rath
(Abingdon, 165 pp., \$14.95)*

In *Benchmarks of Quality in the Church* the authors expand on the lesson that church ministries matter, and they identify 21 indicators of excellence in church ministry and group them under seven broad categories: religious qualities, lay-led qualities, gathering qualities, participative qualities, outside-in qualities, expecting qualities, and consequent qualities. For each benchmark they provide positive examples from churches, diagnostic questions to evaluate current programs, suggestions on how to incorporate quality into current ministries, and a list of resources for further study.

The section on religious qualities was especially rewarding. Too many authors writing on church ministry neglect the work of the Holy Spirit in favor of management technique, but Shawchuck and Rath do not make this mistake. They highlight the importance of spirituality, belief, visionary leadership, missions-mindedness, and

discernment of God's will, thus integrating spiritual concerns with the best of current management paradigms.

Consequently, pastors and other church leaders can profit from reading *Benchmarks of Quality in the Church*. It will help you design (or even redesign) church ministries that are more closely attuned to God's will, include more laypeople in ministry, reach out more effectively to the surrounding community, and result in greater joy and growth as you do God's work in the world.

—Reviewed by George P. Wood, Newport-Mesa
Christian Center, Costa Mesa, California.

The Purpose-Driven Church—Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission

*Rick Warren (Zondervan, 400 pp., hardback,
\$19.99)*

If I wanted to build a great church for God, I would seek the wisdom of one who has been used by the Spirit for precisely that pursuit. Rick Warren is such a man. He pastors the fastest growing Baptist church in Southern California, growing from one family to over 10,000 in worship attendance in just 15 years—without even owning their facility. He has also pioneered 26 other churches during this same time.

Warren contends that many pastors and church leaders do not understand why they exist, that a church must have a purpose, and the entire ministry operation revolve around that reason for being. He requires a church to define its purpose: "Until you know what your church exists for, you have no foundation, no motivation, and no direction for your ministry. If you are helping a new church get started, your first task is to define your purpose."

The author further contends that the purpose be a short, easily remembered statement. Such clarification builds morale, reduces frustration, allows concentration,

Your New Life in Christ

Michael H. Clarensau (Gospel Publishing House, 112 pp., paperback, \$6.95)

This workbook/study course presents a basic discipleship program for new Christians and aims to teach the fundamentals of the Christian life, introduce God's Word as the source of faith and conduct, teach about prayer, and encourage daily devotions. Each chapter is in workbook format, allowing the new convert to write answers to questions, look up Scripture references, and fill in the blanks. This 12-week study covers most of the major Bible doctrines with the final chapter discussing the Christian's lifestyle. It could be used individually or in a new-converts class.

—Reviewed by Juleen Turnage, secretary of Assemblies of God Public Relations.

solicits cooperation, and makes it easier to evaluate progress. This statement of purpose, the author requires, must be regularly communicated to everyone in the church, and the whole ministry must be organized specifically to fulfill that purpose.

While I appreciated all of Warren's book, I was especially edified by his contention that pastors should have the dream of making every member a minister. This volume should not just draw dust in a pastor's bookcase but be left open on his desk as a working reminder to build a purpose-driven church.

—Reviewed by Dan Betzer, pastor, First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.

A Committed Mercy—You and Your Church Can Serve the Disabled

Stan Carder (Baker, 128 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

With a pastor's heart, Stan Carder answers the question, "How do you minister to people with disabilities?" He gives concise, practical information on implementing and sustaining special-needs ministry in the church. The book is valuable to those planning to begin a disability ministry or to those who hope to strengthen a currently operating program.

Carder's questions were answered through a son born with Down's syndrome and an accident that left the author with a broken neck. Thus he gives insight to a biblical perspective of suffering and why bad things sometimes happen to good people.

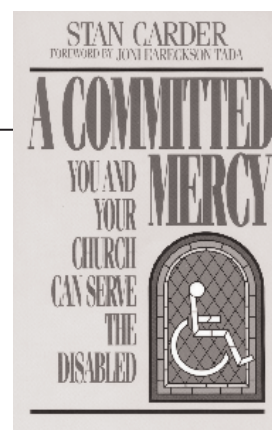
Carder clearly articulates the validity of special-needs ministry in our churches today and identifies common barriers to the establishment of such ministry, including attitudes, emotions, and misconceptions. Suggestions are given to counteract the negative influences they present and make ministry with disabled people more effective.

Of particular interest is a letter giving a parent's perspective of disability and the suffering experienced in parenting a special-needs child. Pastors will realize the potential the church has in taking on ministry to the special-needs family. Simple guidelines enable the pastor and congregation to offer practical ministry compatible with busy schedules.

The last chapters deal with teaching methods, helping workers tailor a special-needs ministry that will impart spiritual knowledge and truth.

A Committed Mercy will swing the door of potential open wide for churches and leaders and help them create an atmosphere of acceptance and an avenue for use of the God-given gifts to people with disabilities.

—Reviewed by Charles T. Chivers, director, Special Touch Ministry, Inc., and representative for Assemblies of God Disability Ministries, Waupaca, Wisconsin.



Stan Carder (Baker, 128 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

Winning the Values War in a Changing Culture

Leith Anderson (Bethany, 192 pp., paperback, \$14.99)

Leith Anderson moves the reader through a well-documented and sound treatment of the appropriate Christian response to a changing world to win the values war. His copious contemporary illustrations highlight the truth he wishes to convey.

He reaches a level of excellence in his teaching on forgiveness, restitution, and reinstatement. Particularly important is his commentary on Galatians 6:1. Knowing the difference between restoration and reinstatement is critical to handling discipline today.

However, his passing comment on 1 Timothy 3 regarding qualifications for elders and deacons—referring only to present behavior, not past history—accommodates the present social system rather than standing by the clear statements of Scripture.

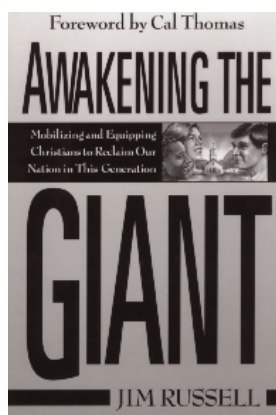
This book is worth reading for this comment alone: "What happens to us is not the most important thing in our lives; what is most important is taking the opportunity to live Christianity in whatever happens. This is true Christianity."

—Reviewed by James K. Bridges, Assemblies of God general treasurer, Springfield, Missouri.

Note to pre-
press:

Please strip in
the correct
book scan for
this book.

Calvin Miller (Broadman & Holman, 227 pp., hardback, \$17.99)



Jim Russell (Zondervan, hardback, 175 pp., \$15.99)

B O O K R E V I E W S

The Empowered Leader

Calvin Miller (Broadman & Holman, 227 pp., hardback, \$17.99)

Calvin Miller, popular pastor, writer, and professor, has authored this exceptional volume on 10 keys to servant leadership. He suggests early in the book that leadership “is not to be gained by studying books like this” and suggests that the book “exists more to awaken and define capabilities in leadership.”

Miller frames the book around David, his biblical model, for illustrations of servant leadership with such basic themes as servant image, self-image, vision, decision making, motivating, abuse of power, surviving mistakes, and leadership by delegation.

Most secular books on the subject of leadership would define the empowered leader as one who has reached some pinnacle of success so that power is derived from economic, corporate, or social control over other people. Miller, in *The Empowered Leader*, flatly rejects the secular definitions of leadership for church leaders and clearly defines biblical servanthood. He draws heavily upon both Old and New Testament examples and principles. Still, he reaches

freely and often to well-known writers and corporate leaders to support his thesis while seeking to find common denominators between secular and church leadership.

One of the engaging chapters is “The Politics of Grace and Abuse of Power.” Miller reminds us that *politics* derives from the same term as *polity* and *polite*. By his definition, politics has always been a necessary part of the church, and in its best sense politics can be good. He makes clear, however, that politics for the purpose of controlling others becomes abuse of power.

As an appendage, Miller offers a bonus section of four excerpts from other authors on the subject of church growth.

—Reviewed by Everett Stenhouse, former Assemblies of God assistant general superintendent, Rancho Mirage, California.

Awakening the Giant

Jim Russell (Zondervan, hardback, 175 pp., \$15.99)

Awakening the Giant is a radically different analysis of the condition of our society and the mission of the church in relation to it. Author Jim Russell contends that it's time to give discipling first priority in our churches and relegate evangelism to a secondary place. (I can't recall ever hearing such a message from an evangelical author.)

Russell's argument stands on three legs: The first is the Great Commission, Jesus' last words to His disciples as recorded in Matthew, “to make disciples of all nations”—the summation of Jesus' 3-year teaching ministry as well as His marching orders to His followers then and now.

The evangelical church in America has been strong on evangelism but weak on Christian growth.

The second leg is the moral state of our nation. Russell sees us as a society in moral confusion and deterioration. Most evangelicals believe the answer is a renewed emphasis on evangelism. Russell believes the

Breaking Down Walls—A Model for Reconciliation in an Age of Racial Strife

Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein (Moody, 242 pp., paperback, \$9.99)

Breaking Down Walls is a good starting place for better understanding the emotional aspects of racial identity. In the foreword, Billy Graham said: “Writing from a wealth of personal experience, the authors recount how God worked in their own lives and the life of one struggling church to bring about a new and vital multiethnic community of faith.”

More than the story of God's working in the lives of two individuals, this book articulates eight principles of racial understanding and reconciliation. To gain perspective on racial tension and misunderstanding, it is a book well worth reading.

—Reviewed by David J. Moore, secretary, Intercultural Ministries Department, Division of Home Missions.

answer is the discipling of the host of baby Christians who have made decisions but are not yet disciples.

We have been successful in creating believers, but we have failed miserably in making disciples and “teaching them to obey all that [Jesus has] commanded.”

The main ministry of churches and pastors needs to be the nurturing of all the people around us who at one time or another have made decisions for Christ but who have never learned to be obedient disciples.

For generations evangelism has been a key identifying mark of the evangelical church. Programs, ministries, mission statements, and goals have been built around it. This book proposes a radical restructuring of how we see ourselves and how we do things. Russell gives suggestions for discipling our families, churches, communities, and nation.

Russell is a successful small businessman, not a theologian, and he approaches his task from that viewpoint—doing rather than discussing or arguing. His life is consistent with his thesis. Even if one might want to argue certain points, there is plenty here to trigger the pastor's thinking.

—Reviewed by Donald E. Lindman,
freelance writer and Jim Russell's pastor,
Lansing, Michigan.

Christian Education: Foundations for the Future

Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat, eds. (Moody, 635 pp., hardback, \$29.99).

Church leaders will be informed and motivated by the breadth and depth of this compilation of educational information and insight. It is appropriate as a text for academic classes and equally usable as a reference for the church practitioner and trainer. It will enhance the minister's and the Christian educator's personal libraries.

The evangelical biblical perspective of the text is clearly evidenced in this comprehensive 40-chapter overview of the educational ministry opportunities of the local church. The 42 respected evangelical contributors to this symposium represent varied educational ministry experiences and perspectives. They serve as ministers of education, pastors, consultants, and seminary and college professors of Christian education.

The five units organize the material under the categories of biblical/theological foundations, the teaching-learning process, age-level and developmental concerns, administrative and staffing issues, and parachurch interests. Each chapter opens with a definitional and outlined content summation. Numerous documented references are provided, as well as a bibliography of sources in each chapter. The comprehensive general index provides significant details to assist the reader in quickly locating a particular area of interest.

Readers will readily recognize both the foundation aspects and the contemporary nature of this text. The basic principles set forth will help each church leader to be more effective in the varied discipleship ministries of the church.

—Reviewed by Victor Ostrom, adjunct faculty,
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary,
Springfield, Missouri.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

EDITED BY
ROBERT E. CLARK
LIN JOHNSON
ALLYN K. SLOAT

Robert E. Clark, Lin
Johnson, and Allyn K.
Sloat, eds. (Moody, 635
pp., hardback, \$29.99).

A SERVICE

Enrichment reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books. As a service to readers the Gospel Publishing House will supply any of these books, but books cannot be returned for credit.

NEWS & RESOURCES

1997 CONFERENCE ON PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CARE AND COUNSELING ANNOUNCED

Mount Paran Church of God and Psychological Studies Institute will host the third annual Conference on Pentecostal/Charismatic Care and Counseling Feb. 27-Mar. 2, 1997, in Atlanta, Ga.

Using the theme, "The Family: Mending the Broken Circle," the conference is open to lay, pastoral, and professional caregivers. General sessions and workshops will highlight issues confronting the family and those who care for it.

Among the conference presenters are Richard Dobbins, Emerge Ministries, Akron, Ohio; Raymond Brock, professional counselor, Tulsa, Okla.; John Kie Vining, professional counselor, Cleveland, Tenn.; Rosemarie Scotti Hughes, Regent University, dean, School of Counseling and Human Services, Virginia Beach, Va.

The Harvey Hotel, Atlanta, Ga., is the

conference hotel. For reservations call 1-800-922-9222. When making reservations, indicate you are with the Pentecostal/Charismatic Caregivers Conference.

For further information call 423-478-7229.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD ENTERS 26 AREAS DURING DECADE OF HARVEST

Since the Decade of Harvest began, the Assemblies of God has opened ministries in 26 countries or regions, according to statistics released from the Division of Foreign Missions. Among the new-entry nations or areas are Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Sao Tome/Principe, Ethiopia, Chad, Rwanda, Eritrea, Latvia, Belarus, the Central Asian Republics, Bhutan, Maldives, Tuva, Mongolia, Cambodia, and Laos. This brings the total number of nations with a viable Assemblies of God presence to 147. Workers are already serving in most of these nations or are currently raising support to go.

In areas where open evangelism is not allowed, the gospel is spread through media. Literature, radio/television programming, medical clinics, and interactive teaching via internet are all used to penetrate areas previously considered unreachable.

"The rate of explosive Christian church expansion demands that we recognize the awesome uniqueness of our day," said Loren Triplett, executive director of the Division of Foreign Missions. "The possibilities of this hour are beyond all our expectations."

FOUR FLY-INS/MISSIONS CELEBRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR 1997

The Division of Foreign Missions has announced the dates and locations for its 1997 Fly-Ins/Missions Celebrations: Jan. 17, 18 in Philadelphia, Pa.; Jan. 24, 25 in San Diego, Calif.; and Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 in Tulsa, Okla.

A Fly-In/Missions Celebration for Latin Assemblies of God churches will be held Feb. 7, 8 in Dallas, Tex. This marks the first Latin Fly-In/Missions Celebration in the 6-year history of these gatherings.

Each Fly-In/Missions Celebration will highlight significant developments in the missionary cause around the world. All missions-minded pastors and laypeople are encouraged to attend the nearest one. More information is available from the Division of Foreign Missions.

MEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT RENAMED HONORBOUND: MEN OF PROMISE

In an effort to emphasize godly manhood, the Assemblies of God Men's Ministries Department is now renamed HonorBound: Men of Promise, according to Ron Roberts, secretary.

Honor has always been a strong word. When tied to heartfelt commitment, a man becomes "HonorBound." This is an age when values are perceived by many as relative, and men who cherish absolutes are hard to find. The Men's Ministries Department has decided it's time for a fresh thrust—a new name and renewed zeal for integrity and honor.

A discipleship series is now available



Right away Pastor Smith could think of three risks in asking for volunteers.

© 1996 PENNI CLARK

for local churches that teaches men to measure themselves against the godly principles that underpin the seven promises of a Promise Keeper. Each of these biblical principles must be ingrained in every Christian man. The series will introduce HonorBound as the theme for men in this Fellowship.

The Promise Keepers movement has obviously ignited men across the country as 1.3 million will have attended Promise Keepers events in 1996. HonorBound provides to Assemblies of God men the next crucial step that helps them return to their local churches, honoring their families and pastors and living out their promises as men of God.

Pastors are being encouraged to raise the priority on men's ministry by involving their men in a discipleship process and helping them see themselves as HonorBound.

CHURCH GROWS DESPITE OPPOSITION

In spite of heavy restrictions upon the church in some areas of the world, the number of believers is growing, according to information released by the Division of Foreign Missions.

- In China, open evangelism has not

been permitted for almost 50 years. Yet by most estimates the number of believers in that nation has grown to 80 million. Some 30,000 Chinese are reported to accept Christ every day.

- When the Decade of Harvest began, less than 20 Assemblies of God churches existed in Congo, a formerly Communist nation in Central Africa. By 1995 the number had grown to 250. The Ouessou region, with 1 church in early 1992, now has 37 congregations with 1,800 adherents. Some 400 are from the long-resistant Pygmy people.

- Southern Asia, consisting of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, is home to over 1 billion people and some of the world's most resistant religions. Yet this region now has 3,500 churches, 550,000 members and adherents, and 66 Bible schools with nearly 3,000 students.

- In South America, Uruguay has been strongly resistant to the gospel. Over half the population claims to be atheists. But prayer and outreach are making a difference. In the center of Montevideo, the capital, a theater has been purchased for a church. The gospel is being proclaimed with encouraging results.

Said Loren Triplett, executive director

of the Division of Foreign Missions: "We are indeed seeing the fulfillment of the words of Jesus, the greatest of prophets, when He said, 'This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world,' (Matthew 24:14, NIV). That prophecy is the measure of our task."

CATALOG PROVIDES ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MINISTRY RESOURCES

The 1997 Gospel Publishing House General Catalog is your source for Assemblies of God ministry resources. In addition to books, Bibles, and church supplies, the catalog has been expanded to include curriculum and resources developed by the ministry departments of the Assemblies of God.

For your free catalog, call toll free 1-800-641-4310 and request item #752-084. Gospel Publishing House is your partner in ministry.

LOGION PRESS RELEASES NEW PENTECOSTAL TITLES

Ministerial Ethics: A Guide for Spirit-Filled Leaders by T. Burton Pierce is a Spirit-filled treatise on the moral and ethical challenges that ministers face. Written by a minister, this book highlights ethical aspects of a pastor's relationship with God and mankind. This comprehensive study answers questions and doubts concerning ethics.

The book features three parts: "The Basis for Christian Ethics: Scripture"; "Ethics and Church Doctrine"; and Ethics in Practical Ministry."

Our Destiny: Biblical Teachings on the Last Things by Stanley M. Horton, renowned theologian, provides an in-depth study on the Second Coming. He explores interpretations of prophecies and views of the afterlife; theories of Jesus' return; post-, mid-, and pretribulationists; and the rise of amillennialism, postmillennialism, and dispensationalism.

Ministerial Ethics: A Guide for Spirit-Filled Leaders (288 pp., hardback, \$19.95, GPH #02-0320) and *Our Destiny: Biblical Teachings of the Last Things* (304 pp., hardback, \$19.95, GPH #02-0322) are published and distributed by Gospel Publishing House, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802.

NEWS & RESOURCES

BOOK ON SIGNS AND WONDERS NOW AVAILABLE

Signs and Wonders in Ministry Today has been written by faculty members of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary to provide a biblical examination of signs and wonders.

Topics discussed include the Spirit's power and world evangelism; biblical foundations of miracles in ministry; signs and wonders in the history of evangelism; the full gospel in action; principles for preparing for signs and wonders; how a supernatural ministry must include spiritual gifts; how to develop a power ministry in your church; and victorious spiritual warfare.

Signs and Wonders in Ministry Today (128 pp., paperback, \$7.99, GPH #02-0346) is published and distributed by Gospel Publishing House, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802.

WOOTTON NAMED NEW PRESIDENT OF WESTERN BIBLE INSTITUTE

Effective June 1, Mark Wootton was named the new president of Western Bible Institute (WBI), Phoenix, Ariz., succeeding Betty Bell.

A 1980 graduate of Central Bible College, Wootton earned his M.A. in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. He also serves as pastor of Evangel Assembly of God in Mesa, Ariz.

Under Bell's leadership, WBI's enrollment quadrupled. Extension education grew to several sites in the Phoenix area. Dr. Bell's established transfer policies with other Assemblies of God colleges have resulted in more students continuing undergraduate education.

Western Bible Institute is one of the 17 endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary schools.

BETHANY COLLEGE TO REMAIN IN SCOTTS VALLEY

On Feb. 8, 1996, the Northern California/Nevada District Council and the Bethany College Corporation voted to keep Bethany College located in Scotts Valley, Calif. Bethany had been directed in 1990 to sell its campus and relocate to Sacramento.

The district also agreed to guarantee a long-term, amortized debt restructuring for Bethany. This financial guarantee removed the burden of debt and the uncertainty about location that has hampered Bethany's growth.

Some immediate concerns for Bethany are financial needs including funding to begin new buildings. Several churches and pastors present for the district council made financial commitments to Bethany totaling approximately \$700,000 per year for the next 3 years.

EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERY, ASSEMBLIES OF GOD COLLEGE PRESIDENTS MEET

The Executive Presbytery and the presidents of 12 Assemblies of God colleges met in Springfield, Mo., Jan. 17, 1996. The agenda focused on the desire for consistent dialogue about the needs of the 17 endorsed colleges, institutes, and seminary. General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask stressed the desire of the Executive Presbytery to assist the colleges in every way possible.

Wayne Kraiss, Southern California College president and commissioner of Christian Higher Education, said: "A sincere desire to gain understanding of the issues and concerns facing Assemblies of God higher education was evident throughout the meeting."

Topical discussion included the impact of newcomers to the Assemblies of God who lack historical perspective, the need for student financial aid, and ways to foster better understanding within the church and academic community.

Some goals resulting from the discussion included evaluation of Bible and ministry majors after graduation and the development of an interactive forum for college faculty.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HOLDS GROUNDBREAKING

The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) held a groundbreaking ceremony in Springfield, Mo., March 15, 1996. The new building will house the seminary's first permanent home since its inception in 1971. AGTS will build on

property adjacent to the Evangel College campus.

"The groundbreaking was the culmination of more than 2½ years of hard work," said Del Tarr, AGTS president. "When we put the shovel in the ground and turned the earth, I thought of the more than 800 churches, districts, and individuals who believe in the vision of AGTS and have given so sacrificially."

Construction began around April 1 and will take approximately 1 year. AGTS expects to hold classes in the new building in the fall 1997.

BETHANY COLLEGE GAINS M.A. DEGREE IN EDUCATION

Bethany College, Scotts Valley, Calif., recently received approval for a master's degree in education. The college is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The degree offering began with the fall 1996 semester. Plans are to develop two additional graduate programs at Bethany in the coming year, one in church leadership and another in counseling.

NEW RELEASES FROM THE SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY SERIES

The Corinthian Letters by Charles Harris and *One for the Lord* by Earl Creps are new titles in Radiant Life's Spiritual Discovery Series for use in the spring 1997 quarter.

The Corinthian Letters engages the student in an exegetical examination of the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Those who use this work will discover the world behind the text, the contents within the text, and principles which emanate from the text that can be applied by Christians today. *The Corinthian Letters* provides answers to various issues the local church has faced throughout history including disunity, immorality, spiritual excess, faulty theology, suffering, and stewardship.

One for the Lord will help those within the single community examine their position in the world, their place in the church, and their relationship to God. Recognizing that not all singles are alike—the never married, divorced, and widowed have issues unique to themselves—Creps

addresses many of these issues while providing biblical insights into principles of spirituality applicable to singleness. Those who use this study will be encouraged to discover God's purpose in their lives and find fulfillment in Him.

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 methodology and reproducible

resources designed to facilitate a group learning experience.

When completed, the Spiritual Discovery Series will contain 40 new titles divided into four tracks of study. Those who successfully complete courses in the Foundations track will be grounded in their faith. Titles in the Life Issues track will explore issues faced in the various stages of life. The Book Studies track will offer resources to help individuals and groups understand the text of God's Word. The Critical Concerns track will address societal issues from a biblical perspective.

The Corinthian Letters and *One for the Lord* join 12 titles already released in the Spiritual Discovery Series. See your Radiant Life curriculum order form for a full listing and prices.

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES MANUAL NOW AVAILABLE

The newly formed Commission on Senior Adult Ministries announces the release of an updated manual which offers guidance and suggestions on organizing, developing, and administering senior adult ministries at the district, sectional, and local church levels.

The *Senior Adult Ministries Manual* contains ideas and programs adaptable to any size congregation. Its concepts are equally valuable to churches with full-time staff, lay committees, or volunteers. The manual presents informational and planning helps for special events, ministry ideas, elder care, volunteering, the process of aging, and preparation for active retirement.

The *Senior Adult Ministries Manual* (#740-001) is available at \$17.95 each from the Gospel Publishing House, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802; telephone: 1-800-641-4310

PRAYER POWER PARTNER PROGRAM BROCHURE NOW READY

Realizing ministries move ahead only as people pray, the Benevolences Department created a Prayer Power Partner program to encourage people to pray for the ministries of Aged Ministers Assistance, Hillcrest Children's Home, Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home, and Disaster Relief.

NEWS & RESOURCES

To receive free copies of this attractive four-color brochure for distribution in your church, check rsc #3 and indicate quantity.

RADIANT LIFE ANNOUNCES VBS THEME FOR '97

"Power Kids: Transformed by God" is Radiant Life's theme for 1997 vacation Bible school.

Why "Power Kids"?

Our world is power conscious. Every segment of society seems to be in search of power. Political and minority groups want power. Individuals are seeking and developing "personal power." Kids have pseudoheroes who depend on themselves or their followers to provide power over others and over their circumstances. That power is anti-Christian, deceptive, and totally inadequate.

The "Power Kids" VBS program teaches children what true power is and from whom that power comes. In a Christian's "power pak"—God's Word—they find power to be transformed, to influence people for good, and to overcome every spiritual obstacle in the path.

Five Bible stories demonstrate the power of God and the dramatic transformations experienced by children of God. "Power Kids" learn they can be transformed by God's power today.

DAY 1: "Persevering Power" (Joseph persevered through very difficult times of rejection, treachery, and betrayal to become leader of the most powerful nation of his day and deliverer of his people from disaster.)

DAY 2: "Overcoming Power" (Peter was transformed from a blustering, impetuous fisherman into a powerful preacher and a spiritual leader in the kingdom of God.)

DAY 3: "Winning Power" (Gideon saw his own flaws and pictured himself as insignificant. God transformed him into a courageous and creative leader.)

Day 4: "Enduring Power" (Paul thought what he was doing was right. But he was transformed by the power of God from persecutor to a mighty apostle.)

DAY 5: "Rescuing Power" (Esther was transformed from captive to queen because she was faithful and obedient to God's Word. God used her to rescue an

entire nation.)

Help your children become "Power Kids" for Christ. Order your Exam Kit from the Gospel Publishing House today (order #29-9501).

ITALIAN EVANGELISM TRACT DEVELOPED

The Division of Home Missions recently introduced a new Italian evangelism tract entitled "Nodi e Pettini." According to Patrick Donadio, MAPS (Mission America Placement Service) Department secretary, a large influx of Italians has been coming to the United States. Already the Assemblies of God has pioneered three Italian-speaking churches.

"We had no vehicles or tools to help Italian pastors and workers evangelize until now," Donadio said.

Light-for-the-Lost funds helped to produce this tract in an effort to reach Italians with the gospel in their own language. Supplies are available free from the Division of Home Missions.

HOME MISSIONS CONVENTION KIT AVAILABLE

During the Mission America Conference held in August, the Division

of Home Missions introduced a new missions convention theme and kit, "It's God's Time for America." The kit contains a large banner; six posters representing the six departments; 8-minute video, *It's God's Time for America*; and "It's God's Time for America" booklet to help churches promote and recognize the Division of Home Missions. Its six departments are: New Church Evangelism, Intercultural Ministries, Chaplaincy, Teen Challenge, Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, and Mission America Placement Service (MAPS). Orders for the kit can be placed through the Division of Home Missions.

1997 NATIONAL WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DAY

On National Women's Ministries Day, Feb. 23, churches have the opportunity to recognize the various ministries of women within the local church. The theme is "Share God's Love Where They Live."

National Women's Ministries Day also allows each congregation an opportunity to give an offering to support the national Women's Ministries Department. Offerings help cover administration costs and services provided to over 400,000 women and girls in Women's Ministries groups

and Missionettes clubs in Assemblies of God churches.

A packet of materials will be mailed in December to local Women's Ministries coordinators to assist 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 planning guidelines, program choices, theme-related music, creative ideas, and resources. To receive your personal copy of the program guide, check rsc #21.

The goals of Women's Ministries are to minister to every woman according to her need and to help each woman find her personal place of ministry. Women's Ministries includes the ministry of all 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.

HIGHLANDS BABY CLUB DAY IS FEB. 16

Sunday, Feb. 16, is the annual Baby Bootee Club Day.

The Highlands Baby Bootee Club is an innovative program to help Women's Ministries groups, Missionettes clubs, and Sunday school classes get involved in ministering to the babies and unwed mothers at Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home.

A free packet containing a program and other helpful information is available by checking rsc #4.

FEB. 9 IS NEW CHURCH EVANGELISM DAY

New Church Evangelism Day is Feb. 9, when our Fellowship is called to pray for and recognize the Division of Home Missions ministry endeavors and missionaries.

New Church Evangelism Day allows pastors the opportunity to inform their congregations on New Church Evangelism strategies to plant churches, train workers, and reach the lost in the cities and countryside; and it also provides the opportunity to receive an offering to support these ongoing efforts to spread the gospel.

Several informative brochures, dynamic posters, a video, and other resources are available from the Division of Home Missions to assist churches in presenting New Church Evangelism's ministries. More information is available from the New Church Evangelism Department.

1995 AND 1996 ADVANCE/ENRICHMENT SUBJECT-AUTHOR INDEXES AVAILABLE

An *Advance/Enrichment* subject-author index for 1995-96 is available for \$2 from the *Enrichment* Office. This index cross-references subjects and authors to help readers find articles quickly, thus enhancing the value of the journal—both current and back-dated issues.

To request a copy of the *Advance/Enrichment* subject-author index check rsc #9.

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In Closing

BY CHARLES T. CRABTREE

For many people the term *discipleship* surfaces all kinds of negative feelings. After having read the articles and expositions in this issue of *Enrichment*, I trust they have helped you ascertain the joy and possibilities in a life of discipleship—both for personal development and helping others grow into the image of Christ.

Discipleship is a glorious privilege and unlocks the secrets of the greatest life ever lived. It is amusing to see how many self-help and secrets-of-success books fill the marketplace, while the Book which reveals the real truth about man is largely neglected by the highly motivated and ambitious.

An invitation to discipleship is an open door to true success for all of life. History bears this out. When people choose to put God and the kingdom of God first, they triumph over the challenges of life. From the time Abraham began his journey and David wrote the first Psalm to Paul's powerful promises in Romans 8 to the testimonies of godly people today, we have a proved record of unbroken success. The reason is simple: We have discovered the Prince of Life, the ultimate authority in making life a success now and forever.

Too often the church has preached the pain of discipleship instead of its rewards. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). What an indictment! The world does not downplay the price of success. They are quite clear: People must change and discipline their lives. "No pain, no gain," they say, but "it is worth it." That is the emphasis we must share with the world about Christ.

I am not about to water down my faith

to a debatable idea but will continue telling men and women everywhere the high price of the cross of Christ. I will plead with men to die to self and take up their crosses. I will encourage everyone to put the kingdom of God ahead of any earthly kingdom. Why? Because it is worth it.


Some say discipleship is not worth it and point to the pain and suffering caused by a dedicated life. The consequences of following Christ have resulted in economic loss, broken bodies, and martyrdom. I will never forget the devout Burmese believer I was privileged to meet who had spent more time in jail than free because of his witness. His teeth were almost gone due to eating rotten prison food. He limped badly from repeated beatings which had destroyed muscle and broken several bones. I asked him if it was worth it. He said, "I'd gladly do it again because of the joy I have experienced in serving Jesus and bringing others to Him."

Some months ago I sat in a roomful of Russian believers who had come from as far away as interior Siberia. I looked at their weather-beaten faces and gnarled hands, knowing that some had spent years in concentration camps for following Jesus. I did not have to ask them if it was worth it. Their countenances reflected the peace of God, and the joy of the Lord was evident in their conversations.

If following Christ and encouraging others to know Him under great persecution and torture is worth the price, how can any of us in the American church think for a moment that being a disciple of Christ is not worth the commitment in a country comparatively free of religious persecution? If believers

have felt it was worth dying for, surely we can believe it is worth living for.

Discipleship is worth it. It gives life eternal value. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). It purifies all relationships; it imparts unfolding truth. Every day the faithful disciple learns another divine principle which enriches life.

The benefits are endless, but there is more: The greatest privilege of discipleship is that it never ends. Discipleship is nothing more than an obedient relationship with Christ. The value of such a relationship cannot be known now. The greatest blessing of discipleship is yet to come. The apostle Paul understood it well. He wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). Yes, it is a privilege to be a disciplined follower of Jesus Christ. 



Charles T. Crabtree is the Assemblies of God assistant general superintendent.

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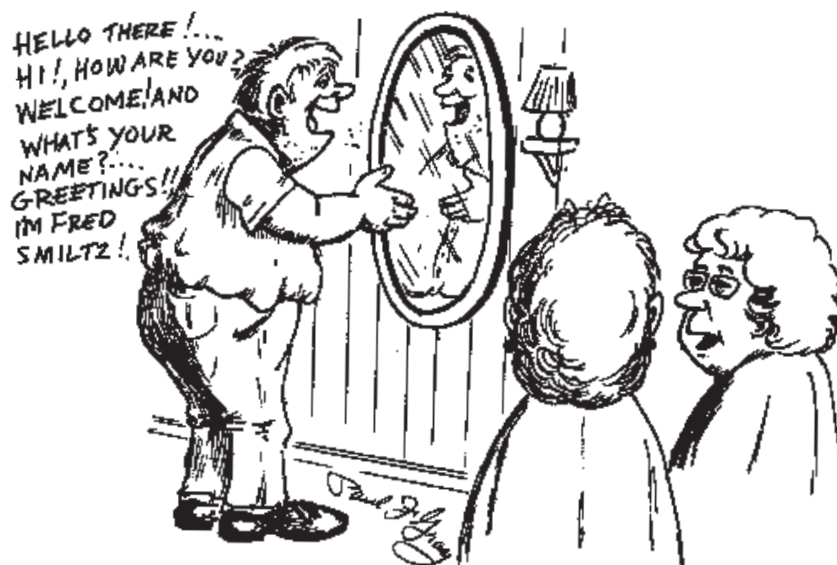
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