

ENRICHMENT

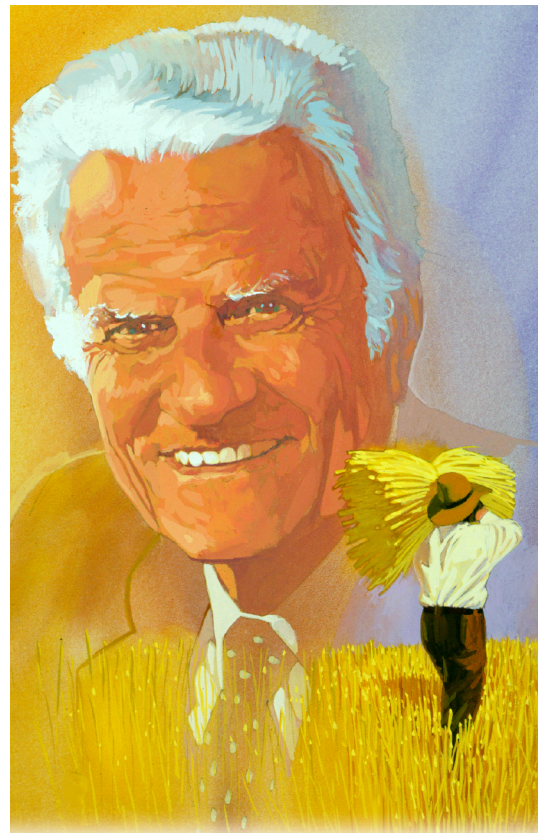
FALL 1997

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A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

M^{inistry} Matters

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL

On January 13, 1850, the weather was snowy and cold. The young man shivered as he walked the narrow streets of Colchester, England. Trying to keep warm, he thought about how far he needed to walk to the church his mother had told him about. Considering his refined, dignified, Puritan Reformed religious background, he felt hesitant about visiting this church because it had a reputation of being somewhat loud. But the 15-year-old thought that perhaps there he would find relief from his burden of sin and guilt. He had read *Pilgrim's Progress* several times and knew that he had to reach the "gate."

When he arrived, 14 people were in the church. He sat near the back, miserable and cold. He couldn't even look at the preacher when he began his message. The minister struggled and stumbled and was obviously not a seasoned communicator. The text was: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22). The preacher made a few comments and then quoted the verse again. Over and over he continued.

After about 10 minutes of this repetition, the preacher looked at the teenager, pointed his finger at him, and said, "Yes, young man, you look terribly miserable." He continued, "Young man, you will be miserable in life, and you'll be miserable in death unless you obey my text. Young man, look to Jesus." Then he shouted, "Look, look, look!"

This unorthodox (and most of the time not recommended) way of communicating greatly affected the teenager. He later said, "I did look to Jesus, and I lived."

Although still a teenager, 4 years later he was called to pastor the historic New

Park Street Baptist Church in London, England. On his first Sunday morning about 80 people showed up. Within 6 months the building, able to seat 1,200, was packed with crowds up to 2,000. Many Sundays hundreds of people were turned away.

In the next 37 years, this determined, passionate pastor turned London upside down; and he still has a tremendous effect on preachers and congregations around the world. The once cold, shivering, miserable teenager was none other than Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "prince of preachers."¹


"Young man, look to Jesus." Those five words hit the bull's-eye of Spurgeon's heart. He later wrote, "The written Word convicted me, but the preached Word converted me." The simple message of Jesus Christ accomplishes incredible things for God. It will never change.

Week by week as you communicate the precious gospel, know that a miserable person could be sitting before you, inwardly begging you to communicate truth to his or her heart.

Francis Schaeffer said: "Each generation of the church in each setting has the responsibility of communicating the gospel in understandable terms, considering the language and thought-forms of that setting."² Your city is unique. The church you pastor or preach in, or the field you serve on has a history and need that only God knows.

Every church is made up of people with different backgrounds and different cultures. Vance Havner said: "Diverse are the ways by which men come to Christ. And great is the temptation to judge others if they do not have mud put on their eyes and go to Siloam

exactly as we did."³ God can show you creative ways to minister and can help you reach your community for Christ. I believe that as God used Spurgeon to shake London, He can use you to change your city. We must never forget that there is an inherent power in the gospel message and that God will always honor the gospel when it is shared.

Many have tried to define the word *evangelism* and the best ways to accomplish it. Someone appropriately said evangelism is "proclaiming Jesus Christ as God and Savior, persuading men to accept Him and become responsible members of His church." Another said evangelism is "one poor beggar telling another poor beggar where he can find bread." Both are right. Whatever way you verbalize the definition of evangelism, always remind yourself that what God has made primary we dare not make secondary. 

ENDNOTES

1. Story abridged from Lewis Drummond, "What Is the Message?" *Equipping for Evangelism* (Minneapolis, Minn.: World Wide Publications, 1996) 29–30.
2. George Sweeting, *Great Quotes and Illustrations* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Publishing, 1985) 130.
3. *Ibid.*, 222.

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



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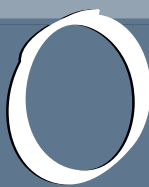
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INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

I Ask the Superintendent



Evangelism is a natural outgrowth of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.



Our culture is more complex than any previous one. A swelling number of unbelievers are teetering on the edge of a Christless eternity. The challenge to the community of faith is to present the gospel to unbelievers in a form that is both understood and relevant.

Completing the task of sharing the gospel will require increasing the intensity of our evangelistic efforts. Addressing the important subject of evangelism is Thomas E. Trask, Assemblies of God general superintendent.

DO PENTECOSTALS NEED TO RENEW THEIR FOCUS ON EVANGELISM?

I believe so strongly in evangelism because it is the direct result of the Pentecostal experience. The baptism in the Holy Spirit has been given to believers so that they might be more effective witnesses (cf. Acts 1:8).

Many church bodies do not embrace, as we do, the baptism in the Holy Spirit or speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the Baptism. However, a number of these organizations and churches do a good job in the area of witnessing. We cannot depreciate that. In many cases, they put Pentecostals to shame. Furthermore, many of them take the posture: "Look, if you Pentecostals are so strong on the Baptism and are supposed to receive power to be witnesses, why aren't you

greater witnesses?"

The truth is: First of all, the baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers believers to live to be witnesses. The greatest witness is not what we say; it's how we live. I believe the Spirit's baptism empowers men and women to live victorious, overcoming lives for Jesus Christ. A Spirit-filled life reflects Christ to those we work with and move among day after day.

Second, the infilling of the Holy Spirit is an empowerment to be witnesses with our mouths—by our testimonies. Effective evangelism is witnessing and seeing people saved in outreach ministries. It's reaching the lost. If there is any group of people that ought to be strong advocates of evangelism, it is those who are empowered for that purpose—the Pentecostal church. That is what we are. That is why I am such a strong proponent of evangelism because evangelism is a natural outgrowth of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

If there is any group of people that ought to be strong advocates of evangelism, it is those who are empowered for that purpose—the Pentecostal church. That is why I am such a strong proponent of evangelism.

HOW CAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN EVANGELISM?

I am amazed at the many opportunities for evangelism. For example, a pastor was telling me the other day that his church takes the newspaper birth announcements and sends congratulatory notes to every parent. They also send condolence notes to families listed in the newspaper obituary column.

I am thrilled at the many innovative ways our pastors are finding to do evangelism. It's not just cut-and-dried tract distribution. That is valuable and has merit. We have to be alert to the creative opportunities God has afforded the church for evangelism.

I believe the Holy Spirit knows how to reach and touch each city. If the Pentecostal church will pray and say, "Lord, give us insight into how we might reach our city," God will do that.

It may be out of the ordinary—whatever it takes.

Most people are fearful and feel inadequate to lead someone to Jesus Christ. That's unfortunate because He becomes our adequacy.

HOW CAN PASTORS COMMUNICATE THEIR BURDEN FOR EVANGELISM SO THEIR CONGREGATIONS ADOPT THE SAME BURDEN?

Pastors must believe in the Great Commission. Jesus commanded: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19,20). Pastors must believe Jesus' command to evangelize is not an option. The Assemblies of God does not view evangelism as an option; it is a direct command, and one we must respond to. Every Pentecostal church must respond to the Great Commission. How they attempt to fulfill it is where the variety and the innovativeness comes in. But it has to be believed in the heart and then carried out through an act of the will.

WHY DO SO FEW EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS LEAD SOMEONE TO CHRIST?

I don't believe it's because they do not want to or there isn't opportunity. Most people are fearful and feel inadequate to lead someone to Christ. That's unfortunate because He becomes our adequacy. People usually do not have a problem introducing a friend to another friend. Leading a person to Jesus is much the same. It's introducing an unsaved friend to Jesus. It is very simple and most rewarding.

Every Pentecostal church must respond to the Great Commission.



There is a direct correlation between revival and the renewal of evangelism within the church.

People usually do not have a problem introducing a friend to another friend. Leading a person to Jesus is much the same.

Scripture says: "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

Not winning souls also comes from a lack of teaching. Many people don't know how to do it. Their fear is an outgrowth of not knowing how to lead a person to Jesus Christ.

DO YOU BELIEVE JESUS COMMANDED THE CHURCH TO GO TO THE UNSAVED RATHER THAN THE UNSAVED TO GO TO CHURCH?

Yes. Most of the time we have been fishing in an aquarium—the church. It's wonderful when the unsaved come to church, but that's not the method or directive Jesus gave. We are to go outside the church to the unsaved in the world and tell them about Jesus.

It's proven that most people have been won to Christ by a friend or acquaintance. Jesus did it. The Early Church did it. It has been carried out successfully down through the years, and it works today.

Someone said: "You win them to yourself, then you can win them to Jesus." In other words, when they become a friend of yours, you can introduce them to Jesus Christ. It will happen if we watch for the opportunities.

ARE THE CONGREGATIONS EXPERIENCING REVIVAL MORE INVOLVED IN EVANGELISM?

Absolutely. There is a direct correlation between revival and the renewal of evangelism within the church. During revival, the Holy Spirit quickens our spirits and makes us aware of eternity, the lost condition of humanity, the shortness of time, and the value of souls. When there is revival, evangelism takes place. The unsaved are witnessed to, and people are introduced to Jesus Christ.

A burden for the lost comes through prayer, and it has to start with the leadership.

HOW CAN MINISTERS AND THEIR CHURCH FAMILIES DEVELOP A BURDEN FOR THE LOST OF THEIR CITIES?

God has to give the burden for the lost. You can't manufacture it. A burden for the lost comes through prayer, and it has to start with the leadership. If the pastor and the church pray, God will give them a burden for their city.




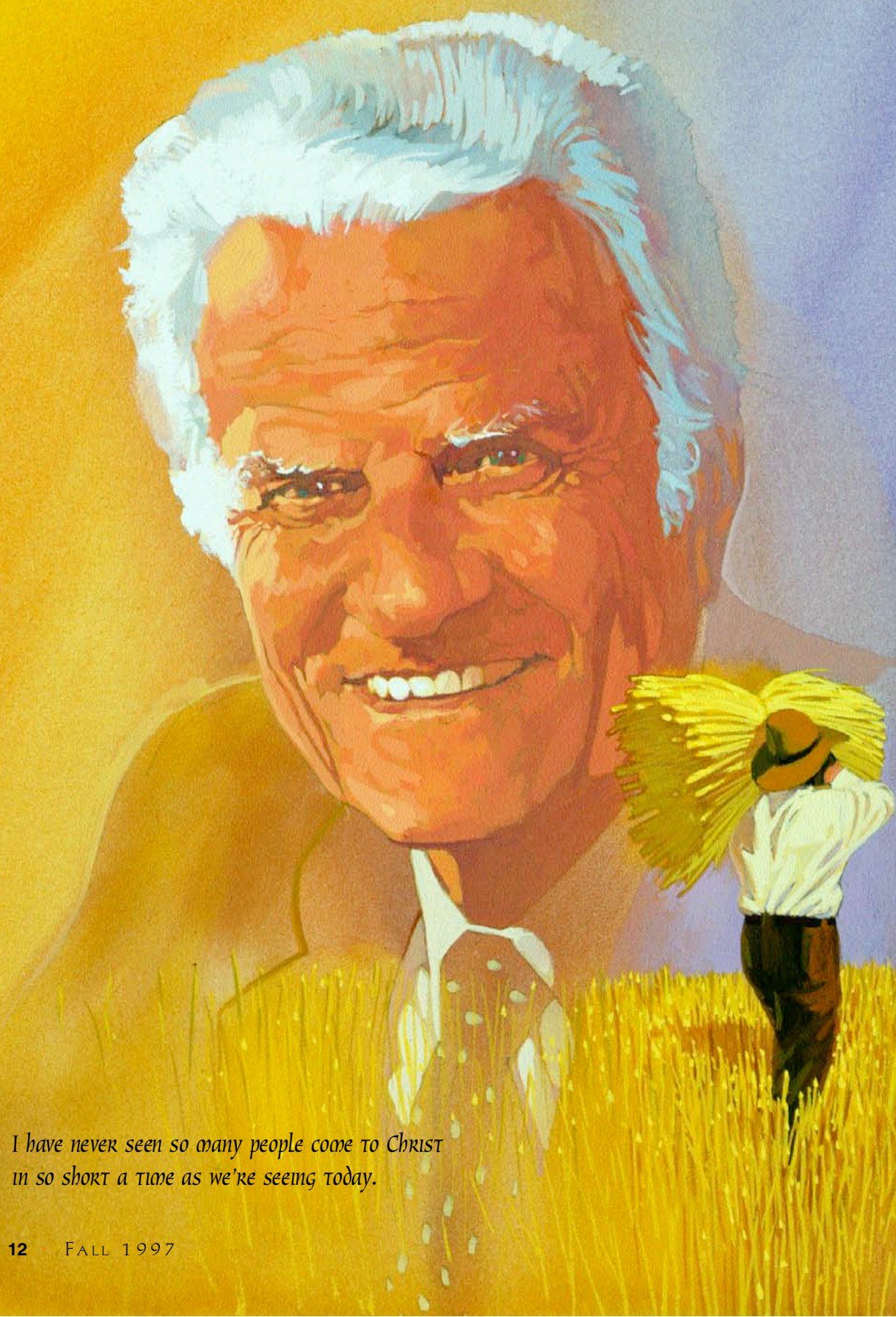
That's why I've said to ministers over the years, "You must know that God has sent you to a particular city." You can't say, "Well, I think this would be a nice place to pastor." You've got to know that God sent you because He will give you a burden for the community, for the lost, and for the congregation. The pastor carries the burden.

Then the pastor begins to communicate the burden to members of the congregation. They are sheep. They'll follow the shepherd. If the shepherd has a burden for the lost, the sheep will have a burden for the lost.

THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HAS OVER 900 EVANGELISTS MINISTERING EVERY WEEK. WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE EVANGELIST?

The office of an evangelist is a gift to the church. It's the same gift as a pastor and a teacher. The ministry of an evangelist is to stir up the saints to believe God for renewal and revival. The pastor has also been instructed to do the work of an evangelist. It is important that the local church have altar services and give opportunities for the unsaved because that's what the evangelist does.

Our Fellowship is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of evangelists and their ministry. It's a wonderful day. Many of our evangelists have said to me: "Brother Trask, for the first time in my years of evangelistic ministry, I'm seeing a marvelous stir within the church. I'm seeing revival get there before I get there." Our evangelists are having a hard time finding dates on their calendars for the demand that is placed upon them. This is an outgrowth of the fresh wind of the Spirit that's blowing upon the church today. 



*I have never seen so many people come to Christ
in so short a time as we're seeing today.*

Do The Work of an Evangelist

BY DR. BILLY GRAHAM

Adapted from messages by Dr. Graham

There has never been a moment of such worldwide preparation for the proclamation of the gospel as we see right now.

People are disillusioned. Secular answers have failed them. As a culture, we have tried everything in our search for peace, security, and fulfillment and have not found it. Materialism, politics, drugs and alcohol, sex and money, the occult and Satan worship, false philosophies and religions—they have all failed. That is why millions are open to the message of the hope of new life in Christ.

These words of Jesus challenge me as never before: “Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). People are ready and waiting. Those on talk shows say, “I want something to satisfy. I want something for fulfillment, and I’m not finding it.” Their marriages are breaking; the home is crumbling. Morals are going down.

My father was a farmer, and I know something about farming. He probably wished I knew a lot more about it. But I have learned one thing—harvesttime is short. This is harvesttime in America, Canada, Mexico, and all around the world. I have never seen so many people come to Christ in so short a time as we’re seeing today.

The Holy Spirit supernaturally takes the message and communicates it to the heart and mind with power.

THE EVANGELISTIC MESSAGE

When Paul left Corinth, what did he say? “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). That was his message. He

could have used his intellectual ability or his oratory but he didn’t.

I was in Australia on the opening night of a crusade in a large stadium. I turned to Archbishop Marcus Loane, one of the greatest men of God I have known and the chairman of our crusade, and I asked him, “Marcus, what should I preach on tonight?”

He said, “Preach on John 3:16, and preach on it every night you are here for 3 weeks. That’s the message that needs to be heard in Australia.”

If you could ask Paul, “How did you communicate the gospel? What was your secret?” he would say, “I preached Christ.” Paul knew there is a built-in power in the gospel message, and the preacher doesn’t have to work it up. We need to know that when we stand up and proclaim the message or when we communicate it to a person in individual counseling.

Paul knew that the Holy Spirit takes the simple message of the Cross, with its message of redemptive love and grace through the proclaiming of Christ, and infuses it into lives with authority and power. When we preach Christ crucified, there’s power—dynamite—in it (cf. 1 Corinthians 15).

Proclaimers of the gospel must always realize, as Paul stressed, that the natural man simply cannot accept the truth of Christ unless the veil is lifted by the Holy Spirit. But the marvelous truth is, the Holy Spirit supernaturally takes the message and communicates it to the heart and mind with power. And He breaks down every barrier. No evangelist or preacher can have God’s touch on his or her ministry until he or she realizes this and preaches in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, the Holy Spirit is the communicator.

No evangelist or preacher can have God’s touch on his or her ministry until he or she realizes this and preaches in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As I begin to
communicate,
I can trust the
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human heart
that hears.

WHY EVANGELISM IS EFFECTIVE

When I proclaim the gospel—whether it is on a street corner in Nairobi or in a meeting in Seoul, a tribal situation in Zaire, or a large stadium in New York City—I know that certain things are true in the hearts and minds of all people, psychological and spiritual factors that exist in everyone. As I begin to communicate, I can trust the Holy Spirit to strike responsive chords in every human heart that hears.

Evangelism is effective because:

1. *Life's needs are not totally met by social improvement or material affluence.* That is true in every culture. Jesus said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15, NIV).

2. *There is an essential emptiness in every life without Christ.* All humanity keeps crying for something. Give a person a million dollars—it doesn't satisfy. Give a person sex and every form of sensuality, but they will never satisfy the deep longing inside that keeps crying for satisfaction. I have heard the pitiful cry of university students who are intellectually, psychologically, and spiritually lost.

Pascal put it right, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in every life that only God can fill." When we proclaim the gospel, we are talking directly to that emptiness. The person with whom you are communicating, whether in personal witnessing or before a group, has a built-in receptivity to the message of the Cross, because Christ alone can fill the void.

3. *We can assume in our hearers a loneliness, which some call a cosmic loneliness.* People aren't sure what they are lonely for. They can be lonely with their spouse. They can be lonely in a crowd. It is a loneliness that only God can fill, and they don't understand it.

4. *We are speaking to people who have a sense of guilt.* This most universal of all human experiences is devastating. The head of a mental institution in London said, "I could release half of my patients if I could but find a way to rid them of their sense of guilt." Mark Twain was once asked, "What are the two most important words in the English language?" He thought a moment, then replied, "Not guilty."

When we preach Christ, we are speaking directly to the nagging, depressing problem of guilt. You don't make people feel guilty; they already feel guilty. Tell them their guilt is

because of their rebellion against God, and tell them the Cross is the only answer.

5. *There is a universal fear of death.* Somehow television, by replaying old movies with actors who have died, has cushioned death. Yet, if you listen carefully to the radio or the television, the specter is still there. The subtle fear cannot be silenced. But here is the glorious news: Our Lord came to nullify death! In His own death and resurrection, He made three things inoperative for those who believe in Him: sin, death, and hell. That is the message of the Cross, and it is good news!

*The person with whom you
are communicating...has a
built-in receptivity to the
message of the Cross, because
Christ alone can fill the void.*

PREACH EVANGELISTICALLY

- *Communicate the gospel with authority.* Preach it with assurance, remembering that faith comes through hearing the Word (cf. Romans 10:17). Dr. Sid Bonnell said to his class at Princeton: "If you are preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the hearers will hear another 'Voice.' " No one is preaching until the people are conscious of that other Voice. Are people conscious of that other Voice when you preach? Are you Spirit-filled (cf. Ephesians 5:18), and are your messages filled with the Bible? One reason people listened to Jesus was that He spoke with *authority*.

- *Preach the gospel with simplicity.* Dr. James S. Stewart, of Edinburgh, said, "You never preach the gospel unless you preach it with simplicity." He added, "If you shoot over the heads of your hearers, you don't prove anything except that you have a poor aim." That was one of the secrets of our Lord: "The common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37). Why? They understood Him. He spoke their language.

- *Preach with repetition.* Professor James Denney, of Glasgow, once said that Jesus probably repeated himself more than 500 times. That is an encouragement to every evangelist. The gospel may at times seem *old* to us. But repeat and repeat and repeat it. It is *news* to multitudes. Never tire, and never be

embarrassed to share the news over and over again.

- *Preach with urgency.* You may be speaking to some who will hear the gospel for the last time. Dwight L. Moody was preaching in Chicago, and one night he decided not to give an invitation. He was going to wait and let the conviction build, as they used to do in those days. But that night the great Chicago fire came, and he was able to escape by going out into Lake Michigan. While he was there he said, "Oh God, I didn't give an invitation to those people who are going to be killed tonight." From then on, for the rest of his life, he never preached anywhere without giving an invitation for people to come to Christ.

- *Preach for a decision.* Evangelistic preaching must include an appeal for decision—an appeal for men and women to decide for Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not merely a set of facts to which a person can give intellectual assent. It is a call for an individual to turn in repentance from sin and neglect of God and to turn to Christ in faith, accepting Him as Lord and Savior.

Tell people they must make a decision. Then explain clearly how you want them to respond—it may be a handshake, or raising their hand, or coming forward for prayer and spiritual instruction. Make sure their names are recorded and that there is a method for follow-up. Make sure they are introduced to Christians and to a church where they can grow in the faith.

But if our hearts are not right before God and our lives are not pure, we cannot expect Him to bless when we call people to accept Christ. When I give the invitation, I know that I am totally dependent on God. This is the moment I feel emotionally, physically, and spiritually drained because of the spiritual battle going on in the hearts of so many people. We must be in an attitude of inward groaning and agonizing in prayer.

An evangelistic message makes a person see who he or she is in the light of God's Word. It makes a person see what decision must be made in response to the message. Throughout the message ask questions like: "Have you ever really trusted Christ? Do you know that if you died right now you would go to heaven?" Also say, "You can't remain neutral about Christ. Let Christ come into your life right now

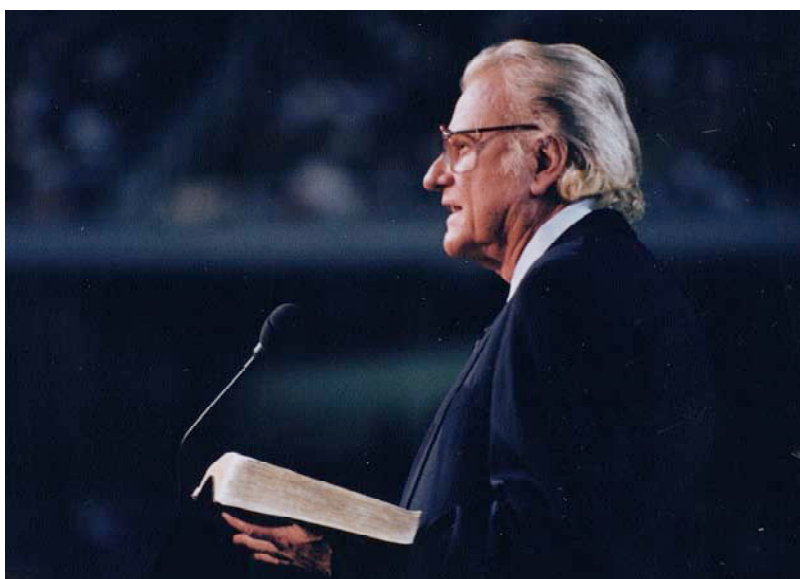



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

In His own death and resurrection, He made three things inoperative for those who believe in Him: sin, death, and hell. That is the message of the Cross, and it is good news!

and cleanse you from your sins and give you a new purpose for living." Throughout the sermon I try to make it clear that the gospel demands a decision that involves the intellect and the emotions, but primarily it involves the will.

I am glad that God has allowed me to see a new dawning for evangelism. Evil is very strong, but God is stronger! Humanity is on a self-destructive binge, but God is still in the business of turning men and women's lives around and bringing them to himself. Perhaps we are in the last days. I rather think we are—the days that Joel spoke of and Peter spoke of at Pentecost. This is a wonderful day to be alive and to bring people to Christ! 

Billy Graham lives in North Carolina with his wife Ruth. He has personally preached to over 100 million people in crusades and other meetings, and millions more have heard him on television or film. This article was adapted by Bill Conard, a staff member of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, from messages Dr. Graham delivered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and Louisville, Kentucky. His autobiography entitled Just As I Am, published this year by HarperCollins and Zondervan, encourages every Christian to continue sharing the good news of Christ.

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Tell them their guilt is because of their rebellion against God, and tell them the Cross is the only answer.

INTERVIEW WITH TOMMY AND MATTHEW BARNETT AND DANIEL DE LEÓN

I Staking a Claim in the Heart of the Inner City

THE PURPOSE OF L.A. INTERNATIONAL CHURCH IS TO GET PEOPLE OFF THE STREETS... AND INTRODUCE PEOPLE TO THE LOVE OF JESUS.

—Matthew Barnett



L.A. INTERNATIONAL CHURCH



PHOTOMANIPLATION: THE ART SOURCE

PHOTOS: BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Throughout Scripture there is a continuing theme of God's love for the city. The spiritual transformation of America's cities is one of the greatest challenges before the Church.

Although major cities have become the domain to the poverty stricken, the homeless, prostitutes, drug and alcohol addicts, and violent gang activity, two churches have counted the cost and are helping the brokenhearted in the inner city find new life in Jesus Christ. Templo Calvario, pastored by Daniel de León, and L.A. International Church, under the leadership of Tommy and Matthew Barnett, have developed urban strategies that are reaching thousands in the Los Angeles area with the life-changing message of God's love. Their methods are different but the message and results are the same.

TELL US ABOUT TEMPLO CALVARIO AND L.A. INTERNATIONAL CHURCH, KNOWN AS THE DREAM CENTER.

DE LEÓN: My grandmother's family was one of the first pioneering families who started Templo Calvario back in the 1920s. Little did she know that 60 years later her own grandson would be the pastor of this church. My father-in-law pastored Templo Calvario here in Santa Ana from 1959 to 1965. I was asked to be interim pastor 20 years ago and have been here ever since. My first Sunday as pastor we had 60 people in attendance. Now we have just under 4,000.

We celebrate our past. God has been very faithful. Some people think that Templo



Templo Calvario Assembly of God

Calvario has always been a large church. However, we had a very humble beginning. A group of men and women filled with faith said, "We don't care what comes our way. We're going to reach out and do great things for God." Today we're filled with the faith that those pioneers gave us.

We celebrate our present victories. God has been wonderful to us. We have a large sanctuary and a large enough building to provide for all the programs that are needed to help our families. Besides our day care and bookstore for the community and church family, we're on television reaching most of the Spanish-speaking world.

We set a goal in 1990 of starting 15 churches. We've opened 13. We set a goal of winning 3,000 people to the church in the decade. We're at 2,100. We have opened a total of 67 churches worldwide. Some of them are bilingual, and others are all English depending on where the church is located. A lot of our churches are in Mexico. Last year a couple of fellows came up here and got saved, baptized in water, and baptized in the Spirit. We trained them, and now they are back home being used by God in a powerful way.

Mexico enacted a new law that every church had to belong to an organization that was recognized in the country. A lot of our churches went over to the Assemblies of God—they were young and growing, and the time was right. Praise the Lord! We're happy with what God has done.

*Tommy and Matthew Barnett
preside over the weekly staff meeting.
Some 100 people attend each week.*



*Pastor Daniel de León
preaching on Sunday
morning at Templo
Calvario.*

**We dare to
believe and
anticipate that
our dreams
will be
a reality
with the help
of God.**

—de León



PHOTO BY JOEL KILPATRICK

We recently received a distinction for being one of the largest- and fastest-growing Hispanic churches in the nation. We have five services each Sunday—three Spanish and two English with Sunday schools in between.

M. BARNETT: L.A. International Church (the Dream Center) has grown from 65 to over 1,000 members ministering to more than 11 nationalities and ethnic groups including: Korean, Messianic Jew, Filipino, Hispanic, Anglo, Chinese, Cambodian, Russian, Armenian, Native American, and African-American. We currently house over 300 homeless and 90 workers in 3 different buildings. The children of our workers go to school here at the Dream Center.

The purpose of L.A. International Church is to get people off the streets, off drugs and alcohol, offer elementary and high school activities, train in various vocations, and introduce people to the love of Jesus.

We began housing, feeding, and clothing needy individuals and families in September 1994 out of Bethel Temple (one of the first churches birthed out of the Azusa Street revival).

We get all kinds of people here—cocaine, heroin, and crack addicts. They have to go through detox for a month or more before they come here. We will not accept them unless they go to the altar and are saved.

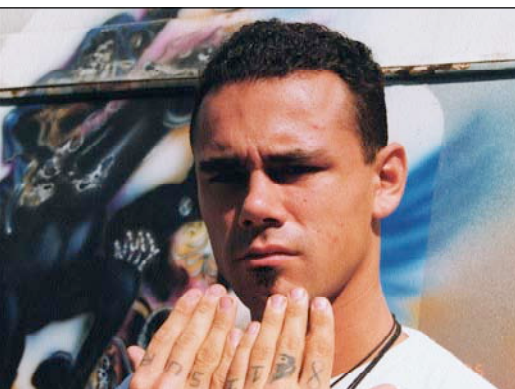


PHOTO BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Johnny Madrid shows his old tattoos. A teenage transient rescued from the occult, Madrid now returns to the streets to lead other youths to Jesus.

**We will succeed
because we have
decided to go
forward for God.**

—Tommy Barnett

T. BARNETT: We moved into the Dream Center in September 1995. We're still just barely in here. It's a miracle. This building was Queen of Angels, a Catholic hospital. Until 1985, 70 percent of the babies born in Los Angeles were delivered in this hospital. Many movies and TV shows filmed in the L.A. area used this facility—*Apollo 13*, *Nixon*, *NYPD*, and *ER*.

This thing is still not in full swing. Of over 140 different ministries, we even have a rehabilitation furniture place where we do sufboards.

We have every color hair and every kind of person you can think of. We have a young man named Bobby who is a survivor of the trouble in Waco. Then there's Hollywood who was a male stripper, and his wife was a prostitute. Now they are saved and living at the Dream Center. One is in nursing school, and the other is trying to get into medical school.

WHAT ARE THE THEMES OF YOUR MINISTRIES AND THE KEYS TO THEIR GROWTH?

M. BARNETT: "No soul winning, no ministry" is the theme that everybody knows, and they all participate. Our people are involved in soul winning every single day of the week—all the workers and leaders. We believe there is no separation in the inner city between the pulpit and the pew. The pastor is out there doing the same thing as the people. The leaders set the example and lead by inspiration and motivation.

DE LEÓN: "Share the ministry; give to the needs of people" is our main theme of ministry. We follow the et cetera concept to "Evangelize, Train, Commission." Our one-on-one soul-winning tool says:

"You are one person, and you bring another person. If there are five members of your family, then bring five people." And our leadership motto is: Faithful, Available, Teachable.

Some of the keys to the growth of our ministry are:

1. *Prayer.* Prayer is No. 1—it has to be. We are a praying church. Early every morning the prayer chapel is open. We have Tuesday and Wednesday morning prayer meetings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, besides the early morning hour. On Tuesday night, we have 60 men praying together and 60 women ministering to one another. On Friday night, there is a prayer vigil. We have prayer towers in the neighborhoods.

2. *Strong pulpit ministry.* It's the center of the ministry of our church.

3. *Strong leaders.* We reproduce ourselves through the Faithful, Available, Teachable concept. I tell those wanting a role of leadership: "If you want to be a leader, you must be characterized by these three things." Otherwise, we won't even select them—they will only be a problem to us. We believe our leaders mirror themselves in other leaders.

4. *Homegrown pastors.* Most of our pastors were saved, filled with the Spirit, and called in our church. We don't believe in transplanting leadership. Our leaders are loyal. We can trust them. They know our heart and vision.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR MOST RECENT MINISTRIES AND OUTREACHES IN THE L.A. AREA?

DE LEÓN: We are excited about our latest endeavor to bring in a medical facility—to provide free vaccinations, free eye exams, and general checkups for children of underprivileged families. We are in the initial process now.

In 1995 another great leap of faith was taken by our growing church. Templo Calvario opened the first bilingual preschool and day care facility in Orange County. We are able to minister to the needs of families by providing a Christ-centered education in the heart of the inner city. With the day care center

already established, it's a wonderful way to tie in with the parents and tell them: "Listen, if you want vaccinations for your children, we're going to have a clinic here where you can get it all done free." For ladies who are pregnant, doctors will give them free prenatal care. We hope to offer help with basic medicine at a 40 or 50 percent discount. Western Medical Hospital is involved in the network, so it will all tie together.

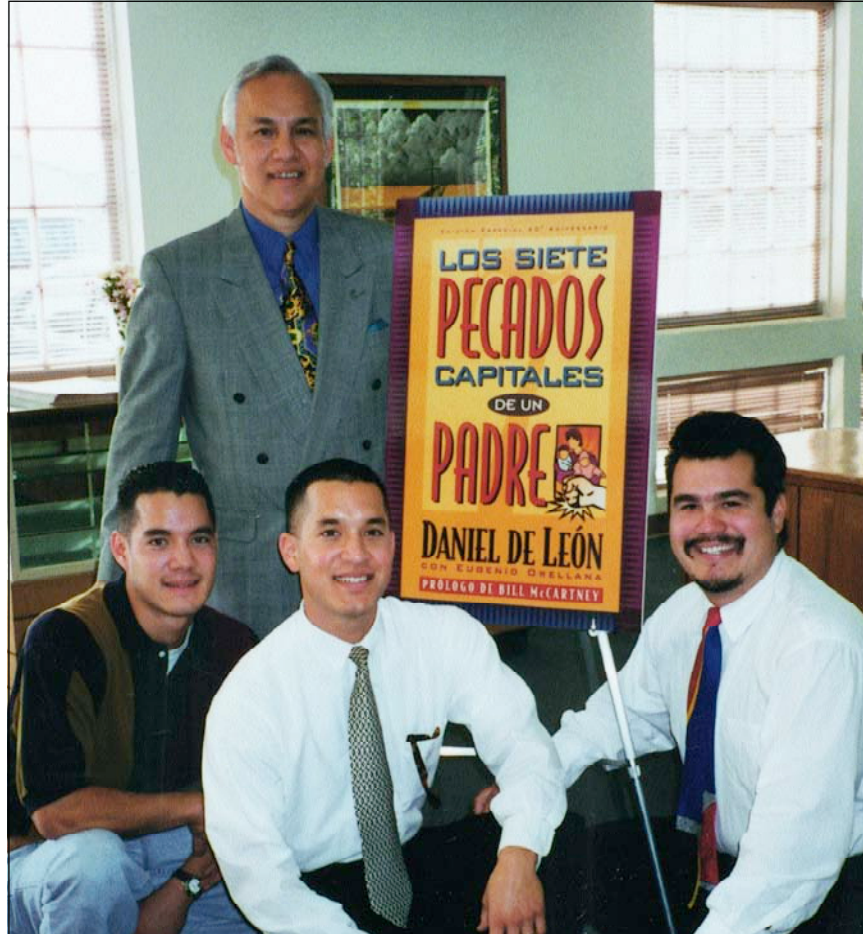
We also started a bookstore a year ago. All these exciting endeavors have taken the church to a different level. We are looking at and anticipating greater things for the Lord in the future.

T. BARNETT: The ninth floor of our main building is a prayer room. We have nightly prayer meetings there, but it is open 24 hours.

We recently received
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the nation.
—de León

M. BARNETT: We offer everything from gymnastic training to intense Bible study to counseling. We find a need and then try to fill it.

Right now we are turning 46 rooms on the entire sixth floor in the hospital into a community center with a library. We're putting in a computer center where kids can get after-school computer lessons. We have a recycling program where kids recycle a certain amount of trash and get school supplies. One of our newer programs is teaching kids gymnastics. My dream is to someday



Daniel de León with his sons Danny, Jr., Joey, and Steve.

have a whole gymnastics center where we can teach young kids in the neighborhood and even train them for the Olympics. We also give wrestling lessons in our workshops.

We want to give kids a dream. We have a dream room and an inspirational room where people can come in and be inspired by watching footage of different sports heroes, different places, and museums. We have motivational things such as sermons and tapes playing all the time.

T. BARNETT: It takes a lot of imagination.

M. BARNETT: We also have a room where we display job openings on a huge oak job board. We are planning a department store next door where we'll schedule different shopping days for different groups. For example, Monday night only fathers can shop, and Tuesday night only the homeless can shop.

We have an after-school tutoring program, and we offer elective classes

nightly. Monday and Tuesday night electives in Old and New Testament Survey are required for those in discipleship.

There are 123 junior high and high schools in the L.A. area. We are the only Christian group that is actively going in and talking to the kids about the Dream Center and inviting them to church. During the summer school sessions, we speak to 2,000 to 6,000 young people each week. We are setting up an after-school program where we bring in a trailer and are able to tutor, counsel, and encourage kids that need help. We will share Jesus with these young people. We will be able to talk to over one million young people during the school year. God has opened up this great opportunity for us in the L.A. public school system.

With our outreaches, we first of all pick out neighborhoods based on the lowest poverty—where we feel there is devastation. That's our target point. We start a mile from church and send in trucks to the different neighborhoods. A stage pulls out from each truck, and we have an hour-long, action-packed kids

program. Then at the end of the program, we distribute food to entire families. Before we even get to church on Sunday, we have been in 30 neighborhoods during the week. Each neighborhood averages 300 to 400 children, some teenagers and adults. We reach around 8,000 to 9,000 people in an outdoor church setting before Sunday.

We also reach out to the prostitutes on Hollywood Boulevard. We've been here for so long now that when they see our vans, they know what we're about. We talk with them, but they also know that we have a van that will take them back to the Dream Center in case they are in trouble. Oftentimes they escape from their pimps and come over to our place.

When we go over to Venice Beach, we bring a group of 250 to 300 people from the church—bikers and straitlaced people. We bring every kind of person. We come in as one big army, like a fair coming to town. We walk in, set up, and have a free outdoor concert right on the beach. Of course Venice Beach is not just a beach—it's a gang beach.

In our community block outreach program, we adopt whole neighborhoods. Five people in our church give their life to that one block. They don't worry about anything else. They take care of that block and work on getting the people saved.

MATTHEW, YOU RECENTLY WENT THROUGH A DIFFICULT SITUATION. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT IT.

M. BARNETT: There was a man who came to church several times. When I was finally able to talk with him he said, "I've got a way you can raise all the money you need."

I said, "How's that?"

"I've got AIDS, and I'm dying," he said. "I want to show the world the frustration and anger I have. So in April I'm going to shoot you and then kill myself right on the stage of your church."

Every week he would say, "You don't believe me, do you?" Then on one occasion he pulled out a gun and said, "I'll kill you right now."



Buses bring in hundreds to LAIC from skid row for a meal and a message.

PHOTO: BY JOEL KIL-

I said, "Let me tell you something. You can pull that trigger and if it goes off, I'll be in heaven—a much better place than downtown L.A. But I believe the Lord will protect me." Then he ran out of the service.

Well he didn't come the month of April. He came back the first week of June. He had lost weight, and his hair was gray. AIDS was starting to get to him. He said, "I was walking down the street on Friday night, and the Holy Spirit struck me with conviction. What I've done to you is an awful thing. You know, every time I saw you I had the greatest respect for you. You always glowed like Jesus, and the Holy Spirit was right behind you. I want to accept Christ and have my life changed."

I led him in the sinner's prayer that night. He accepted the Lord, and we sent him to a Christian treatment center.

It's the most amazing thing. Every week he threatened to kill me. It was like a 4-month-long trial.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO THINK THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR YOUR MINISTRY?

T. BARNETT: You know the odds are against something like the Dream Center ever succeeding. But it will succeed because everyone here sees each other in our good and bad moments.

If we succeed, it will not be accidentally. It'll be on purpose. We know each

other's failings and mistakes. We will succeed because we have decided to go forward for God.

*We offer
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to intense Bible study
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We find a need
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—Matthew Barnett

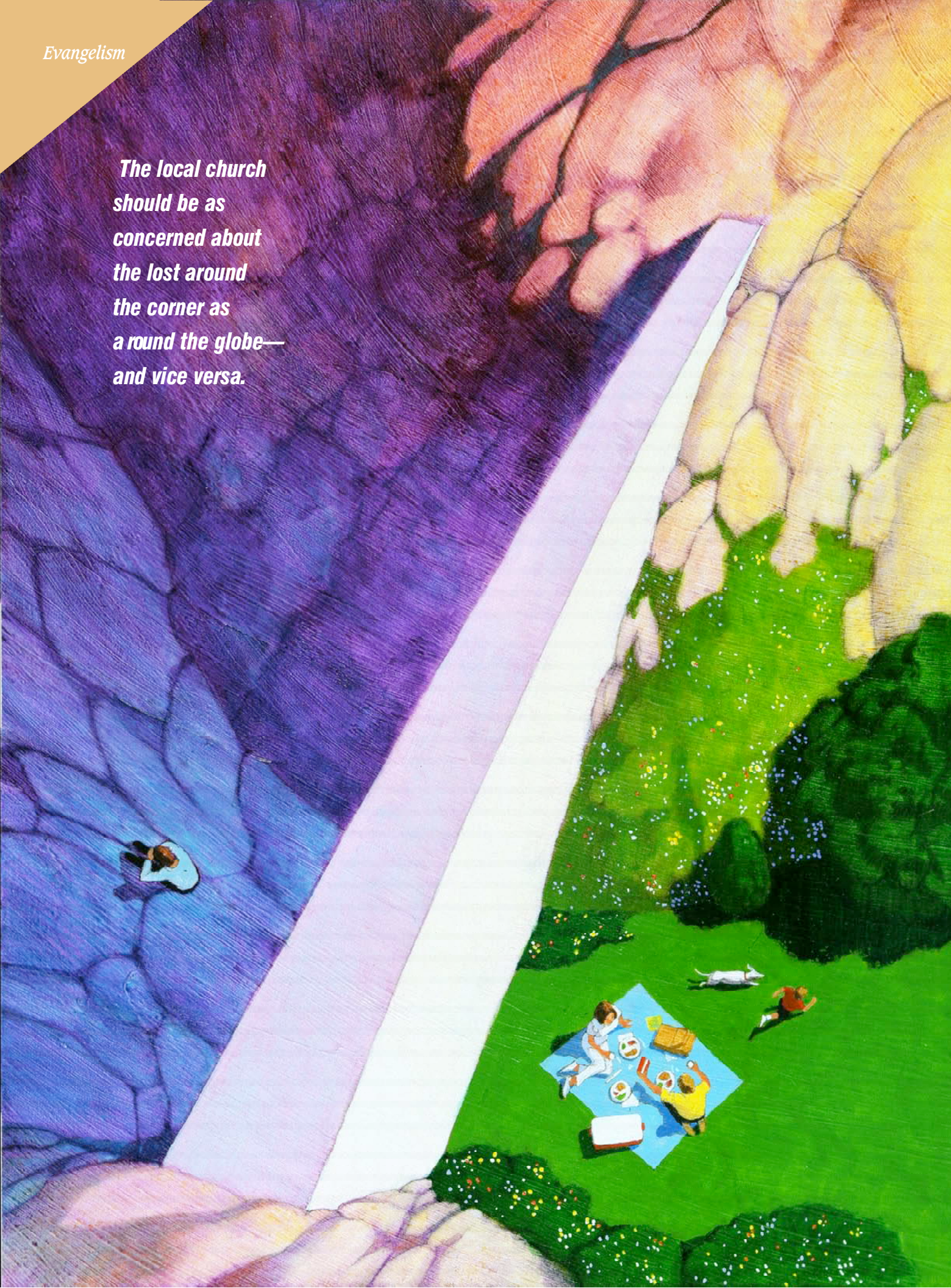
DE LEÓN: We anticipate a glorious future. We're going to have problems, but with God all things are possible. So we dare to believe and anticipate that our dreams will be a reality with the help of God. We're filled with a spirit of celebration because God has been with us in the past; God has been wonderful in the present; and God will be with us in the future. **E**

Tommy Barnett is senior pastor of First Assembly of God, Phoenix, Arizona.

Matthew Barnett is pastor of L.A. International Church, Los Angeles, California.

Daniel de León is senior pastor of Templo Calvario, Santa Ana, California.

*The local church
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the corner as
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and vice versa.*



Overcoming Evangelism Barriers

BY D. JAMES KENNEDY

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Great Commission describes a continuum of outreach from the local community to peoples around the globe. The local church should be as concerned about the lost around the corner as around the globe—and vice versa.

The resources at our disposal to achieve local and world evangelism are unmatched in church history. Never before have so many organizations been devoted to evangelism—setting off an explosion of books, workbooks, publications, videos, seminars, and training ministries. The electronic church has more outlets—including cable, satellite, and now even the Internet—to spread the good news. An astounding variety of Christian music, computer games, and other entertainment is available to attract unbelievers of every age and interest. Instant E-mail communications allow workers around the globe to support each other with the click of a mouse button.

Christians are enjoying enormous successes in evangelism and church growth. A generation ago, a church of 1,000 would have been considered a megachurch. Now churches of 20,000 members are not unknown. Breakthroughs are occurring worldwide. Missions outreaches have seen churches with literally thousands of members spring up in regions such as Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

A TIME OF TALL BARRIERS

Despite the resources at hand and promising breakthroughs, pastors and evangelical leaders are seeing a virtual forest of barriers arising to

keep churches from effective evangelism. Many churches are noticing signs of burnout when it comes to evangelistic activity.

Barriers to evangelism outreach can include:

A lack of time commitment. Never have families been under such time pressures. Today, most women work outside the home. Downsizing in the work community has increased the commitment that laypeople must give to their jobs. Yet, they expect *more* out of less leisure time—more outside interests, more activities for their children, and more entertainment from more outlets.

The losers in this time crunch are churches and evangelical outreaches. Church members are less willing to enter into long-term commitments. One pastor lamented, "I don't know why I can't get [members] more involved." It's

Laypeople need to be reminded that just as both local and global evangelism is every church's responsibility, it is also every member's responsibility.

The Experiences Nonchurched Adults Would Like—and Dislike— If They Visit a Church

Treatment of Visitor by the Church	Visitor Reaction	
	Like It	Dislike It
FAVORABLE PRACTICES		
Nothing special during service; treated no differently	80%	13%
Greeted individually after the service by people	78	17
Information about the church was made available	70	22
Received a thank-you note from the pastor that week	70	23
Voluntary, church-sponsored reception after the service	65	25
UNFAVORABLE PRACTICES		
Pastor or church person visited your home that week	32	64
Asked to wear a name tag at the service	26	65
Asked to identify yourself as a visitor during service	22	72
Small gift brought to home as a thank-you for visiting	21	72

—Adapted from *Evangelism That Works* by George Barna (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995) 67. Used by permission.

no wonder that many churches are hiring staff to do what volunteer laypeople used to do—including evangelism.

Finances. Households are under financial strain. Incomes are stagnating, while the costs of housing, taxes, college, and other necessities are rising.

And again, the church and parachurch are caught in the squeeze. Financial support for world and home missions is going down in many evangelical churches. Because of environmental regulations adding to building upkeep, and insurance and staffing costs going up, outreach—both local and global—is frequently the first to suffer.

The shift to a post-Christian culture. Americans are cocooning. Instead of sharing life with the neighborhood, the community, and especially the church, they are self-absorbed in their home entertainment centers, fitness equipment, computers, and the Internet. Telecommuters are even working from home.

This isolation is intensified by the suspicion Christians are sometimes viewed with today. At one time, Christians and church leaders were the most respected in the community. To be a church deacon was a badge of public

honor. Today, however, nonbelievers are being influenced by the opinion of some people in media and government that the evangelical church is intolerant and intrusive.

Meanwhile, competition is intensifying. Even pagan and humanistic approaches have taken hold. Top-grossing movies are studded with New Age themes; books by Eastern mystics have climbed to the highest rungs of the best-seller lists; and gurus of the “new spirituality” are being invited into major corporations to offer stress management and success seminars.

How have these barriers affected the local church's pursuit of its responsibility to evangelism? Some feel that North America is becoming a secondary force in the global church and on the home front.

Churches need to make a commitment to cross-cultural ministry.

HOW WE CAN OVERCOME

How can local churches overcome these obstacles and carry on the task of world evangelism?

The most effective form of outreach has always been personal outreach.

Churches and their leaders need to:

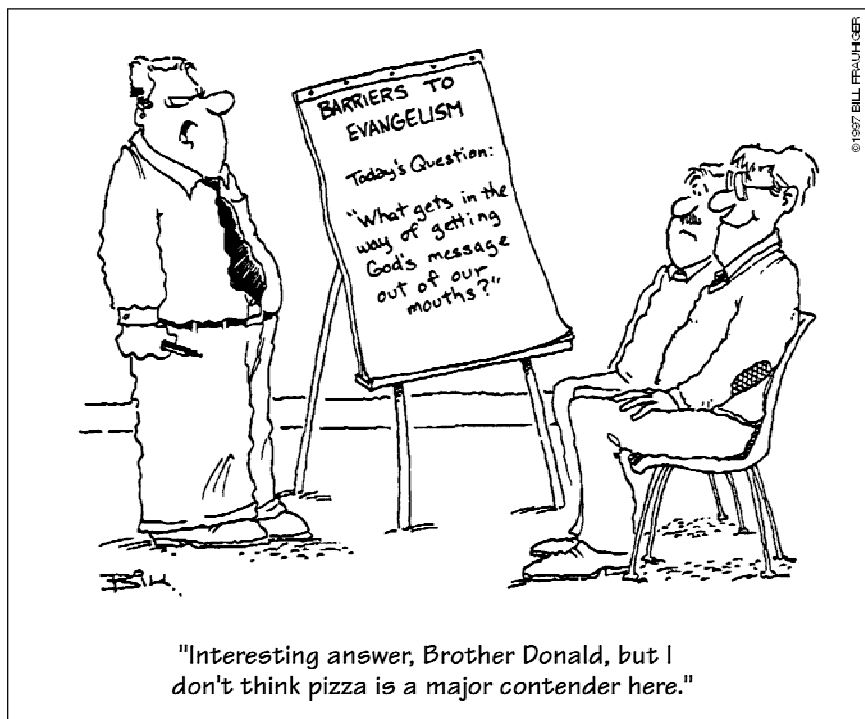
Renew the vision for worldwide evangelism. Local church leaders should lay out bold visions for their flocks for home and global outreach. They should ask: Can we get into the new housing development in our city? Can we dramatically increase the number of conversions and new members we experience this year? Can we add additional missionary families to our missions monthly support budget? Such visions will challenge members and give them a chance to see what God can do through a motivated and active congregation.

Reenergize and equip the laity. Laypeople need to be reminded that just as both local and global evangelism is every church's responsibility, it is also every member's responsibility. There simply will never be enough people to complete the job of local and world evangelism.

But lay members can't just be sent out as lambs among wolves. They need to be prepared and trained as Christ did with His disciples. Evangelism Explosion is just one example of a simple-to-administer but effective evangelism and discipleship ministry as well as a means of developing lay leaders. It offers a system of church-based training that includes a carefully developed and effective presentation of the gospel, as well as methods of presentation and learning that develop not just soul-winners but also trainers of soul-winners.

Adapt to the culture. Unfortunately, many churches stick with past approaches even after they have proved ineffective for penetrating a changed culture. As Christ made clear, new wine calls for new wineskins—and new methods.

For that reason, last year we shortened and simplified our materials to



accommodate tightened schedules. Earlier this year EE brought together a convocation of denominational, church, and individual leaders in evangelism to determine how best to meet the needs of churches in a changing culture. The purpose was to lay out a road map for the future direction of evangelicalism.

Jimmy Davis, national evangelists representative for the Assemblies of God, who attended the convocation stated that evangelism ministries need to move forward to reflect “the rapid change from the information age to the imagination age.”

***There are as
many workable methods
and combinations
of methods as
there are churches.***

One particular cultural development upon which the church needs to capitalize is the arrival of the world on our doorstep. Here is an area where world and local evangelism can truly come

together. Churches need to make a commitment to cross-cultural ministry—a commitment highlighted in the Great Commission reference to reaching Samaria, a hated people the Jews would have normally shied away from.

Find cost-effective approaches. Training ministries that can be run entirely by laypeople do not require expensive facilities. The cost of training materials is minimal. Ministries such as these can have a major impact on church outreach but a small impact on the church budget.

Capitalize on electronic communications but not rely on them. There's no question the church should take advantage of every means to reach unbelievers, including continuing to use television in its many current formats, as well as the Internet and on-line services.

But we should remember that the most effective form of outreach has always been personal outreach to friends, neighbors, relatives, and associates. More than 8 in 10 Christians have come to the Lord through friendship evangelism, which is still the

most effective way of overcoming the freeze-out of the church in our culture. Christians need to be trained to capitalize on these relationships.

Work together. There are as many workable methods and combinations of methods as there are churches, with plenty of room for everyone to work cooperatively to reach the lost.

Remember to let God work. The Great Commission is Christ's program, and He will complete it in His time. Our role is to be faithful and to continue keeping His last command our top priority. That more than anything defines the responsibility for the local church and the parachurch in world evangelism across the continuum from Jerusalem... unto the uttermost part of the earth.” **E**

Dr. D. James Kennedy is senior pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and founder and president of Evangelism Explosion.

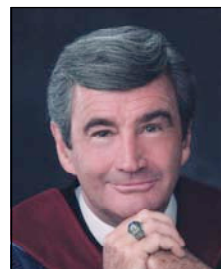


PHOTO: EXTERNALE PHOTOGRAPHY

The *Secret* To Building a Soul-Winning Church

BY CHARLES T. CRABTREE

Far too many believers, including clergy and laity, are apathetic to the opportunity for soul winning.

PARABLE OF TWO HEADQUARTERS

Springfield, Missouri, is a beautiful city nestled in the Ozark Mountains. It is the home of several powerful businesses and religious enterprises. Springfield is the headquarters city for the Assemblies of God and Bass Pro Shops, the undisputed champion of sporting goods stores. Added to the allure of this mecca of sporting goods are several wonderful lakes in the Springfield/Branson area.

Among my friends in Springfield is a rather wealthy businessman who claims to have visited Bass Pro Shops only once or twice because friends wanted to see it. He is not the least bit interested in fishing, so the new equipment he could buy stays on the store's shelves. The sleek new bass boat he could purchase stays on the showroom floor. And the fish he could catch in nearby lakes continue to swim unmo-lested.

Another friend who also lives in Springfield is not nearly as well off as my other friend, but no fish is safe anywhere in the region. He is a dedicated fisherman who does not let the lack of new equipment stop him from catching fish. He goes to Bass Pro Shops on a regular basis to buy what he really needs and to drool over what he cannot afford.

Both of my friends live in proximity to a major supplier of fishing equipment and wonderful lakes full of fish. Both could be effective fishermen, but only one chooses to catch fish. Therein lies the secret to a soul-winning church.

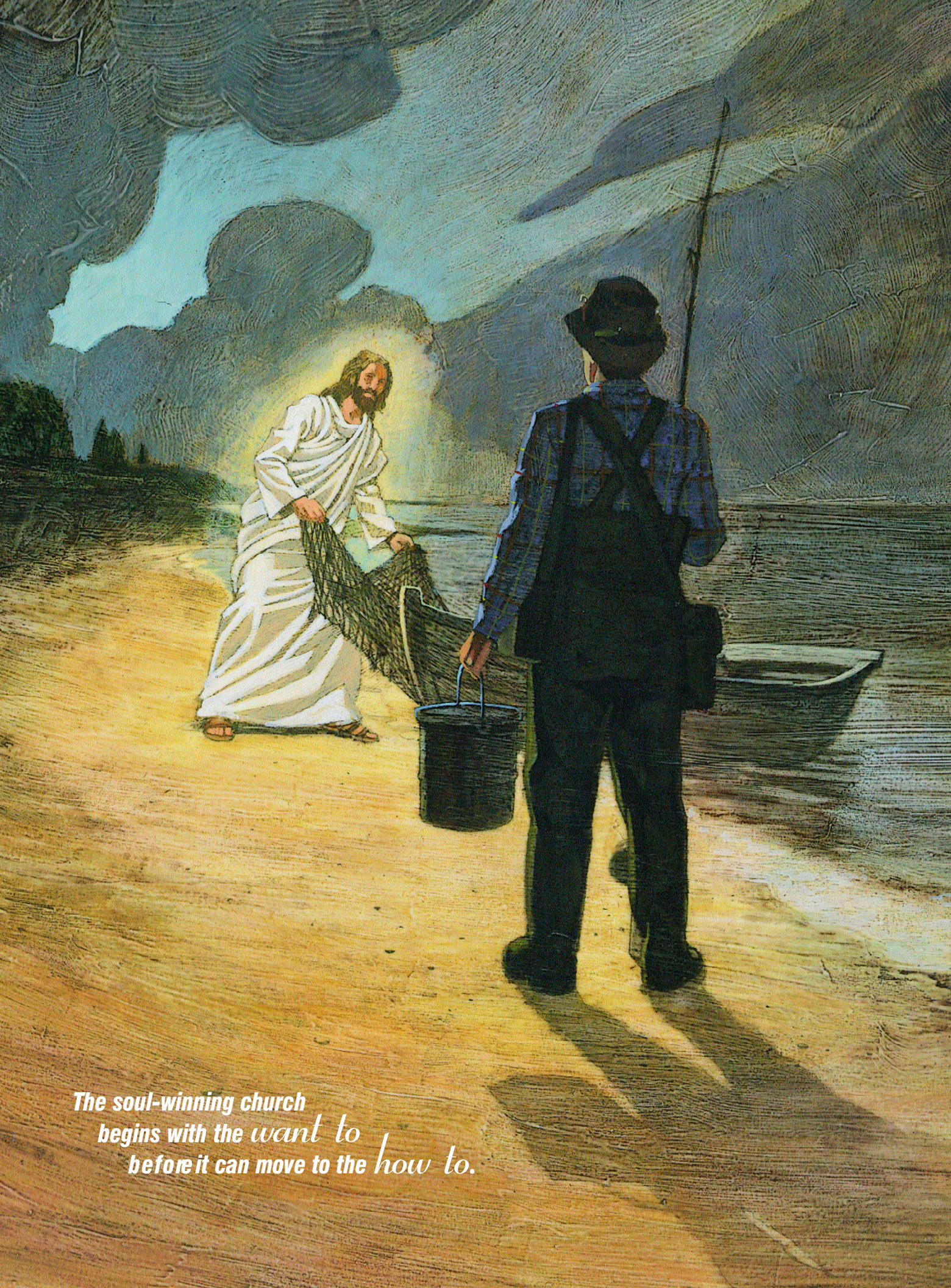
It was not by coincidence Jesus began to build His Church initially by choosing a number of disciples out of the fishing industry. His call to these men included a promise which interested them: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). He was saying to them, "Your motivation and skills in fishing are the dynamics I am looking for in a new kind of fishing industry."

Every believer should follow the Master and become a soul winner. Since the Church consists of believers who are called to be witnesses, it is logical to expect every church to be a soul-winning church. Sadly, this is not the case. Far too many believers, including clergy and laity, are apathetic to the opportunity for soul winning. If Jesus promised to make His followers fishers of men, it raises a question whether those who choose not to win souls are closely following the Master.

Somehow, soul winning must be seen as a joy, not a drudgery; a passion, not a duty; a thrill, not a downer.

SOUL-WINNING DESIRE

The soul-winning church begins with the *want to* before it can move to the *how to*. My friend who does not fish could be scolded over and over for not fishing, or he could be instructed against his will in how to fish and what equipment he needs for fishing; but it would do no good. The *want to* has to be born in his heart.



*The soul-winning church
begins with the want to
before it can move to the how to.*

Fishing has to become a desire. It must become a significant factor in his life.

How can I possibly make my disinterested friend become a fisherman? How can I motivate believers to become soul winners? How can leaders create a soul-winning church when there is no passion to reach the lost?

It all begins with the birth or renewal of desire. Somehow, soul winning must be seen as a joy, not a drudgery; a passion, not a duty; a thrill, not a downer.

SOUL-WINNING MOTIVATION

We would do well to remember that the joy of the Lord is our strength. This principle is at the heart of soul-winning motivation.

When Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men," He was offering His followers a better way of life. Before Jesus came, they had been satisfied to catch a certain kind of fish. Their lives revolved around the fishing business so they could exist. Jesus came to them with a

new basis for living so *others* could live.

No pastor or spiritual leader will ever motivate believers to become soul winners by making them feel guilty, pressured, or coerced. The only way believers will become soul winners is if they can experience the joy and fulfillment of leading someone to Christ.

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and fulfillment of
leading someone to Christ.***

Evangelism: Major Component in Church Growth

Results from a national evangelism survey revealed important differences in the attitudes and behaviors of pastors and laypeople from churches in different stages of attendance growth or decline.

In growing churches:

- *Evangelism is a priority to the pastor.* Pastors of growing churches are more likely to rate evangelism as one of their top three priorities than those that have stayed the same or decreased (42 percent vs. 29 percent).
- *Pastors are personally active in evangelism and are more aware of evangelism programs.* Pastors from growing churches are 50 percent more likely than those from maintaining or declining churches to have had a part in leading someone to Christ within the past month (46 percent vs. 30 percent).
- *More salvation messages are preached.* According to laypeople, more salvation messages are preached in growing churches (65 percent vs. 51 percent).
- *Evangelism efforts are more of a priority and better organized.* Laypeople from growing churches are twice as likely to rate the organization of their church's most recent evangelism efforts as excellent (30 percent vs. 15 percent).
- *Laypeople see themselves as part of the evangelism team.* Laypeople from growing churches disagree more that "the pastor is primarily responsible for evangelism" (83 percent vs. 72 percent). They are also more likely to perceive the entire church as being on the "evangelistic team."

In maintaining or declining churches:

- *Pastors aren't as personally in touch with non-Christians.* Pastors from churches that aren't growing are not rubbing shoulders with nonbelievers (13 percent vs. 6 percent).
- *Pastors see laypeople as unsupportive.* Pastors from churches that are not growing are more than twice as likely as others to rate lay support of evangelism programs as "poor" (37 percent vs. 17 percent).
- *Pastors and laypeople feel guilty, or at least sense a deficiency in their church.* Pastors from nongrowing churches agree more than others with the statement, "I feel guilty because I am not leading people to Christ on a regular basis" (47 percent vs. 33 percent).

—Adapted from National Evangelism Survey Results prepared by Mary Ellen Knapka (Carol Stream, Ill.: CTi, June 1995) 32-36. Used by permission.

Believers will only be motivated to become soul winners by soul winners. My disinterested friend will never get into fishing by himself. He is only going to get interested when somebody he cares for begins to testify about the thrill and satisfaction of catching fish. He will never head for the lake with fishing tackle if simply told he should by someone who does not fish. He will not get the urge to buy a boat if he hears horror stories about fishing—no nibbles for 8 hours, the one that got away, the boat that went aground, everyone got motion sickness.

The main reasons we do not have enough soul winners are:

1. *We do not have enough soul-winning pastors and leaders.* If soul winning is not a passion and joy in the life of leadership, it will certainly have no place in the lives of those who follow. People are not interested in theoretical truth.

2. *We drive people by guilt rather than leading them by an excited and effective role model.* Lots of people are turned off by preachers and teachers who shout mandates but leave out the promises.

3. *Soul winners talk too much of their failures and have no record of effectiveness.* You can just imagine how motivated new believers will become when they hear about doors being slammed,

testimonies being refused, and statistics showing how few who pray the sinner's prayer really become true believers. It reminds me of the proverbial ineffective broom salesman who knocked on the door with the question: "You don't want to buy a broom, do you?"

SOUL WINNING BY EXAMPLE

The soul-winning church begins with an excited, influential soul winner. No person in the church is more influential than the pastor. Pastors can have soul-winning churches if they are soul winners themselves—in the pulpit and outside the pulpit.

Believers are weary of being told what to do. They must be shown how to be effective witnesses and soul winners in the marketplace. A revival of soul winning in the church will take place when spiritual leaders become fishers of men outside the pulpit and then share the joy and fulfillment of these new experiences from the pulpit.

Pastors can have soul-winning churches if they are soul winners themselves—in the pulpit and outside the pulpit.

The most effective motivation in creating soul winners is not preaching about soul winning but telling about it. I saw this over and over in my own ministry. When I was pastoring, I would often preach about soul winning, but I was most effective when I could tell the congregation about a soul I had led to the Lord that week. What a joy I felt when people I was baptizing turned to me and thanked me for leading them to Christ at their workplace or in their home. In those moments, my congregation was able to relate to me as a witness of Christ as well as a pastor. As an undershepherd, I was able to say to them with authority, "Follow me as I follow the Lord, and I will help you become fishers of men."

KEYS TO A SOUL-WINNING CHURCH

1. *The soul-winning church has soul-winning leaders.* They create a hunger in others to become effective witnesses.

2. *The soul-winning church makes room for those who win souls to share their joy and testimony with the congregation.* Pastors would do well to have a witness box or a soul-winning window—time set aside in the service—to give opportunity for others to share the joy of fishing for men.

3. *A soul-winning pastor will give opportunity for souls to come to Christ service after service.* Altar calls are a priority in a Pentecostal church. If no one comes, it is still a victory because the opening of the altars reminds people why the church exists. Of course, when someone responds, the joy on earth becomes the joy of heaven.

4. *The soul-winning church has effective altar workers.* The training of altar workers creates soul winners. If people learn how to lead people to a saving knowledge of Christ at an altar, they will be able to do the same in a car, in a cafeteria, and in the corner of an office.

Some time ago, I was preaching in a soul-winning church that had a wonderful choir. I learned that people wanting to join the choir had to attend one musical tryout and three training sessions for altar ministry before they could take their place in the choir. When I gave the altar call, choir members streamed out of the choir loft to meet those coming to Christ. It is no wonder this particular church is flourishing.

Believers will only be motivated to become soul winners by soul winners.

Recently, one of my grandsons came to visit. He was barely in the door when he began to beg me to take him fishing. We had gone on his previous visit, and he had caught the fishing "bug" rather severely. At the time I could not go, but


did that stop him? Oh, no! He and grandma took off with a couple of poles and a few worms to go fishing. They did not catch much, but they caught more than I did. He did it! A 6-year-old with a pole, a hook, and a worm.

You may have started reading this article with a desire to find some new ideas and techniques to build a soul-winning church. Hopefully, the Spirit of God has gripped you with the secret of building a soul-winning church—a love for souls with the accompanying invitation to go fishing with the Master.

To me, the Parable of the Two Headquarters in Springfield is profound. The Assemblies of God and Bass Pro Shops are both in the fishing business. Both of these dynamic institutions are centers for equipping fishermen; however, neither of them can create a fisherman. They are only of interest and value to those who want to catch fish.

If you ever get an insatiable desire to catch bass, I recommend you visit Bass Pro Shops. They will offer you the latest in techniques and equipment. They are very effective in helping the person who really wants to catch bass.

If you ever get an insatiable desire to win souls, I recommend you call the headquarters of the Assemblies of God. They will offer you the latest in materials and guidance. Every department from children through senior citizens is effective in helping the person who really wants to catch souls.

If you have no interest in fishing for bass or men, neither organization can help you. However, if you really want to fish, you will find a way even if the preacher cannot go with you. Just a fishing pole, a hook, a worm, and a grandma will do. 



Charles T. Crabtree is the Assemblies of God assistant general superintendent.

THE CHURCH'S FORGOTTEN NO.1 PRIORITY



"As the old saying goes, we must keep the main thing the main thing, which is to throw lifelines of hope and peace to people trampled and overcome by despair."⁵

BY LUIS PALAU

Recently, a supporting church's finance committee notified us that it was cutting its support of our evangelistic association by 50 percent. Paraphrased, the letter said, "We love you. We think the world of you. But giving is down. May God provide for your needs." Nothing unusual. I'm sure every missions organization gets letters like this.

The church's weekly bulletin was in the same envelope. One announcement caught my attention: "The pastor and 20 men in the church will be leaving this week with their wives for a golf tournament in the Bahamas. Please pray for them."

Now I'm all for golf tournaments, and these 21 couples can spend their money any way they want. But I confess it bothered me that this church seemed to place greater emphasis on chasing a little white ball than on evangelistic ministry.

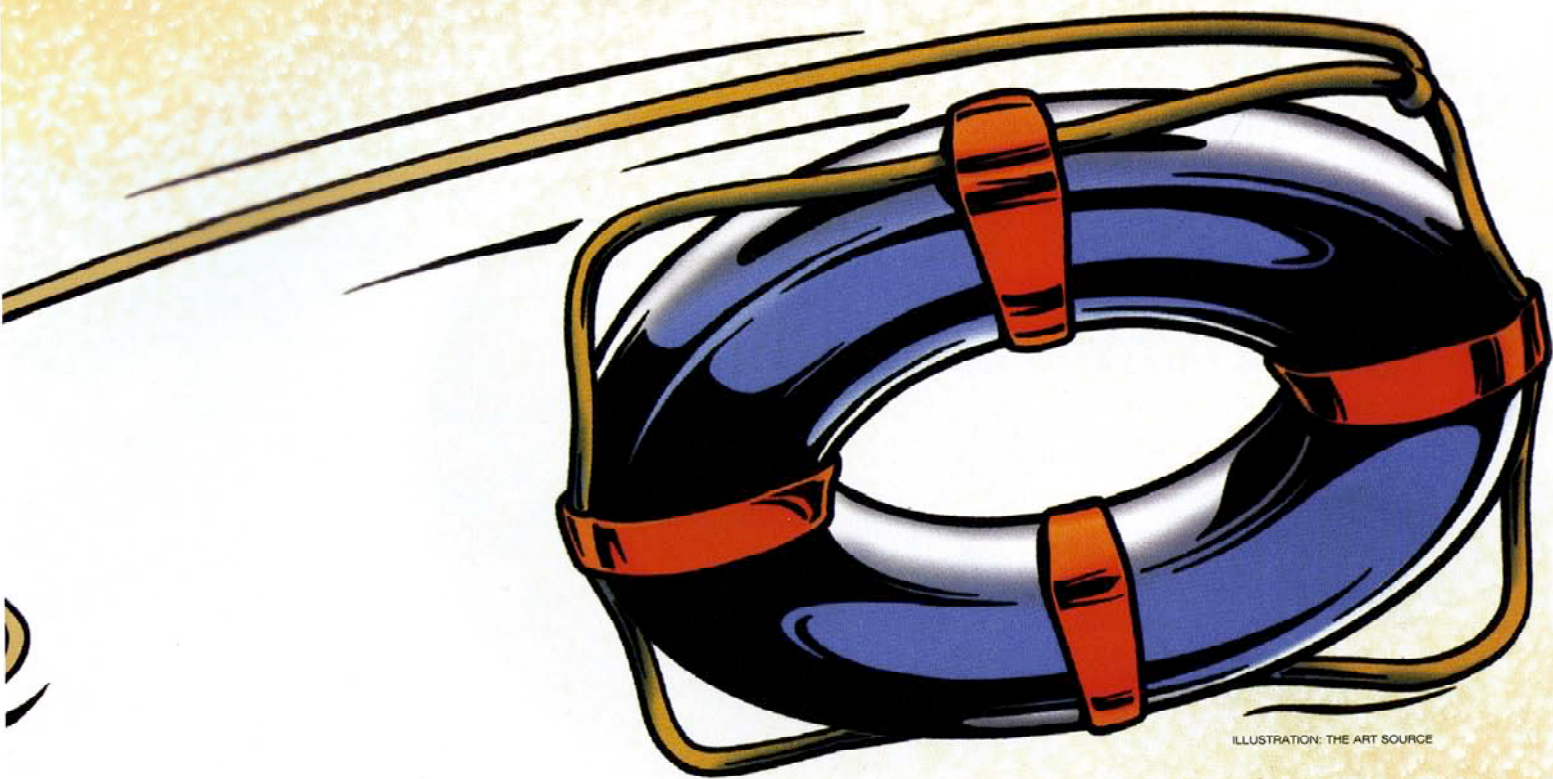


ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

I believe evangelism is the main work of the church. I have debated that point with friends. One of my mentors believes if you build up the church and worship right Sunday morning, emphasizing solid biblical exposition, church members will automatically witness at work and in the community throughout the week.

In 1966 at the World Congress on Evangelism, a respected evangelical statesman said, "Evangelism happens when the people of God walk with God." But 30 years of experience tells me it doesn't work that way. I know many worshipping people who don't share their faith—for them evangelism never happens. If evangelism happened naturally, the Lord wouldn't have commanded it repeatedly.

NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT

For a Christian, evangelism is the most important act of obedience to God's

FACTORS THAT MAY HINDER A CHURCH'S EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS

- The absence of vision for church-based evangelism;
- The lack of churchwide ownership of evangelism as a core value and activity;
- The absence of churchwide prayer for evangelistic efforts;
- A lack of significant relationships with nonbelievers;
- An attitude of disinterest in non-Christians;
- The goal of facilitating decisions rather than conversions;
- Too much reliance upon the pastor to make evangelism happen;
- Not enough strong leadership by the pastor in evangelism;
- The absence of a strategic plan for outreach;
- No accountability for meeting evangelistic goals and standards;
- The inability to change from existing methods to more effective methods;
- Poor-quality ministry activities;
- Having only one way for nonbelievers to enter the life of the church;
- Inadequate training of evangelizers;
- Allocating responsibility without giving authority;
- Failure to celebrate stellar efforts, obedience to God's call, and His blessings;
- Division among churches.

— Adapted from *Evangelism That Works* by George Barna (Ventura: Calif.: Regal Books, 1995) 139. Used by permission.

revealed will because there is nothing more important to God "who wants all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4*; cf. 2 Peter 3:9).

***If evangelism happened
naturally, the Lord wouldn't
have commanded it repeatedly.***

Jesus' mission is plain: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). We know His final command to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) as the Great Commission, not the great suggestion.

It's a commission largely ignored today.¹ There are pockets of action, but evangelism isn't a priority, let alone the No. 1 priority, for thousands of churches and Christians in America. Since 1990 when our association began to focus on the reevangelization of America, my team and I have led evangelistic crusades in more than 15 U.S. cities. In each city, those most opposed to evangelism have often been Christians. It takes a tremendous effort to persuade some Christians to come to an evangelistic meeting, let alone to pray for unsaved friends, practice friendship evangelism, and invite friends to come along to hear the gospel.

Before a recent crusade, my son Kevin gave a presentation in a large church. After he explained the upcoming opportunity to share the gospel with relatives, friends, and neighbors, he asked those in attendance to write down on the friendship evangelism prayer card five names of people they would invite to the evangelistic event. Although this evangelical church was generally supportive of the crusade, only 1 person out of 2,000 turned in the response portion of the prayer card.

I understand that the crusade evangelism method is the focus of some churches' misguided opposition, not evangelism itself. But in the months of preparation with churches and getting to know the pastors, our team members

discovered that most churches devote very little time to evangelism of any kind.

Sometimes opposition to a particular method of evangelism cloaks defensiveness about the content of the gospel. Some church members who are embarrassed about the gospel prefer to keep the "light under a bushel" and remain politically correct.

Arguing against a method is almost always a smoke screen for inaction. D.L. Moody's response to one critic of mass

***For a Christian, evangelism
is the most important act of
obedience to God's revealed
will because there is nothing
more important to God.***

evangelism methods was: "I don't like them too much myself. What methods do you use?" When the critic indicated he didn't use any evangelistic tools or activities, Moody said, "Well, I like the way I do it better than the way you don't."

PLEASE EXCUSE ME

Critics and nonparticipants abound. Here's just a few common excuses we hear from churches (and our responses) for not getting involved in evangelism:

- "We are too busy." *But are you busy about the Lord's most important work?*
- "We don't believe in evangelism." *What exactly do you believe? Is your church a Christian church?*
- "Right now our church is into prayer ministry." *Are you praying daily for your unsaved neighbors, relatives, and friends? Together let's tell them the gospel.*

PORTRAIT OF THE EVANGELISTIC MALAISE

We found that churches have an interest in growing numerically but have a very limited commitment to investing in evangelism. Results from a recent study indicated:

- For every dollar devoted to outreach activities, the average Protestant church spends more than \$5 on buildings and maintenance.
- Only 28 percent of senior pastors stated that seeing nonbelievers turn their lives over to Christ was at or near the top of their list of primary joys of pastoring.
- Only 12 percent of senior pastors strongly agreed that "most Christian adults are capable of effectively sharing their faith with nonbelievers."
- Less than 50 percent of senior pastors believed they were doing either an excellent or good job at leading their churches in evangelism.
- Less than 25 percent of pastors said their church could be described as evangelistic. Of the 14 attributes examined, evangelistic received the lowest rating.
- Seven out of 10 senior pastors ranked evangelism third in their list of priority choices for the coming year.
- On average, senior pastors said they devoted about 2 hours each week to evangelism activities.
- Only one out of three churches offered any kind of formal evangelism training.
- Only about 2 percent of the gross annual revenues received by the typical church were allocated for all of its local evangelistic endeavors.

— Adapted from *Evangelism That Works* by George Barna (Ventura: Calif.: Regal Books, 1995) 84. Used by permission.

- “We have to build up our saints first before we can do evangelism.” *What better way to build them up than by getting them involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission. According to the apostle Paul, God uses the gospel “to establish” believers (Romans 16:25).*

- “We are in the middle of a building project.” *Great! Let’s work together to build God’s kingdom at the same time and fill up your church with new babes in Christ.*

George Barna issues a wake-up call to Christians to “get into the game and share the good news, now!”² He adds: “How ironic that during this period of swelling need for the proclamation of the gospel and the healing powers of the Church, the ranks of the messengers have dissipated to anemic proportions.”³

ZEAL FOR THE GOSPEL

Evangelistic fervor is found most often in young people. After discovering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, they usually become instant evangelists similar to Peter and John after the Day of Pentecost: “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

But for most Christians, the zeal to spread the gospel disappears far too soon. Perhaps they fear being considered “fools for Christ” (1 Corinthians 4:10). Fanatics. Religious zealots.

Zeal requires sacrifice and a willingness to go anywhere, give up anything, and endure all things for Jesus, while relying on His indwelling resurrection life.

Helen Roseveare demonstrated the life of a zealous Christian. While serving as a missionary doctor in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) during a civil war in 1964, Helen was captured by rebel soldiers, beaten, and raped. After her release and furlough, Helen returned to her work in Zaire for 7 more years.

“I want people to be passionately in love with Jesus so that nothing else counts,” Helen said. “The world thinks I’m foolish for going there. But if God

sent me to Africa with my family, He’s going to look after us.... If I get AIDS, it’s because He wants me to witness to others who’ve got it. How’s that for success?”

“I’m a fanatic. Nothing counts except knowing your sins have been forgiven by the blood of Jesus. We only have this short life to let others know the same truth.”⁴

Many of today’s churches are not convicted to proclaim the simple, unadorned gospel of John 3:16–18 and 1 Corinthians 15:1–3. Every time we preach we must let people know God loves them and is actively seeking them.

SINGLE-MINDED RESCUERS

My friend Jim Reapsome compared the church’s mission to the Marines’ heroism in rescuing Air Force F–16 pilot Captain Scott O’Grady. He felt many churches waste energy in battles over peripheral matters—for example, praise choruses vs. traditional hymns.

He said: “The devil is having a field day, because every such intramural fight is a gain for his schemes to keep us from doing our primary mission—

breaking down the walls of his kingdom of darkness and rescuing people for God’s kingdom of light. [The Marines who rescued Captain O’Grady] did not sit around and argue about which arrangement of the Marine Corps hymn to sing. They pursued a single mission—rescue a downed pilot—and they allowed nothing to sidetrack them.”

There are pockets of action, but evangelism isn’t a priority, let alone the No. 1 priority, for thousands of churches and Christians in America.

Jim concluded his article: “As the old saying goes, we must keep the main thing the main thing, which is to throw lifelines of hope and peace to people trampled and overcome by despair.”⁵

Thanks to missionaries who threw a lifeline to people in South America, both my father and mother are in heaven. Thank God for the gospel message and for the missionaries who sacrificially



brought it to our family with the assurance of eternal life (cf. John 10:28).

DESPERATE TO PERSUADE

In today's church, there's no urgency to evangelize, partly because we don't deeply believe the lost are really lost. We don't deny it, but we don't embrace it either. If we did, we would be desperate to persuade lost and dying people to turn to Christ (cf. Psalm 39:5).

A friend of mine whose mother is dying without Christ doesn't seem to feel the same despair I feel, and she's not my mother. I know my friend cares, but if my mother were dying without Christ, I'd spend every day on my knees by her bed until she surrendered to the Savior.

George Barna tells about a Bill Hybels sermon on the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Luke 16:27,28): "To this day, more than a decade later, I recall that lesson and the horror that filled me as I realized, perhaps for the first time, how horrific a life in hell would be, how significant the death of Christ had been for me, and how imperative it is to use every resource available to share the real truth about life, death, sin, and grace with every person I know."⁶ Barna's life as an evangelizer hasn't been the same since.

***Zeal requires sacrifice
and a willingness to
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indwelling resurrection life.***

Fellow evangelist Clyde Dupin said, "There is nothing more important to God than rescuing what He created." All of us need a renewed tenderness and a revived love for those who live and die without Jesus.

I want a greater passion from God for the souls of people who still live in selfishness and sinfulness and are on their way to eternal perdition. I have a burden for friends who don't grasp that the

No. 1 responsibility of a Christian is not to retire young in order to spend endless hours chasing a little white ball. If only they could get as excited about building the kingdom of God as they do about their handicap on the golf course.

***Every time we preach we
must let people know God
loves them and is actively
seeking them.***

How can I convince them they can have even more fun and fulfillment in evangelism? Evangelism is spiritual warfare, so we can expect a few doors slammed in our faces and more severe attacks personally and to our families. But there's joy in obeying the Lord. Just get me doing evangelism—I can never have more fun. There's no greater thrill than to spread the gospel and lead people into the eternal kingdom of God. Give evangelism all you've got. This life is your only chance. **E**

**All scripture quotations are from the New International Version.*

Adapted from The Only Hope for America (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1996).



PHOTO: OWEN CAREY

Luis Palau is an evangelist reaching people in 95 countries via the media and evangelistic crusades. He has written over 40 books and booklets.

ENDNOTES

1. Barna, George, *Evangelism That Works* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995), 35–36. "The typical American adult, who has undoubtedly been exposed to this long-standing challenge many times, has no recollection of the content of the challenge"
2. Barna, 15.
3. Barna, 22.
4. "The Cost of Loving Jesus," *Christianity Today*, 12 May 1989, 45.
5. Jim Reapsome, "Captain O'Grady's Lifeline," *Pulse*, 21 July 1995, 8.
6. Barna, 12–13.

The Lost— Restoring a Sense of

URGENCY

BY GEORGE O. WOOD

LOSTNESS FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

A few years ago many Christians united for an evangelistic campaign by displaying bumper stickers stating, "I found it." An opportunity to witness was provided when an observing person would ask, "What did you find?"

Some nonbelievers mounted a counter-campaign. Their bumper stickers read: "I never lost it." In our culture, their view prevails. We live in a day of religious syncretism in which one person's belief is as valid as any other's. The idea of people being lost and needing salvation holds offense.



During my pastorate in southern California, a young couple who were relatives of persons in the church went camping in the desert at a popular place for dirt bikers and other wilderness lovers. The parents became busy setting up camp and did not notice that 3-year-old Laura had wandered off. When the mother realized the child was not in sight, she called for her. There was no answer. Hours, days, and weeks later and after the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, there still was no answer.

If Laura was kidnapped but was still alive today, she would be a teenager. She

would have no memory of her real family, but her parents would still know that she is lost.

Likewise, God alone knows how lost people are—even those who have no sense of lostness.

Jesus reveals the heart of the gospel in Luke 15 with three short stories: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. He knows all humanity is lost and in need of being found (cf. Luke 19:10). That's why He tells these stories of how people become lost in three different ways. Taken together as one unit, the stories give a full perspective on God's mission and ours in reaching the lost.

CARELESSNESS

The lost sheep illustrates the person who moves away from God unthinkingly, head down, one clump of grass at a time. The sheep wanders on from one feeding place to the next, eyes only on what immediately lies ahead. It is shortsightedly unaware that it is not where it should be and all the time has been straying farther and farther from the flock and the shepherd's care. The sheep never intended to get lost.

Similarly, people get caught up in the cares and riches of this life. I've seen families in our church become moderately prosperous, buy a camper, begin missing church on Sunday, and before long wander away altogether from the flock of God and the Good Shepherd's care. Many are lost because they never look up and ask: "Where did I come from? What am I here for? Where am I going?"

CARELESSNESS OF OTHERS

The lost coin represents those lost through negligence or bad treatment from others. The coin cannot bleat like a sheep for help, nor find its way back like a son. It has been done in by the mishandling of someone else.

People become damaged through victimization in a myriad of ways. The perpetrators of their sorrow give them a broken concept of God.

Jesus warned His disciples not to cause offense or stumbling to a little one. How

many young people in our churches have been lost to the faith because of the poor example of older saints?

PERSONAL CHOICE

The son is deliberately lost—unlike the sheep or coin.

Zelma and Ira Stanphill stated the gospel as clearly as anyone ever has when they composed the words and tune to "There's Room at the Cross for You." Soon after, Zelma left Ira, backslid, sang in nightclubs, and had an affair with a show business personality. Five years later she was killed in an auto accident while driving from a nightclub singing engagement. No one knows in those seconds of dying if she acted on the words she herself had helped to write—words which have drawn countless thousands to an altar of commitment—"Tho' millions have come, there's still room for one; yes, there's room at the cross for you."¹

God alone knows how lost people are— even those who have no sense of lostness.

Her lifestyle represents all those who once sat in our pews, sang hymns, prayed with us, but then went out from us. Oh, for a revival in which all our lost sons and daughters come home!

Persons without the Lord are lost because they are ignorant of God, unlike God, and distanced from God. They are lost in all three senses of Jesus' stories: by their own carelessness, by the carelessness of others, and by their own deliberate decision.

If we fail to perceive the lostness of those around us, we have no sense of urgency. There is no business as usual when someone is lost.

GOD WANTS THE LOST TO BE FOUND

Who is concerned about finding the lost? God himself!

The lost are His: the sheep, the coin, the son. Each shows a different aspect

of the work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in salvation.

JESUS SEEKS

Jesus is the Good Shepherd looking for the lost. The prevailing idea of Jesus' day was that God might possibly receive a penitent sinner, but He would never go look for one.

But Jesus searches for the lost sheep *until* He finds it (verse 4). The woman also searches for her lost coin *until* she finds it (verse 8).

Love is not satisfied by a favorable percentage between those who are safe and those who are lost. With the sheep, 99 percent were safe; with the coin, 90 percent; and with the son, 50 percent. Who wouldn't settle for those kind of church-growth statistics. What if 99 percent of the people in your town were inside the church?

Souls, however, are not digits or percentages. When one child has died, it is not tactful to say to a father or mother: "Oh well, you have others left." The Lord seeks one life, and so must His church.

The Christian and the church are not really sharing Jesus' mission and passion unless they go and look, not simply stand and receive.

THE HOLY SPIRIT SEEKS

The Holy Spirit's activity is to seek that which cannot help itself. Like the lost coin, humanity is lifeless and has no ability to respond to God except the Spirit draws it.

I prefer to see the story of the woman searching for the coin as an allegory. The lit lamp is the church (cf. Matthew 5:14). The Holy Spirit wants to take the lamp and go look.

It's no easy task searching for the lost. It involves effort. But what if the lamp has gone out?

THE FATHER WAITS

The sheep and the coin may be returned without their consent, not so with people. The rebellious son is far more difficult to find. First he must come to himself and then to his father.

The lost son's problem is that he attempts to spend his father's resources outside of his presence. Augustine said it well: "A darkened heart is the far country, for it is not by our feet but by our affections that we either leave Thee or return to Thee."

Bruce Larson put it this way: "The far country is the place where you become disillusioned with who you are. You are in the far country at the point where you are disappointed with the world and say, 'Is this all there is?' And the Father says, 'Of course not. Come home.'"²

GOD REJOICES WHEN THE LOST ARE FOUND

The shepherd, the woman, and the father all rejoice and want others to share their joy when the lost are found. Only one person does not rejoice: the elder son. He represents every religious person whose relationship with God has grown lukewarm. He is the individual who has never agonized for a moment over a missing prodigal. He never shares the father's heartache, nor does he share the tears of joy when the

missing come home.

The elder son represents the church that can go with business as usual in the Father's house, never be concerned with the lost, and never bend any effort to find them.

In 1982, Thomas Keneally wrote the bestseller *Schindler's List*—the true life story of Oscar Schindler who employed and saved the lives of over 1,200 Jewish individuals in Krakow, Poland, from 1939 to 1945. Those on his list were saved from the ovens of Auschwitz and other concentration camps. At the end of the war, his mission successful by all human standards, Schindler was beside himself because he did not do more.

We should ask: "Who is on my list?"

Recently I visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. Lining the walkways are trees planted to remember the "righteous Gentiles" who saved the lives of Jewish people. I found the tree in honor of Oscar Schindler.

Will there be a tree planted in the eternal garden that has your name on it, "A Righteous Christian"—someone

who participated in saving the life of another? After all, Jesus has a list called the Lamb's Book of Life.

As the Assemblies of God, will we be content to say, "We were the instruments God used to put 30 million people on the list"? Or will we say, "There are hundreds of millions more...and there is one more"?

A true Pentecostal church is never content with the number of persons on the list. Rather, it shares God's passion for people who are still lost. **E**

ENDNOTE

1. Ira F. Stanphill, *Room at the Cross* (Nashville, Tenn.: The Benson Co., 1946).
2. Bruce Larson, *Luke, The Communicator's Commentary*, ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 230.

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When the Saints

BY JOSEPH C. ALDRICH

Jesus sent them into the highways and byways (cf. Matthew 22:9).

When the Lord deployed the Seventy to prepare communities for His visitation, He instructed them to stay in the home that extended hospitality. "Stay in that house," He told them. "Do not move around from house to house." Interesting. "If they'll accept you, they will accept me" (cf. Luke 10:5-16).

If people will not come to church, is the church capable of going to people? It must if it is to impact this generation. The Lord trained His disciples to be "fishers of men." To catch men involves contact with them, often in their own habitat. What do we need to teach to raise up "fishers of men" equipped to evangelize the current generation?

There is no impact without contact. Ours is a hands-on strategy. Jesus could have invited us to heaven to tell us the gospel. Instead, He came as a servant to our world. He walked our streets, ate our food, healed our diseases, stayed in our homes, wept over our plight, shared the good news with us, and died to provide it. When critics would not acknowledge Christ's deity, He challenged them to believe on the basis of His miracles.

The closest many churches come to an evangelism strategy is fishing in a stained glass aquarium. The pastor prepares the message. The congregation contributes by herding fish. The pastor says, "You invite them to come to church, and I'll invite them to come to Christ." It works, but in the majority of ministries, the fish caught are few and far between.

NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM

The Early Church had no stained glass aquarium. No organ or worship team. No radio programs. I've often wondered if the reason the Lord "added daily to their number" was

because they "found favor with all the people." They lived the good news.

New Testament evangelism is not so much methods we utilize or programs we develop—it is a way of life. God's communication strategy is to wrap ideas in people and deploy them out as living epistles read by all. We're reading material. In its most fundamental sense, evangelism brings our giftedness under the lordship of Christ and then utilizes that giftedness to serve our neighbors and community. Every ability is God given and becomes a spiritual gift when it is brought under the lordship of Christ and produces spiritual results. Evangelism is gift driven.

Paul expressed it this way: "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a servant to everyone, to win as many as possible" (1 Corinthians 9:19*). No serving—no winning. Effective evangelists are towel wearers and basin bearers. By serving they play the music of the gospel for the unbeliever. Part of our evangelism strategy should be to equip Christians to live hope-filled lives, and when asked why, share the reason. Many have heard the words of the gospel; few have heard the music.

If people will not come to church, is the church capable of going to people?

As Jesus carried out His mandate to make His disciples genuine fishers of men, He shared an interesting observation with His frazzled disciples following His conversation with the woman at the well. He told His disciples: "I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work" (John 4:38).

New Testament evangelism is not so much methods we utilize or programs we develop—it is a way of life.

Go Marching Out



ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

Jesus said that reaping isn't the hard labor. Any farmer knows that. Jesus suggested that a quality harvest is dependent upon the quality of the labor which preceded it. To reap fruit, someone must do the hard labor. Paul said, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

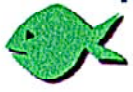
THREE PHASES OF EVANGELISM

I see evangelism as a three-phase process.

1. *Cultivation*. An appeal to the *heart* through relationship building. It involves serving, sharing, and sacrifice.

2. *Sowing*. An appeal to the *mind* through revelatory communication. It involves personal

The closest many churches come to an evangelism strategy is fishing in a stained glass aquarium.



There is no impact without contact.

testimony, tracts, books, tapes, Bible studies, fellowship, and preaching and teaching.

3. *Reaping*. An appeal to the *will* in anticipation of a response. It involves a careful explanation of the gospel.

When these three functions operate in a church family, the unbeliever will be attracted to that church.

Perhaps this has happened to you: After a high-pressure day you check in at the airport, check your luggage, go through security, walk down the long ramp to the airplane, find seat 7C and

collapse, hoping no one will take the middle seat 7B. You're all talked out. You just want to get home. If the middle seat remains empty, you won't feel obligated to talk with the person on the aisle (7A). When the door finally closes and there are no more passengers coming aboard, you do a high five toward heaven and say to yourself, *Yes—7B is empty. Thank You Lord*. Then the guilt hits. You feel an obligation to share the good news, but you usually don't. Are you ashamed of the gospel? A better question might be: Are you a cultivator, a sower, or a reaper?

Most of our instruction about evangelism centers on sharing the gospel with strangers with whom we have no rela-

tionship. In these training sessions, we focus on helping the learner say the words of the gospel. Often evangelism becomes what a group does on Tuesday evening rather than a way of living.

Virtually all those who receive Christ arrive at the point of decision through multiple influences. It is the body of Christ that brings people to the foot of the Cross. The reaper has the joy of harvesting fruit, which in some cases has been cultivated for years by those doing the hard labor—a godly grandmother praying every day for the salvation of loved ones; a coach who cared; a roommate who led a Bible study; godly parents; a preacher who faithfully taught the Word; a healthy church body; a concerned camp counselor.

All these people are cultivators and sowers. God uses them to break up the soil, clean out the rocks, cut down the thorns, drive away the birds, and plant the seed. Cultivation is an appeal to the heart through relationship building. It is the hard labor.

Every ability is
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a spiritual gift when
it is brought under
the lordship of
Christ and produces
spiritual results.



I met a man from India who leads a ministry to college students. He is especially effective in reaching Muslims and Hindus. I asked him about his strategy. His reply: "We just introduce them to Jesus." I asked him how he did that. "Every Sunday we have 40–50 of them over for dinner. We just keep loving them until they ask us the reason why." When told Jesus is the reason, they readily respond. This man's group of workers are cultivators. They make themselves servants to everyone to win as many as possible.

AVOID EVIL...NOT EVANGELISM

Here are some general observations and suggested principles for evangelistic effectiveness:

1. *We are not capable of fully understanding our own motives, much less those of other believers.* Let's obey Paul and quit judging our brothers and sisters in peripheral areas.
2. *We should be sensitive toward weaker brothers and sisters.* The Christian community has just as much responsibility to educate as it does to guard against offending them.
3. *We must recognize that tension is created when people live the Christian life in a variety of ways.* Paul made it clear that "meat eaters" and "nonmeat eaters" are both legitimate members of the body of Christ.
4. *We must not sacrifice truth to gain the approval of men and women.* In the Early Church, there was a searching community whose understanding of the gospel would have been distorted had Jesus or Paul succumbed to the pressures of conformity.
5. *We should be certain to avoid evil.* Who we are determines *where* we are. The more mature we are in Christ, the better prepared we are to minister effectively to non-Christians.
6. *The farther we are from effective personal evangelism, the more we are probably involved in criticism.* People who object to befriending non-Christians may never have befriended one themselves.
7. *Identifying with the world is not the same as being identical with it.* As Rebecca Pippert puts it, "Christ was effective because of His radical identification and His radical difference."
8. *Compromise is inevitable in life.* As life moves on, we discover that some of our dearly held axioms must succumb to the ax of maturity and truth. Yet all of us must have absolutes rooted solidly upon God's inerrant Word that we will not compromise.

—Adapted from *Lifestyle Evangelism* by Joe Aldrich
(Sisters, Ore.: Questar Publishers, 1993) 50–53. Used by permission.

How do you impact strangers? It's a challenge to play the music of the gospel for the stranger in 7B. He or she knows nothing about you—doesn't know if you're trustworthy; can't be sure you're not part of a multilevel marketing scheme; doesn't know your family, your past history, or your reputation. Yet, people do find Christ through this very familiar approach to evangelism. Those who regularly have the joy of seeing the lost find Him are the reapers. Probably 10 percent of those in the Christian community have this unique gift.

Reapers should realize that those they address as strangers have probably already had several exposures to the gospel through significant others in their lives. Sensitivity to an unbeliever's readiness is a real challenge for the reaper.



OUR NEIGHBORS

What about our neighbors? We are commanded to love them. To love them is to be a good neighbor. *Neighbor* comes from a root word which means to *draw near*. Therefore, a neighbor is one who draws nigh. Our responsibility to our neighbors is to move toward establishing a strong social bond that will ultimately appeal to their hearts. No one will receive Christ through you unless they receive you first. You're a living epistle, a shining star, a fragrant aroma, salt, light, a prudent cultivator of the soul, a fisherman, a beautiful seed to be sown. You are the message.

You remember the story. If the disciples were rejected by a home or community, they were to do a dust dance in the front yard and move on. If, however, a home was opened to them and they were extended hospitality, the disciples were told to stay in that house and not move around from house to house. Those who are open to friendship are the schooling fish.

If we're to love our neighbors, what do we do? We cultivate. We sow. We serve. We play the music of the gospel. So deployed, we trust that God will lead our

neighbors to seek an explanation for the hope that sustains and motivates us. To discover the living hope is the world's greatest need.

UNITY

What are people everywhere looking for? Unity. Deep in the heart of every man, woman, and child is the desire and hope of living together in unity—where

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there is no misunderstanding, no discrimination, no abusive behavior and deceit, but where there is purity, holiness, love, forgiveness, beauty, community, and open communication.

The most beautiful thing in the Garden of Eden was not the splendor of its exquisite plants and animals. Though fearfully and wonderfully made, Adam and Eve were superseded by the beauty of the unity and intimacy they shared with each other and with

God. "How beautiful it is," wrote the Psalmist, "when believers dwell together in unity...there God commands His blessing" (cf. Psalm 133:1-3).

The great tragedy of the Fall was the disruption of this precious fellowship, this wonderful intimacy, this unparalleled unity. Before the Fall, God made house calls. The calm of the evening hours was reserved for fellowship with His beloved children. He could drop in day or night, announced or unannounced, and always experience a vibrant, joyous reception. There was nothing to hide, nothing to possess, nothing to fear. God, woman, and man in perfect unity.

When man and woman sinned, nothing was the same. People still long for Eden, the paradise of God. They hope to find unity in marriage, home, family, and career. Men and women seek someone who understands them, who accepts them, and who always tells them the truth. They long for someone who will listen and share from the depths of his or her being. Most couples who stand before a minister and share their vows anticipate a life of unity and oneness. Most never find it, and the dream dies a slow death. Those who do are the greatest emissaries of the gospel.





Elders and deacons are part of God's evangelistic strategy to penetrate darkness with rays of hope. All in such positions are required to be lovers of hospitality. Their home circle is to be an open circle where seeking people can participate in its routines, actions, and reactions. The phrase *lovers of hospitality* does not mean to have church folks over. It is a compound Greek word that literally means a *lover of strangers*. When pre-Christians observe unity within the family, when they sense a spirit of love, when they discern a servant's heart, their hope detectors begin to flash; and they ask: "Could it be that there is a solution to the disunity that surrounds us? Can broken hearts be repaired? Can families recover? Can churches abandon their self-righteousness? Can believers really become a community of faith?"

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The lights come on when your neighbor discovers that at the core of the universe exists a triune God who not only dwells in unity but empowers believers with the ability to live in unity following the pattern of the Trinity. Jesus defined unity when He said, "All that I have is yours, and all that you have is mine" (cf. John 17:10). Sounds like the Early Church got the message (cf. Acts 2:44,45; 4:32).

Within the Trinity there is no competition, no covetousness, no jealousy, no private possessions, no envy, no hoarding. When believers model the Trinitarian unity and get along with each other, such behavior has redemptive power. It is so unique it captures the attention of unbelievers convincing

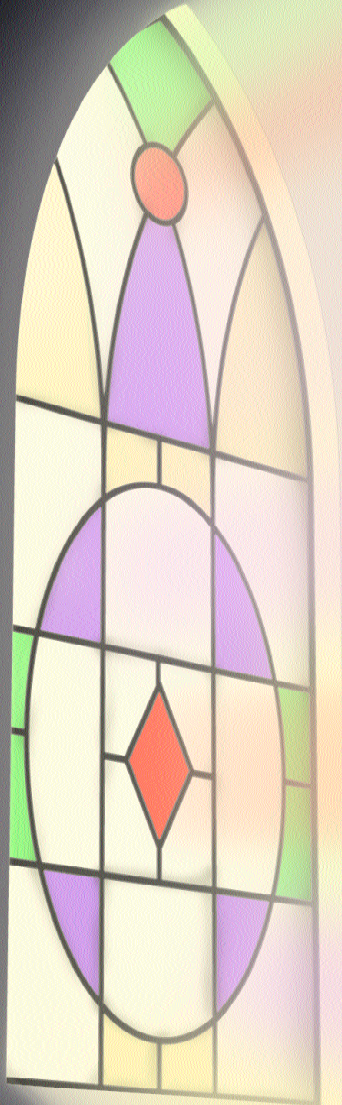
them that God loves them and sent Christ for them. That's the good news!

Satan, the great enemy of unity, split the angelic ranks, split the first family, split the Davidic kingdom, split the disciples, and has split hundreds of local churches. God is not indiscriminate in the bestowal of His blessing. He blesses those people who dwell together in unity. Being blessed, cultivators cultivate; sowers sow; and reapers reap as God adds daily to their number those who believe. **E**

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

Joseph C. Aldrich, Th.D., is president of Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary and author of five books including *Lifestyle Evangelism* (Multnomah Books, 1993).





The Assemblies of God— a Growing and Dynamic **WITNESS** *to the World*

BY JAMES K. BRIDGES

Any success in growth or evangelism in our Movement is attributable to the divine guidance of the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit.

As we consider the calling and mission of the Assemblies of God in its 83rd year of existence, our attention is drawn to distinct features that have contributed to our Fellowship's usefulness to the kingdom of God.

THE PLACE OF CHURCH GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Some people would attribute our growth to the church growth movement exclusively. Although this is inaccurate, we must acknowledge that we have benefited greatly from the application of church growth principles corroborated by Scripture and common sense.

However, when we consider recent statistics, we agree with H.B. London who stated in a recent seminar that the church growth movement has had a considerable amount of “smoke and mirrors.” His research indicates that in the United States 50,000 people a week leave the church not to return—a 14 percent decline since 1991. And further, [the church in general] is spending \$40 billion on church planting, yet 8 of 10 new church members come from other churches.¹

George Barna’s research substantiates this conclusion: “Christian population has remained stable for two decades, with a growth rate of 1 percent per year. We’re not even keeping up with the growth rate of the nation. And all the time we are spending \$250 billion on domestic ministries and it’s producing virtually nothing.” He further adds, “The majority of church growth in the United States is transfer growth.”²

Such statistics tell us that while we have gleaned some good out of church growth principles, it is by no means the reason why the Assemblies of God is growing at home and abroad.

**The Assemblies of God is
growing because it is giving
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that are pleasing to God.**

GIVING PLACE TO GOD

For the church to be successful, we must continually respond to the will of God. Only a church that is supple and pliant as clay in the potter’s hand will have the flexibility to give place to what the Head of the Church wants to accomplish. To illustrate, the apostle Paul idiomatically said, “Neither give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27). He used the word *topos* (which means *place*) in a metaphorical sense to emphasize that the church must not make room for or give opportunity to the devil to get inside. On the negative side, the church

must not give place to the world, the flesh, or the devil. On the positive side, the church that gives place to the gospel and godliness; makes room for the moving of the Holy Spirit; and gives opportunity for the Word of God to be disseminated among the people is a church that will give dynamic witness in the midst of solid growth. Knowing what to give place to determines the success of any church. The Assemblies of God is growing because it is giving place in its ranks to those things that are pleasing to God.

**Only a praying church
is a growing church, because
only a praying church
will have revival.**

GIVING PLACE TO PRAYER

Whether it is in the United States or any other country, growth in the Assemblies of God has been traced to our commitment to seek God in a manner described by the apostle Paul to Timothy: “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men” (1 Timothy 2:1).

Unfortunately, it is still true what R.A. Torrey wrote in his classic work *The Power of Prayer*: “We do not live in a praying age. A considerable portion of the church...do not believe in prayer as bringing anything to pass that would not have come to pass even if they had not prayed.” This destitute condition in the church today is the reason for the decline of many denominations.

Only a praying church is a growing church, because only a praying church will have revival. When revival came to Scotland in the 1830s, it started in a church in Dundee pastored by a young man in his twenties, Robert Murray McCheyne. When the Aberdeen Scottish Presbytery asked him what caused the revival, his answer was prayer. At the time the revival started, 39 prayer meetings were going on in the church; 5 were

among the children.

Without exception, our churches that are experiencing revival are engaged in powerful prayer meetings affecting all areas of the church. Blessed is the church that has discovered the truth about prayer that Torrey wrote about: “Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouse of God’s infinite grace and power. But we must use the key. No one can stand against [people] who know how to pray and who meet all the conditions of prevailing prayer and who really pray. The Lord God Omnipotent works for [them] and through [them].”

GIVING PLACE TO PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL

Wherever you see the Assemblies of God growing, you will always find the church giving place to the moving of the Holy Spirit and making room in their calendar for times of Pentecostal outpourings that may totally disrupt the status quo. This can be disconcerting to a church that has never experienced a genuine Pentecostal revival.

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Revival for many of our churches has been a routine of inviting a guest speaker for a series of carefully planned services with predictable time schedules and results. Such revivals have left some churches disillusioned and in a state of “postevangelistic campaign exhaustion.”³ To paraphrase D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: “Revival is not what the church does for God, but what God does to the church.”⁴ We don’t have to settle for a virtual revival; we can have the genuine article—a real Pentecostal revival.

A genuine Pentecostal revival:

- Begins when the church takes hold of the “horns of the altar” and prays through to a divine concern for the lost condition of humanity and the carnal condition of the church.

- Allows the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s purposes in the midst of the people.

- Gives place to the Word of God to bring conviction and response by repentance and obedience.

- Does not seek decisions for Christ but brings souls into the kingdom of God and endues believers with power from on high.

A mighty Pentecostal revival is beginning to move the nations again, and the Assemblies of God is a vital part of it. This is why we have growth and power to witness.

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GIVING PLACE TO SCRIPTURAL ORDER AND SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

Comprised of Spirit-filled believers, the Assemblies of God has always given opportunity for the Holy Spirit to manifest himself in the church through the gifts which He has bestowed according to His will (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:11). When these spiritual manifestations are used in proper order (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:30), they best serve God’s purposes. The apostle Paul instructed us that the gifts of the Spirit are for the edification of the church as a whole, and when used appropriately, they minister to the believer and the unbeliever. We are grateful for the invaluable guidance in 1 Corinthians 12–14 to use spiritual gifts for the increase and maturity of the church.

Many charismatic and Pentecostal believers misunderstand the difference between spiritual manifestations and physical responses. Spiritual manifestations are gracious gifts of the Spirit provided to us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that occur when we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

However, some people think the physical responses of laughing, crying, shouting, shaking, dancing, and falling

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are spiritual manifestations. These are not spiritual manifestations, but are human responses to the moving of the Holy Spirit. It is extremely important that the church knows the difference and does not become enamored with externals, which open the door to unscriptural disorders. If given no restraint, there is no end to what form a physical response may take. The flesh must always be disciplined lest it try to take priority over the Spirit (cf. Philippians 3:3). Yet, there is a place for physical responses to the outpouring of the Spirit, as long as we keep them within scriptural order. Spiritual manifestations are vital to a thriving church, and so is scriptural order. Nothing can destroy the witness of the church like spiritual imbalance. Because the Assemblies of God has kept this balance, we are growing throughout the earth.

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GROWING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

A recent study of 31 denominations concluded that for a church to survive and continue to grow in the 21st century, it must concentrate on certain vital issues:

1. Maintain a clear mission statement and a leadership team able to achieve the mission.

2. Stay true to the original mission and tenets of faith.

3. Commit to help the local church accomplish its mission.

4. Serve the customer—the church and the pastor.

5. Assist local church leadership in providing a high-value church experience for the laity.

6. Take responsibility for stewardship education among the churches.

7. Help churches offer a culturally relevant way to make a life-changing connection to Jesus Christ.⁵

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I am optimistic about the future growth of the Assemblies of God—we are moving in the right direction. Our threefold reason for being presents a clear mission: “To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world, to be a corporate body in which [people] may worship God, and to be a channel of God’s purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son.” We are committed to achieving our mission by establishing on every continent indigenous churches committed to the same principles of fellowship, to the same tenets of faith, and to the same missionary zeal as has been the mission of the sending church.

When I consider the philosophy that prevails at the Assemblies of God Headquarters, I see a servant philosophy that is committed to helping local assemblies fulfill their mission and helping the ministers of our Fellowship fulfill their calling. I see a headquarters team working to supply the local church with as many products, services, and ministries as time, energy, and finances permit. I see our national office teaming up with our district offices and local churches to accomplish the joint vision

of spreading the gospel of Christ at home and abroad until Jesus returns. I believe this is why the Assemblies of God is growing and giving a dynamic witness to our world. **E**

ENDNOTES

1. H.B. London, Assemblies of God Superintendents/Secretary–Treasurers Seminar, 1997, Hilton Head, South Carolina.
2. George Barna, Church Growth Extension Class, 1996, Fuller Theological Seminary, Houston, Texas.
3. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Revival*

(Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1987) 100.

4. Ibid., 99.

5. J. David Schmidt, *Choosing To Live: Financing the Future of Religious Body Headquarters* (Milwaukee: Christian Stewardship Association, 1996) 93–118.

*James K. Bridges
is the Assemblies
of God general
treasurer.*



The Missing Generation in Our Churches

BY HARVEY HERMAN, JR.

GENERATION X
IS PERPETUALLY
IN SEARCH FOR
SIGNIFICANT FAMILY—
THE SENSE OF FAMILY
THEY MAY HAVE LOST
THROUGH NEGLECT.
THE CHURCH,
WHEN IT LIVES
ITS BIBLICALLY
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THE GREATEST
FAMILY ON EARTH.

The 1970s witnessed churches surging with newly saved twenty-somethings who reinvigorated the church. Unfortunately, the opposite is occurring today. There is a generation missing in many of our churches commonly referred to as Generation X—a generation born between 1961–81. Gen X represents approximately a third of the U.S. population. These young people are impossible to ignore as they move through society at 93 million strong.¹

Some people in our churches feel that Gen X is too hard to reach with the gospel. Is Jesus irrelevant to them? No. Is the local church irrelevant to them? In many cases, yes. According to Dieter Zander, “No other generation has needed the church so much, yet sought it so little.”²

How do most Gen Xers view the church? Most never think about it. They view it as being out of touch with the real world, being money hungry, and spending money on itself. They regard the church as irrelevant to the real needs in society. They believe the Christian church represents one of many acceptable ways to “god.”

This generation possesses a few key, common characteristics.

- *Abuse and neglect.* A majority have experienced abuse and neglect. The term *latch-key* kid originated with them. Up to one-third of the young women may be victims of incest. The poverty rate for children rose for the first time in U.S. history, and only 50 percent of the children grew up in homes with both of their birth parents.³ The abortion rate grew exponentially during their birth years.

Neglect forces Xers to be more self-reliant at

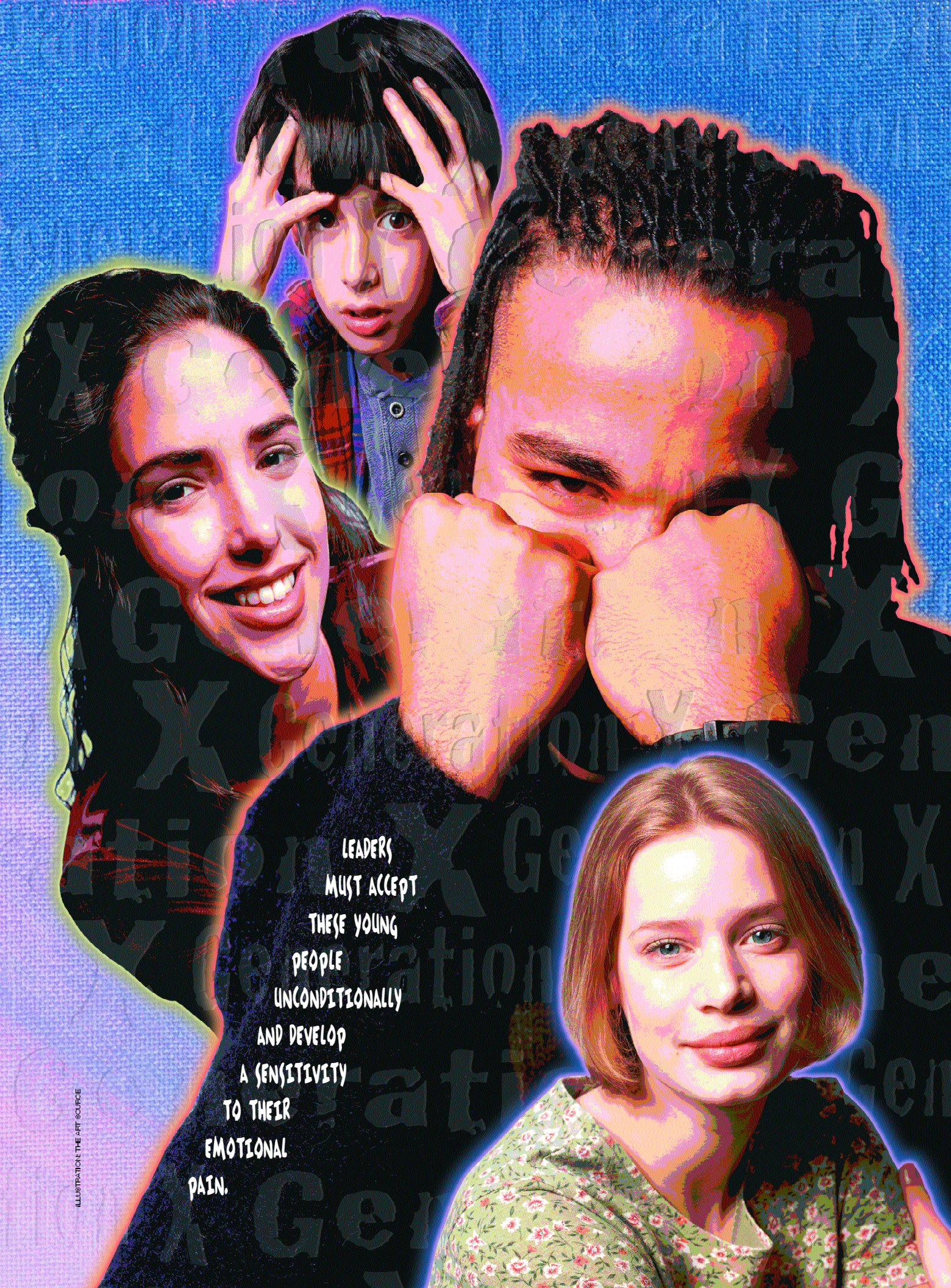
their age than their baby-boomer predecessors were at a comparable age. They are serious about life because adulthood has been forced upon them prematurely. With the breakdown of the family, they cope with a nagging sense of aloneness and seek a sense of community and family.

- *Postmodernism.* They are the first generation to grow up in a postmodern world. This generation rejects the belief of modernism that progress, reason, democracy, and technology can perfect the world or can even be obtained. The assumptions of modernism presume that knowledge is certain, objective, and good, and produce an optimistic and progressive outlook on life.

Postmodern assumptions propose that subjectivity supersedes objectivity. Postmodernists believe that the world has no center and no guiding principles or truths; it has only differing viewpoints and perspectives. They are unconvinced that knowledge is inherently good and provides answers to our problems—truth is relative. This pessimism leads them to think the problems of the world cannot be solved globally. Since there are no absolutes, everything is relative to the postmodernist.

As a result, Gen X reacts abhorrently to religious dogmatism. Tolerance, a lenient disposition toward other people's convictions and practices, embodies this generation's highest virtue. They aspire a life filled with cultural and relational diversity.

Fundamental Christianity has been hammered by the vigor of modernism with its materialism, humanism, and prejudice against the contributions made by the church in pre-modern times. Not realizing a postmodern age



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has dawned, many Christian leaders continue to battle modernist ideas, unaware that the issues have shifted. The question college students ask today is not, "Is Christianity true?" Now they ask, "What makes Christians suppose they have the only truth?" We miss this generation because the church is often too busy answering questions that young people are not even asking.

• *Spirituality.* Gen X is a deeply spiritual generation. However, George Barna warns, "Make no mistake about it though: *spiritual* is no longer synonymous with *Christian*."⁴ They do believe in a reality beyond the natural world—beyond what they can see, feel, touch, taste, and smell.

This spiritual sense makes Gen X open to accepting Christ, but it also

creates an openness to practically everything else. Xers are investigating a diversity of religious faiths. Many of them are customizing a belief system and spiritual life from a concoction of religious streams. If it works for them, then it is good for them, even when these beliefs have no inherent congruity.

Whether the church will still be a player in postmodern America in the

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GENERATION X

BY JOSEPH DALTORIO

God is working through Generation X in three unique ways.

1. *Servant evangelism.*

Generation Xers are doers. They may be cautious at first in committing themselves or proclaiming allegiance. When they do respond, they show a commitment and tenacity that is reminiscent of the missionary generation that ushered in the Pentecostal revival and worldwide missions outreach at the beginning of the 20th century. They are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

Xers are activists. They get involved in practical ways to make a difference in their community, whether by volunteering in their local neighborhoods, nursing homes, or soup kitchens. They will respond to the gospel if the church lets them make a difference in practical ways and if they see that the gospel has the power to change lives.

Could this be another great missionary generation at the turn of a new millennium?

2. *Racial reconciliation.*

Generation X reflects and is more comfortable with racial and ethnic diversity. Christians from this generation tend to see a supernatural love and unity among people of different ethnic groups as proof of the Pentecostal outpouring. As young people of integrity and authenticity, they are suspicious of churches that support foreign missions but have trouble living with ethnic diversity in their own neighborhoods. Hints of racism or exclusivity in our churches offend this age-group.

If we are going to see a true nationwide spiritual awakening, the deep rifts between America's people groups must heal. Generation X is an age-group especially tuned to racial reconciliation and will participate when churches become major supporters of this issue.

College students hunger for God and respond with a spirit of repentance as God works in their midst. The difference in this generation from the Jesus movement is how young people are responding to the move of the Holy Spirit with brokenness

over sin and commitment to bring healing for the wrong of previous generations. God will use revival among this generation to heal, reconcile, and shake America to its foundation. Could this be the generation that rebuilds the broken walls of our cities by ushering in racial reconciliation?

3. *Biblically-based deliverance from spiritual strongholds.*

True to their postmodern mind-set, young people often don't ask whether something is true when they look for answers. They simply want to know if it works. That is how they approach the gospel.

When they respond to the gospel, their faith takes on practical dimensions. They are especially tuned to the Pentecostal message because it emphasizes the importance of experiencing God's presence and His transforming power to change their lives. As revival fires are beginning to burn, only churches that know how to challenge demonic powers and pray people through to wholeness will have success with this generation.

Because Satan has gained a foothold in government, education, and media, churches need to be serious about spiritual warfare and walk as the apostles did with power to set the captives free.

Churches cannot afford to have this generation missing from their ranks. They must recognize its potential and love each member as Christ loved us while we were still sinners. He saw our potential when we were at our worst. My prayer is that we see God's prophetic potential for Generation X. Someday we will hear the name that God has written down for them.

Could this be the generation that also discovers that God's strength is made perfect in weakness?

—Joseph Daltorio was formerly the field representative for Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, Springfield, Missouri.

year 2020 depends on what it does with this generation today.

I propose that as church leaders to this generation we must adjust three basic paradigms in ministry.

1. *Church leaders must adjust the way they minister.* Generation Xers will listen to you talk truth until you're blue in the face and then look at you and say, "So what?" They are more interested in what Christ has done for you than in what you believe. Information has value only when they see its practical expression. In other words, they are more concerned with formation than information.

We must minister in a manner that emphasizes a *formation process*. Formation process is a proactive relationship that deliberately attempts to integrate truth into living. Integrating truth into living occurs on two levels: character and skill. We have assumed by teaching biblical truth that people would know how to implement the truth. Teaching is only half the proposition. Dispensing information is best facilitated in the classroom, but formation is best accomplished at the coffee table. Church leaders historically have been strong in the classroom. Now they must learn the skills of the coffee table.

WE MISS THIS GENERATION BECAUSE
THE CHURCH
IS OFTEN TOO BUSY
ANSWERING QUESTIONS
THAT YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE NOT EVEN ASKING.

2. *Church leaders must adjust the way they lead.* Hierarchical, authoritarian, programmatic church leaders make little sense to a generation inherently skeptical of cold institutions and corrupt leadership. Highly visible, fallen church leaders, impeached political leaders, and amoral celebrities have only served to sustain their skepticism. Positional authority figures have little, lasting impact upon them. If a leader is not

personally approachable in style and character, they will not voluntarily follow. They value diversity, mutuality, and inclusivity, while affirming egalitarian role models. They much prefer being a valued member of a team rather than serving on a committee.

A discipling, enabling leader will be received warmly by a Gen Xer. Leading must focus on transactional ministry—a leadership process that trains people in ministry skill acquisition similar to the way a coach trains athletes in the fundamentals or a master craftsman trains an apprentice.

Leaders must also learn the transformational process for character development. The transformational process is accomplished by mentoring Gen Xers in the spiritual disciplines and preparing the soil of their lives for lifelong fruitfulness. Transformation must occur from the inside out with the leader demonstrating how to nurture a relationship with God. When transformation begins to become evident, the mentor knows that conversion has occurred

and the connection between God and disciple is established and growing.

XERS ARE INVESTIGATING A
DIVERSITY OF RELIGIOUS FAITHS.
MANY OF THEM ARE
CUSTOMIZING A BELIEF
SYSTEM AND SPIRITUAL LIFE
FROM A CONCOCTION
OF RELIGIOUS STREAMS.

The leadership role in this model emphasizes equipping, discipling, long- and short-term planning, mentoring, interceding through prayer, and studying the Word. Leaders then equip Gen Xers in ministry skills such as: personal care, availability, serving, peer counseling, ministering among the ill, and disciple making.

To be effective with Gen X, leaders must underscore the joy and freedom in the Christian life. They should illustrate in anecdotal form rather than in outline

INSIGHTS FOR REACHING BUSTERS

Busters will:

1. Attend churches that have a clear focus, narrowly defined vision, and assertive commitment to accomplish their mission.
2. Attend churches where worship services are shorter, well designed, and have good flow and tempo.
3. Attend churches that have a loud, upbeat, faster pop music sound.
4. Attend churches that win their loyalty every Sunday through excellent ministry.
5. Attend churches that focus on local ministry rather than on ministry in faraway places.
6. Give money to churches where they can see their money achieving results.
7. Volunteer for ministry activities that are short-term.
8. Volunteer and minister to confront practical issues in their community.
9. Attend churches that help them sort out the hurts in their lives through practical issues in their community.
10. Come to Christ through need-based ministries that deal with the hurts and internal issues they are facing.

—Adapted from *Make Room for the Boom...or Bust* by Gary L. McIntosh
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997) 46. Used by permission.

TRANSFORMATION MUST OCCUR FROM
THE INSIDE OUT WITH THE LEADER
DEMONSTRATING HOW TO NURTURE A
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

presentation how a relationship with Jesus brings meaning and purpose in life.

3. *Church leaders must adjust the way they relate.* The key word is authenticity. This generation is sensitive to the salesman approach. They don't care how

much you know until they know how much you care. Affirmation, openness, and vulnerability are essential relational skills for relating to Gen X. Leaders must accept these young people unconditionally and develop a sensitivity to their emotional pain. Leaders must learn how to be open with their own problems and struggles. Self-disclosure expressed in appropriate ways endears leaders to these young adults.

Generation X is perpetually in search for significant family—the sense of

family they may have lost through neglect. The church, when it lives its biblically prescribed lifestyle, forms the greatest family on earth. God's people will see a tremendous harvest among Xers if they are willing to communicate in meaningful ways to this generation at risk.

TO BE EFFECTIVE WITH GEN X,
LEADERS MUST UNDERSCORE
THE JOY AND FREEDOM
IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

In fact, Generation X's personal need for community may provide a key in reaching them for Christ. They develop an interest in church not because they are on a search for truth but because of their desire for home and community. The church must develop ways to make non-Christian young adults feel welcome and able to participate in church life, even before they make a commitment to Christ. If young adults find in the church a place to belong, they will often settle the issue of conversion later. In contrast, this is the exact opposite of the baby boomer generation—young people searching for truth. Young boomers first settled the issue of conversion before they dealt with commitment to relationship.

Our age is being referred to as the postmodern age. Whether it also becomes a post-Christian age is yet to be seen. Much of our future will be determined by how effectively we reach Generation X. **E**

ENDNOTES

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4. George Barna, *Generation Next: What You Need To Know About Today's Youth* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995) 20.

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Carrying
Out the

GREAT Evangelism CAUSE

ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

BY LOREN TRIPPLET

Picture idyllic Eden. No traffic, no smog, no noise, no stress, and no sin with its consequences. What a beginning for the human race. As God said of all His creation, it was good. Everything was good, including His crowning acts of creation—Adam and Eve.

THE GREAT CALAMITY

But the first Adam failed. Hand in hand the first couple walked into Satan's trap, and the party was over—Eden ended. An angel with a flaming sword stood at Eden's gate. Man was shut out of the Garden. Today the word *Eden* is used merely to express unimaginable fantasy.

Before the couple's expulsion, Eden was the scene of an awesome and heartbreaking vignette—one that is repeated again and again in Scripture. God came into Eden to visit with His children, but they weren't there. They hid when they heard Him coming. God stopped at the meeting place, looked around, and finally called out, "Adam, where are you?"

A suggested translation of that cry captures God's great sense of loss: "Adam, how can I give you up?" As we view God in deep sorrow and loss, we see the *great calamity*. Nothing has been the same since.

THE GREAT CAUSE

Despite the Fall, we see God's yearning love displayed toward fallen man throughout Scripture. This is the *great cause*—God's campaign to bring back Adam's race. He never stops loving the lost. Even when He gave up on all who were on the earth, He found an exception—Noah. God started over with righteous Noah and his sons. Later, He was ready to destroy Israel again and start over with Moses. But Moses pled, "Please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written" (Exodus 32:32*).

***His great cause is His
unceasing search for
a solution to
the great calamity.***

Though God eventually sent His people into heathen captivity, all the while He hoped they would bow and call on Him for mercy and forgiveness. God is reluctant to punish. He is slow to anger. His mercy shines through His dealings with man. He is not a God of vengeance but is a God of mercy and reconciliation. His

***Hand in hand the first
couple walked into
Satan's trap, and the
party was over.***

great cause is His unceasing search for a solution to the *great calamity*.

GREAT CALVARY

In the fullness of time, God reached into the deepest files of His eternal database and set in motion a plan conceived before the worlds existed. It was a startling, radical solution that could not fail—a plan that called for God's only Son to be sacrificed for all of the sins of Adam's race. God himself, in the form of a man, would make the most inconceivable sacrifice ever placed on an altar. This was a God-sacrifice, a divine agony—the agony of the Cross. It was *great Calvary*.

Great Calvary is the centerpiece of God's *great cause*. Calvary was God finding a way. Calvary was heaven's pronouncement to Satan that there is always a city of refuge where the guilty can flee for mercy. Calvary is the gateway to that city. And going through Calvary doesn't hide sins—it washes them away. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

*In fullness of time, God
reached into the deepest files
of His eternal database and set
in motion a plan conceived
before the worlds existed.*

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Before His return to heaven, our Lord put in place a plan to reach the lost with the message of Calvary. We call it the Great Commission, a mandate for the greatest cause of evangelism ever considered.

At first glance it seems pathetically inadequate. Yet, the Great Commission is a divine arrangement that calls for every born-again believer to become a part of God's great delivery system. Since Christ died for all, God wants everyone to know about Calvary. That is why every believer is to be a soul-saving member of His redeeming army.

All believers are appointed by God to

carry the good news of Calvary and the empty tomb to all peoples, all nations, all tribes, and all tongues. We are the *commissioned ones*.

*It was a startling, radical
solution that could not fail—
a plan that called for God's
only Son to be sacrificed for
all of the sins of Adam's race.*

There is no need to fear or be overwhelmed. God knows we cannot do this on our own. That is why Jesus said as He was leaving earth, "As soon as I get there, where my Heavenly Father is, I will send you the enabling gift of the Holy Spirit" (cf. John 16:7). He enables us to obey the Great Commission—to do our part in telling the world about Calvary. When we obey, we can know the joy of participating in God's *great cause* of finding the lost and turning them toward Calvary.

A GREAT OBLIGATION

Being involved in the Great Commission is not only a matter of obedience to God's plan, it is also obedience to the holy idea of justice. Why should we have the joy of salvation and its benefits and not care that millions do not have it?

Scripture repeatedly speaks of the solace and healing that comes from knowing God. The Psalmist expressed the hope that all nations can be healed, so they can truly trust in the Almighty (cf. Psalm 67:2). All people of all nations must have a chance to experience the embrace of God's love and promise.

There is a great army of *commissioned ones* around the world who seem to never stop reaching a little further. They see themselves as the *called ones* to spread the knowledge of His name to all peoples.

A Bible school student from our new school in Ethiopia returned from a witnessing outreach during the school's first semester break. Missionaries

Duane and Sylvia Stewart tell about Nagusi, *a commissioned one*.

Nagusi was traveling to reach one more preaching point when the rain began to pour. So, as Ethiopians do, he stopped at someone's house and asked if he could come in. A group was gathered there, and they welcomed him in. While visiting, he noticed one man sitting in the corner who never said anything. As time went on and the rain continued, Nagusi asked if he could say a few words to the group. They consented, so he preached the gospel. Afterward, as Nagusi prayed, the Holy Spirit came upon him, and he began to speak in other tongues. Immediately the man in the corner of the room leaped to his feet and threw his hands in the air. He said to Nagusi, "How did you know my language?"

*Great Calvary is the centerpiece
of God's great cause.*

"I didn't," Nagusi said. "The Spirit of the Lord was speaking through me."

"You told me in my language to stand to my feet," the man replied. "I have not been able to walk because my leg was shriveled up. Now you can see that I am standing normally."

Surely God's *commissioned ones* will have courage, boldness, and power. Let us make new vows to serve the great cause of God's love for the lost. This is the will of God for His Church. We must carry out the great evangelism cause of letting people everywhere know of God's eternal love for them and of His provision for their salvation. **E**

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



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A bountiful grain harvest comes when there is good soil, adequate moisture, proper temperature, and quality seed.

followers in the 21st century. Most experts tell us that a team spirit coupled with respect for those who serve under leadership are a major part of successfully planting a church. The following guidelines would determine my approach if I were planting a church.

1. *Pray until you receive a word from God.* This outweighs all other considerations. No one can give you this except the Lord. You cannot get a word from God from tapes, books, seminars, or counseling.

Once you hear from God, these resources can be very helpful, but they can never substitute for getting on your face before God and hearing firsthand what He has to say to you. This is not a mechanical process of choosing available options; this is a time when you must hear directly from God.

SO You Want To Be a CHURCH PLANTER?

BY CHARLES E. HACKETT

Many books, tapes, and seminars list the finer points of church planting. I want to paint a broader picture that has more to do with the general guidelines of church planting rather than the mechanics. A set of correct rules and procedures will never be enough to touch the hearts of people

causing them to come together and form a church family. Soul, warmth, feeling, and unity are some of the characteristics that must be in place; they come as a result of leaders who are sensitive to the needs of people. Insensitive robots who attempt to lead from a dictatorial position will find fewer long-term

On some occasions you will have nothing else but the call of God, so His direction must be clear and unmistakable. Where does He want you to go? What is His timing? What needs to be corrected or changed in your attitude and motives? Are you seeking to build God's kingdom or your kingdom? Has God given you a clear vision with supporting verses of Scripture that will see you through any storm?

When I faced a difficult time earlier in my ministry, God gave me John 15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (NKJV). I have needed that verse many times as I pushed ahead in what I knew was God's will for my life.

God does not call you to failure. He receives no glory when no one is saved. His kingdom is not built when you despair, give up, and leave without bearing fruit. He does not give you the gift of barrenness or defeat, but rather, He gives you a fruitful ministry—fruit that remains when He leads you to other areas of service.

In 1993, Chris and Monica DeLaurentis planted a church in Minneapolis' inner city. Most experts will tell you that an indigenous church cannot be planted in this type of environment by inexperienced people. But Chris and Monica had a word from God that superseded conventional wisdom. Today, the Assemblies of God has a strong church of over 400 believers in this area of darkness. Most of the new believers were saved out of the immediate neighborhoods where crime and drugs ruled for years.

A set of correct rules and procedures will never be enough to touch the hearts of people causing them to come together and form a church family.

Moses was successful in leading a nation of slaves out of Egypt, not because he had a great plan, but because he heard from God and got His plan. God is not confused or perplexed. He knows what to do in every situation and will pass His wisdom on to you if you will only

ask. Confusion, division, and barrenness are not gifts from God. They come when you rush ahead of Him and do your own thing. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They can walk and not get tired, and they can run and not fall (cf. Isaiah 40:31).

***Soul, warmth, feeling, and unity
are some of the characteristics
that must be in place.***

2. *Secure shared responsibility.* Some see this only as getting permission from the proper authorities. We need more than permission. We need agreement, affirmation, advice, and support. That which God has spoken to our hearts, He will confirm through others who are in authority over us. We will never need to resort to unscriptural behavior to accomplish His will. God will remove obstacles, including people, open or close doors, and do whatever it takes to advance His kingdom. He will never need our carnal input or actions to accomplish His will.

***[God] knows
what to do in
every situation
and will pass His
wisdom on to you
if you will only ask.***

PLANTING CHURCHES THAT GROW

As we look at the rapid proliferation of churches in Acts, we find seven universal and timeless principles [of growing churches] that are sure to work anywhere with any people group:

1. *Go where people are.* Don't expect them to come looking for you. God poured out the Spirit in a place where thousands of Jews from all over the world were present (Acts 2:1–12).
2. *Let the love of God be manifest.* In the new church at Jerusalem, outsiders could see the church members' love as they provided for needs of all (2:45; 4:34).
3. *Minister to the felt needs of people.* When the crippled man was healed (3:7,8), multitudes were ready to receive Jesus (4:4).
4. *Obey the Spirit even when it results in judgment on sin.* After the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, multitudes came from cities all around Jerusalem (5:11–16,28).
5. *Rejoice when you are persecuted for Jesus' sake* (5:41).
6. *Keep your priorities straight* (6:4–7).
7. *If you become a martyr, the Lord will reveal His glory.* You may win your most important convert (7:55–60).

—Adapted from *Planting Churches that Grow* by Opal L. Reddin
(Springfield, Mo.: Central Bible College Press, 1990) 115–116.
Used by permission.

Bill and Cheryl Gray received from the city of Mobile, Alabama, a choice piece of property for a ministry center—an impossible feat until we remember that God owns it all and will do as He desires. Favoritism and luck had nothing to do with this blessing. It came because two people heard from God and were in proper relationship with those who were in authority over them. Rebellion against God-ordained authority is a cancer that will paralyze and eventually destroy any ministry.

Insensitive robots who attempt to lead from a dictatorial position will find fewer long-term followers in the 21st century.

3. *Pray for laborers.* Planting a fruitful church cannot be accomplished by one leader alone but requires many workers. Too often we pray for money instead of laborers and then wonder why we fail. I have never seen a better example of raising up workers from the neighborhood than what Tommy and Matthew Barnett have done at L.A. International Church. People who were

outcasts from society have become profitable workers through the grace of God, love, clear instruction, and great role models. Tommy's son Matt is a vital part of the leadership, even though he is only 22 years old. He heads up this great ministry on a day-by-day basis with his dad providing the overall leadership. It is a wonderful combination. In today's great harvest field, we need the energy of the youth and the wisdom of the elders. There is a place for all to serve, and everyone is needed.

We often neglect the role of mentors—mature leaders teaching others from their own life's experiences. Jesus set the example by taking 12 ordinary people and making successful church leaders out of 11 of them. No long-range success can be realized without raising up workers.

4. *Do the basics.* Many ministers look for shortcuts to planting successful churches. There are none. A bountiful grain harvest comes when there is good soil, adequate moisture, proper temperature, and quality seed. There is no substitute for any of these. When these elements are properly brought together, there will be an abundant harvest.

Likewise, in planting a church, three important basics cannot be ignored. They are:

- *Our daily relationship with God.* We cannot give to others until we have received from God. We must have a daily time in the Word and in prayer. To ignore this time with God guarantees failure.

Most experts tell us that a team spirit coupled with respect for those who serve under leadership are a major part of successfully planting a church.

- *Our relationship with others.* We are in the people business, and building relationships is more important than erecting buildings. Our calling is not to brick and mortar, but to people. Build a loving church family, and a church building will automatically follow. Even sinners can lay bricks and nail lumber.

- *An organized structure.* This is necessary in personal life as well as in the church. When Jesus wanted to feed 5,000 men plus women and children, He first got everyone organized. He seated them in groups of 50 and 100, appointed ushers, found 12 baskets, and then proceeded to perform the miracle. Without structure, the miracle would have caused chaos, and very few would have been fed. Having a plan of action, good organization, and the discipline to persevere enables us to do many things well and helps avoid burnout and frustration.

Planting a church and seeing it develop into a healthy, spiritual family is one of the most satisfying adventures anyone could experience. **E**

Charles E. Hackett is executive director of the Division of Home Missions, Springfield, Missouri.



WHY CHURCH PLANTING IS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF REACHING NONBELIEVERS

C. Peter Wagner, in *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, calls the birthing of new churches the most significant evangelistic method on the horizon. The following are his reasons why.

- New leaders are released to use their skills and gifts more effectively than would have been possible in their old churches.
- A new church renews the energy and enthusiasm of some of the existing churches located in the same community.
- A new church has fewer psychological barriers to overcome in developing means of effectively reaching the new generation of adults.
- Numerical growth is more likely with less effort in new churches than is likely in older congregations.
- New churches offer the unchurched a wider variety of alternatives to choose from, enhancing their likelihood of attending any church.

—As cited in *Evangelism That Works* by George Barna (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995) 82.
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BY DON E. ROSS

D“Don, I’ve got to get away from this place.” I watched Bob struggle to express his feelings, his facial muscles tight with tension. He was clearly dealing with a high level of emotional pressure.

“If I could just get away for a month or so, maybe I could get some perspective on this situation and begin to put things together. There are some long-standing problems in our church that I’ve been trying to deal with for months, but I’m so mixed up I can’t see the forest for the trees. I just don’t know what to do anymore. I’m worn out. I go to bed tired and wake up tired.”

“Why don’t you take some vacation time?”

“I’ve considered that, but honestly I don’t think that’s the solution. I could use 2 weeks right now, sure, but what about my family this summer? They deserve some time away too. What I really need is to get into some kind of a personal-growth program that would recharge my batteries and help give me perspective.”

“So what’s stopping you?” I asked.

“I don’t see how I can find the extra time to focus on recharging, strategic planning, vision, and personal development when I’m bombarded all day with people looking to me as their primary caregiver. Frankly, I feel like

PREVENTING AN UNTIMELY RESIGNATION

The basics of prayer, Bible study, and moral purity do not guarantee that a pastor won’t run out of steam.



I'm being sucked dry."

A conversation like this is not unusual. When this kind of language is used, it's a signal that a resignation could be in the works. The pastor is so frustrated he feels the only way out is to leave. He thinks that once he's in a new church, he'll feel energized, focused, and have a hard time even remembering he was once out of gas emotionally.

Unfortunately, this cycle can reproduce itself again in 3 to 5 years. One pastor told me he resigned his church when he was out of energy and took a new church because he hoped he would have a year's honeymoon; he badly needed a rest. He was quite surprised and disappointed to find he had jumped from the proverbial frying pan into the fire. Fortunately, he survived and led his new church forward after an intense period of adjustment.

The basics of prayer, Bible study, and moral purity do not guarantee that a pastor won't run out of steam. As I have consulted with pastors, I have discovered that many long-term leaders are:

PERSONALLY CENTERED

They know what they're trying to accomplish. They don't often look for personal leadership cues from those around them—they are initiators rather than enablers. These leaders have a personal, internal navigational system that helps them stay on course, even in stormy weather. As I have interviewed them, I have found two consistent factors that produce this type of balance in their lives. First, most have gone through personal pain or a career crisis. They've recovered and learned from the failure or trauma. Second, there is a humility about them as well as energy. They have the ability to assess both their strengths and weaknesses accurately in a variety of situations.

*Long-term leaders are readers....
Books provide them not only
respite but stimulation from
a variety of sources.*

CONSISTENT READERS

John Wesley believed so highly in reading that he told the young men of the Wesleyan societies, "Either read or get out of the ministry." Wesley himself had a passion for reading and

devoured thousands of volumes on a wide range of subjects while riding horseback.

Long-term leaders are readers. They seem to have several books going at once, usually on different topics, secular as well as Christian. They use books to stay current, to develop sermon illustrations, and to get and keep a balanced perspective on life and the ministry. Books provide them not only respite but stimulation from a variety of sources.

MONITORS OF THEIR SOULS

These leaders know how to monitor and regulate their emotional output as well as input. They know how to recharge themselves and maintain personal boundaries so that neither they nor their families blow out or up from emotional pressure. If the soul is made up of the mind, will, and emotions, as some have suggested, long-term leaders realize their supply of soul strength is not inexhaustible. They know when to say no and are not afraid to say it. They recognize people and situations that drain their emotional energy and are careful in their dealings with them.

MISSION DRIVEN

Long-term leaders know their mission is paramount. They do not personally handle everything that reaches their desks. They focus on the mission of God and refuse to be drawn into mundane, trite, and profitless issues.

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "The urgent problems are seldom the important ones." Focused leaders are able to discern the difference between the urgent and the important in the light of their mission.

PERSEVERING

When enduring leaders hit a wall in their leadership or lose perspective, they know that a critical factor is simply deciding not to quit. Often that decision alone can bring an answer to a perplexing situation or at least an attitude change. They understand that perseverance is also a form of success.

RISK TAKERS

These leaders know that to keep moving they must take risks. There is no such thing as a place of complete security. Leaders must lead, so it follows they must also take risks. Each new vision produces a risk of some sort.

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Some visions can be fulfilled in 3 to 5 years; others may take a decade or more. Long-term leaders know that at the fulfillment of a vision, a new one must take its place. This may account for some of the pastors who resign after 12 to 15 years' successful ministry. They have fulfilled the vision they had for that time frame, but instead of getting a new vision for the same place, they decide to move on. Perhaps they may have developed a sense of security and are unwilling to risk again on a new vision. General Douglas MacArthur, a man who clearly understood risk, once said, "There is no security on this earth, only opportunity."

RELEVANT

Martin Luther was a relevant leader, and he was almost killed for it. Nevertheless, he put the message of the gospel into song and word in a way that helped the common man to understand it.

Long-term leaders know the value of being relevant. They have the ability to recognize the difference between conviction and nonessentials and willingly remove the latter if they hinder the forward motion of the church. They

work at staying relevant so the message will be received. You can discern their efforts in the words they use, stories they tell, and subjects they preach.

ABLE TO TAKE PERIODS OF REST

Jesus demonstrated that rest is a part of life. He often retreated for periods of reflection and recuperation. Leaders who think long term have tapped into this resource and rest several different ways. Most pastors take a regular day off. Some, with multiple services, develop preaching schedules that allow them to be out of the pulpit every 6 or 8 weeks, possibly even out of town. A few even recognize the value of a sabbatical of 2 or 3 months every 5 years and have put it in their church policies. Pastors who have taken sabbaticals say they feel like they have new churches when they return. Their congregations often feel the same way. Senior pastors would do well not to underestimate the value of rest and the perspective it gives.

Regardless of our efforts, pastors change churches—that is part of life. Each of us has questioned a move at some time. In moments of honest

reflection, we entertain thoughts of what might have been if we had stayed and dreamed new dreams. Our current American pastoral paradigm illustrates that most of us dream new dreams easier in new places. It was different 200 years ago; when a pastor took a church, it was usually for life.

Focused leaders are able to discern the difference between the urgent and the important in the light of their mission.

In his book *Today's Pastors*, George Barna states that the average pastor currently stays in a church about 4 years. Think about the energy and resources invested in those every-4-year moves. Consider the adjustment required of the pastor's family, the new congregation, the previous congregation, the finances involved, and the amount of time needed to bond to a new church. Rethinking a decision to resign might not be a bad idea. There are probably enough lost people to fuel a new vision.

You, as pastor, may eventually conclude it really is time to go. Perhaps the situation is such that you believe you have no other choice. Each of us must seek to know God's will and do our best to fulfill it; however, there is the possibility we could be trying to run away. If so, sooner or later we will run into ourselves again and discover that nothing has changed but our addresses.

When you stop and think about it, where you are may be the best place to stay. **E**

Don E. Ross is senior pastor of North Seattle (Washington) Christian Fellowship and for 10 years has also served as a church ministries consultant.



Quantification Sickness

BY DEL TARR

John the beloved apostle wrote about a man called Diotrephes “who loves to be first” (3 John 9, NIV). This character type would have no trouble thriving in our culture or even in much of the church today. Jesus’ words are perceived as being upside down in today’s world.

- The first will be last (cf. Matthew 19:30).
- The way to win is to lose (cf. Matthew 16:25).
- You can only get to the top if you first go to the bottom (cf. Luke 14:10).

Jesus said some amazing words that are shocking in the era in which we live: “So the last will be first, and the first will be last” (Matthew 20:16, NIV; cf. Matthew 19:30). These two similar verses bracket the story of workers in a vineyard where the landowner paid some very strange wages.

Shakespeare offered an eloquent warning in *King Henry VIII* to all that mirror Jesus’ words quoted above: “Cromwell, I charge thee fling away ambition: by that sin fell the angels” (III, 441). Can you imagine hearing these words of warning in the United States today?

We live in days of pride and greed. We have allowed sports-world heroes to become models of the day and our standard of ethical behavior in business and often in the church. It’s in to be No. 1. Can you imagine some hungry-eyed broker on Wall Street being told to “fling away ambition”? All one needs to do is jump high in the air and slam-dunk a basketball to then prance around expecting the adulation of the crowd. Or simply cross a white line on a green field with an oval ball, and again a frenzied dance is allowed in the end zone while gesticulating wildly before enthusiastic spectators. With both index fingers jabbing at the sky, the player leads the crowd in a frenzied cry, “We’re No. 1.” Who would expect a father of a college athlete to encourage his son to walk in meekness, guarding against the sin

that caused the angels to fall?

These times are not known for humility, servanthood, or modest reluctance. If you’ve got it, flaunt it!

I heard Charles R. Swindoll address this topic in his sermon, “Christ at the Crossroad of Ambition” (April 8, 1990):

“With assertiveness and unrestrained desires, those who wish to make a name for themselves push and shove their way to the front. Self-promotion is in. How unlike the Savior who envied no place in the sun and instructed all who followed Him to model the same unambitious lifestyle.”

How shocking the words of Jesus—“The first shall be last and the last shall be first”—how could that be?

Let’s look at the spiritual lesson these strange words bracket in the parable Jesus told of a landowner who needed to harvest his grapes. Jesus told this story because the apostle Peter had just asked Him: “What are we going to get out of following you? What’s in it for us?” (cf. Matthew 19:27). In the story to follow, Jesus said clearly that the world’s measuring system is out of sync with God’s measuring system—in fact it’s upside down.

STRANGE WAGES (MATTHEW 20:1–16)

- A landowner hired laborers five times in one day.
- When the work was done (12 hours later), the foreman was told to pay all workers the same wage the first hired laborer had bargained for.
- Some workers were paid a full day’s wages for only 1 hour’s work.
- For that strange behavior, other workers were “bent out of shape.”
- Remember, Jesus told this story to explain

We have allowed sports-world heroes to become models of the day and our standard of ethical behavior in business and often in the church. It’s in to be No. 1.



ILLUSTRATION: THE ART SOURCE

Peter's question in Matthew 19:27.

If a boss paid these kind of wages in today's world, the same kind of disgruntled people in Jesus' story would either picket or riot basing their rights on their understanding of quantified discrimination. Listen to these critics in the story (20:12, NIV). " 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' " Peter and the other disciples were hoping for a quantified answer to their question: "What are we going to get out of serving You, Jesus?" Jesus was plainly telling the disciples that this world of quantification, where one makes value judgments connected to numbers, was going to miss some essential ingredients—numbers can't measure everything.

What do we deduce from this story?

- The landowner was not stupid for hiring so many times. Why? Even an idiot wouldn't have to learn the same lesson 5 times in 1 day.

- It was not because of the landowner's miserly ways he hired so few workers at 6 a.m.

How do we know this? No tightwad would pay a whole day's wages for 1 hour's work!

- The problem in the story had to be with the go-slow workers. Did the early ones form a union and force the later arrivals to go slow—to prolong the job?

- There must have been something about the *way* the last people hired worked that caused them to be rewarded so generously.

From our perspective we would shout: "Jesus, You've got the numbers all wrong! You can't pay people who have worked 12 hours the same as people who have worked only 1 hour. Where is Your sense of equality and justice?"

Jesus said clearly that the world's measuring system is out of sync with God's measuring system—in fact it's upside down.

Jesus taught that attitude is more important than activity. The *way* people work is more important than *how long* they work. Obviously, those who had worked 12 hours had a bigger pile of grapes to show for their labor than those who had worked only 1 hour. Jesus was saying: "If you want to measure by quantification only, you are going to miss the way My Father judges and evaluates."

Sadly, this kind of quantified numerical evaluation has crept into the church. I saw a poster recently advertising a well-known evangelical singing group. It described the group as having:

- Traveled over 2 million miles worldwide.
- Performed in over 60 countries and in all 50 states.
- Performed nearly 20,000 concerts.
- Recorded over 40 popular albums.

All of this self-evaluation is quantitative, and none of it is qualitative. In promoting themselves, this group has learned how to speak "numerese." Is it because attributes like character, integrity, and honesty don't sell?

Of course, many things of value can be expressed by a number. The problem

is that many of the greatest Christian values cannot be expressed with a number. How would you put a numerical value on the fruit of the Spirit? Number "oneitis" has lead this culture into a "quantification sickness." People say, "We can prove it; we've got the numbers; we're No. 1."

**Jesus taught that
attitude is
more important
than activity.**

The businessman broods over the bottom line. The baseball addict dotes on batting averages. Numbers are so important they actually define us. We are a library card number, a credit card number, a social security number, and a license number. Richard Scammon, former head of the U.S. Census Bureau, said, "Modern man must not only be literate, he must also be numerate!" "Numerese" like "computerese" is a separate language.

Is all of this bad? Not necessarily. "Numerese" seems to be absolutely

necessary for existence in this industrialized, computerized, materialistic society.

The problem comes when we confuse *quantity* with *quality*.

A brochure for the dedication of a new church listed these statistics:

- 90 acres,
- 123,000 square feet,
- 14,500 square feet of carpeting,
- 85,000 square feet of roof tile,
- 1 million board feet of lumber.

If a serious spiritual problem or divorce caused you to search for a church home, wouldn't it be comforting to know you could find a church in your neighborhood with these statistics?

How did we get this way?

In America, success is a yardstick with which an individual's value is measured. One can speculate that America got on its "quantification kick" early in its history. Success became the basis upon which respect and confidence from others could be secured.

The maximization of quantifiable variables makes its appearance early in childhood. American parents implicitly demand their small children to be heavier, bigger, stronger, and smarter than other babies. Love is sometimes given conditionally if the baby talks and walks earlier and is cuter than other babies. Will the child obtain more love than those who are second or last in the quest for success? Children take their cues from grown-ups. Adults talk about a \$175,000 home or a \$75,000 salary. A person's prestige increases with his or her annual salary.

As president of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, I'm often asked: "How many students did you have last year?" It's true; numbers do sometimes give an accurate picture. But I wish people would ask questions like: "What is the quality of your professors?" "What is the spiritual temperature of the students studying for the ministry?"

I don't mean to say that numbers should be avoided. Yet, there are so many good things that can't be expressed in numbers. Our constant fixation with



who's No. 1 leads us away from spiritual truths that can only be measured by quality rather than quantity.

Lois Chaney cuts through the baloney on this topic with some very poignant words (*God Is No Fool*, 1969):

“We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” (Matthew 19:27, NIV):

“If I am doomed to be a saint, then I want to be a gold-cup saint. That's the whole trouble isn't it? Everyone wants to be a show piece. The emphasis is on success rather than on submission. That's why we have gold plated the cross.... The wooden cross in the shadows is so unnoticeable. That's the hang-up.... I want to be a gold loving cup, not a clay chamber pot. Then let's be honest. I am not a saint; I am a performer.”

Robert J. Samuelson, writing for *Newsweek*, talked about this number oneitis sickness in America. He called it the “trophy syndrome.” Not everyone can win every game, so we devise consolation prizes that make the losers feel better without hurting the winners—everyone gets a participation trophy.

The problem with this theologically is that it flies in the face of Jesus' words: “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). Constructive hypocrisy teases us into believing we don't have to mourn over anything or any loss. We don't have to consider ourselves inferior in any way because of our lack of perseverance, dedication, or commitment.

Here then is the core of this American sickness. It allows us to seek a pseudo-system that lets us dupe ourselves to quantitatively take away our pain for our own lack of shortcomings. It's the very opposite of what Jesus tried to teach us in the beatitude quoted above. Jesus knows that in this world there are going to be winners and losers, but Jesus also knows that only when a person is willing to mourn over his or her failure can that person receive the comfort that God provides. People who will not admit defeat (or admit anything less than being No. 1) don't even seek God's

comfort but feel self-sufficient in their pseudo-quantified self-evaluation.

SOME PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Everyone likes praise at the age of 6—an extra pat on the back is helpful. A few trophies are no big deal. Our problem is that we perpetuate childish customs. Praise given too easily or too lavishly is worse than no praise. Trophies are worth something only if they are earned, not bestowed. For example, the value of a seminary honorary title Distinguished Professor is diminished if every professor receives this title at retirement.

Charles Colson in his book *The Body* has a chapter entitled “Gimme That Hot Tub Religion!” He said that cultural values have so captured the church that we equate success with size—it's a reflex action. If a church isn't growing, someone is doing something wrong. Colson said the key to the solution is biblical fidelity. If a church challenges people to live holy lives and is growing, it is being blessed by God. On the other hand, just like giving a trophy to everybody, if a church preaches a message that just makes people feel like they are in a hot tub and in a state of perpetual bliss, then its growth is man-made.

Man-made growth can be spiritually deadening.

When can numbers lead us astray? Here are some quick axioms that will help our thinking while living in a quantitative society.

- Numerical proofs of theories that do not have numerical basis prove nothing.
- Numbers are tools not rules.
- Numbers are symbols for things—the number and the thing are not the same.

• Skill in manipulating numbers is a talent, not evidence of divine guidance.

Think quality. The New Testament said of the Lord's disciples: “These men have turned the world upside down” (cf. Acts 17:6).

Just imagine these quotes:

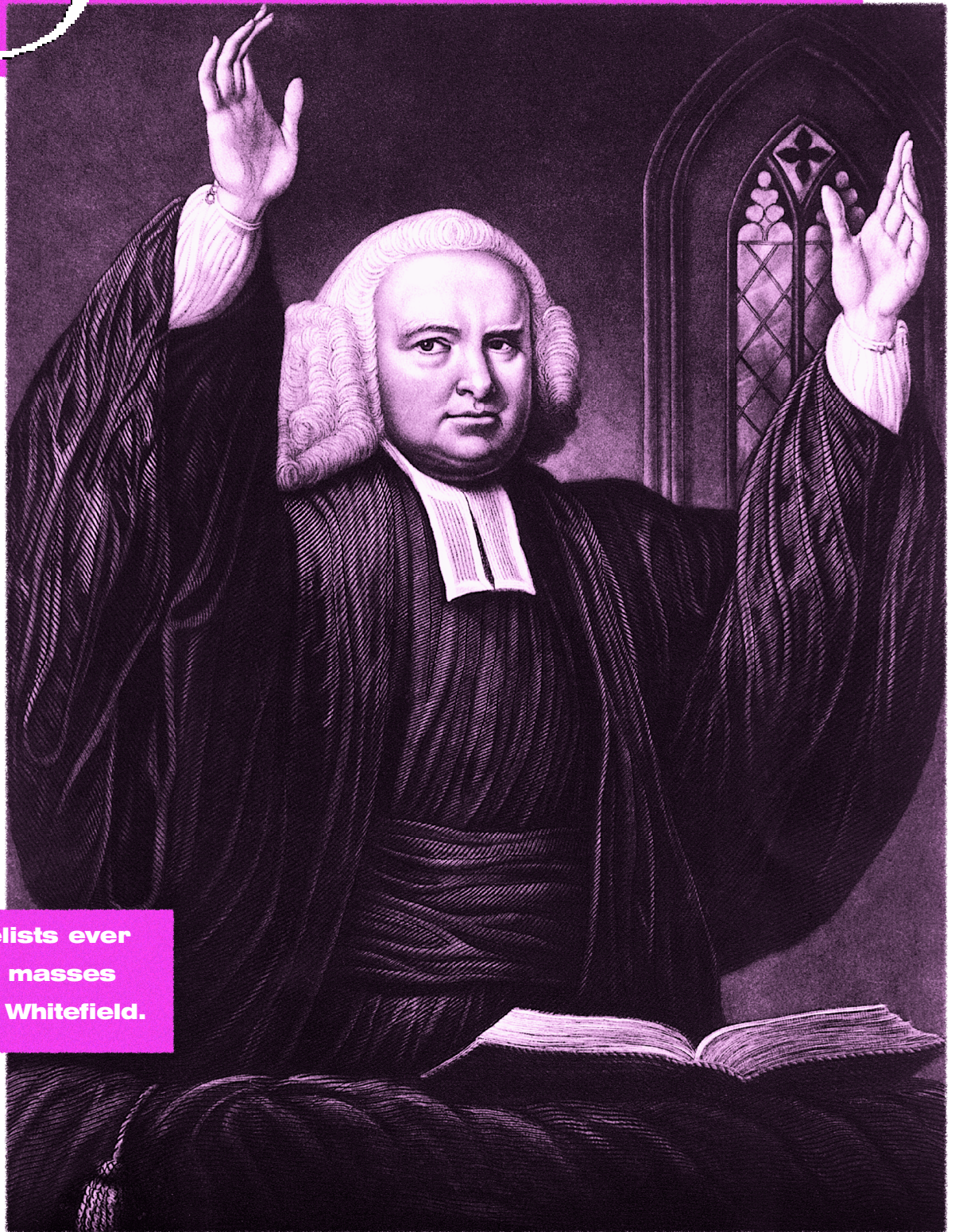
“I started out with 12 and ended up with 11.”—Jesus Christ

“Our church went from 32,000 to 300 in one week.”—Gideon **E**



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The Innovative Awakener:



Few evangelists ever
touched the masses
like George Whitefield.

PHOTO: BILLY GRAHAM CENTER MUSEUM



"Lord Send A Revival" (Psalm 85:6) is the Assemblies of God theme for 1997. To give special emphasis to this theme, *Enrichment* is printing articles on four of history's great revivalists. We started our series with inspiring accounts of the lives of Aimee Semple McPherson and Jonathan Edwards. We continue our series in this issue with an article on the life of George Whitefield. Smith Wigglesworth will be the subject in the remaining issue.

George Whitefield

and the Growth of the Evangelical Revival

BY GARY A. KELLNER

Few evangelists ever touched the masses like George Whitefield. Benjamin Franklin recalled his unparalleled impact on Philadelphia: "It was wonderful to see the Change soon made in the Manners of our Inhabitants...It seem'd as if all the World were growing Religious; so that One could not walk through the Town in an Evening without Hearing Psalms sung in different Families of every Street."

Whether leading citizens like Benjamin Franklin, coal miners in England, or townspeople in the colonies, George Whitefield moved them all. Unquestionably, he was the greatest evangelist of his time. Before Whitefield was 26, he had become the most popular figure in England and the colonies. Over the next generation, no one spoke to larger crowds or saw more converts, earning him the title Grand Itinerant.

How do you explain such a man? No doubt gifts and calling have a lot to do with it, but there was more to Whitefield's success than natural gifts. Simply stated, Whitefield was an *innovative awakener*, devising new methods for communicating the gospel and expanding the evangelical revival.

Whitefield was an innovative awakener, devising new methods for communicating the gospel and expanding the evangelical revival.

EARLY LIFE

Whitefield was born December 16, 1714. Little is known about his early life except what he records in his *Journals*. The young Whitefield grew up in a very different environment than

John and Charles Wesley whose father was a parish minister. Whitefield's parents operated the Bell Inn in Gloucester, which was hardly an ideal place to raise any child, much less a future minister.

The inn exposed the young Whitefield to the full cast of life's characters—traveling merchants, actors, gamblers, prostitutes, drunks, pickpockets, politicians, and clergy. He learned how to win the favor of people different from himself. In this diverse audience, Whitefield began to cultivate the art of conversation and storytelling.

Although the Whitefield family had been members of the petty aristocracy in the 17th century their fortunes had sunk to the point where their position in the community was tenuous. In addition, George's father died when the boy was only 2, and his mother's second marriage ended in divorce. So George grew up without the security that comes from having a strong father figure and a stable family environment.

The major influence on the boy was his mother Elizabeth, a woman who possessed none of the qualities that made Susannah Wesley the figure she was in the lives of her children. His parents were nominal Christians at best, and even though George's mother encouraged him to enter the ministry, she seemed to be more motivated by a desire to recover the family's sagging social status than by anything spiritual. The combination of the family's precarious finances and the absence of a strong male role model left George with a deep sense of inferiority and a strong need for affirmation that hounded him throughout much of his life.

His conversion caused him to redefine the nature of salvation, the meaning of the church, and his own mission in life.

George began grammar school at age 12. He was an indifferent scholar who seems to never have improved as a student. Whitefield's real gifts began to emerge early on. He showed considerable skill in elocution and declamation, as well as an exceptional ability to memorize dialogue. In short, George Whitefield was a born actor and starred in many of his school's plays.

Not surprisingly, Whitefield became immersed in theater, studying the passions—anger, love, fear, jealousy, joy, etc. In time, the evangelist would become an unrelenting opponent of the theater, but the lessons he learned about movement, gesture, and voice were never lost to him.

Whitefield became the progenitor of a distinctive approach to revivalism that practically assured large, eager, responsive crowds wherever he went.

By today's standards, the young Whitefield was something of a juvenile delinquent—drinking, stealing, and getting into frequent scrapes with his mother. After one quarrel, his frustrated mother consented to his leaving home to live with his brother.

As he neared 18, George seemed to think more seriously about his future. With encouragement from his principal and mother, Whitefield sought entrance to Oxford as a servitor—a scholarship student who made his way by serving as a house servant to wealthier Oxonians.

Whitefield was at the bottom of the social ladder at Oxford. The wealthier students never socialized with servitors, and even though Whitefield's ingratiating personality made his life better than

most, he was still isolated and lonely. At Oxford he met Charles Wesley who reached out to George and brought him into a group of earnest seekers, which came to be known as the Holy Club. Organized by John Wesley and others, the Holy Club existed to seek a more experientially and morally meaningful faith.

THE NEW BIRTH

The members of the Holy Club aggressively pursued the Christian life, meeting weekly for prayer, Bible study, and mutual support. They engaged in extended prayer vigils and frequent fasting in hopes of discovering the key to a more vital brand of Christianity. Whitefield pursued the goals of the group with special vigor. He fasted twice a week and wore plain clothes. During one Lenten season, he embarked on a 40-day fast that threatened his life and permanently weakened his health. Some of his teachers feared that he had lost his mind and considered expelling him from the university.

Whitefield grasped the meaning of the new birth more quickly than any other member of their circle. It came while reading *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* by Henry Scougal. Whitefield wondered what Scougal meant when he wrote: "Some falsely placed religion in going to church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the duties of the closet, and now and then reaching out their hands to give alms...." If that wasn't true religion, what was? Whitefield recalled: "God soon showed me; for in reading a few lines further, 'that true religion was a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us,' a ray of divine light was instantaneously darted in upon my soul." Although Whitefield did not have all the light, he soon found that he had been delivered from the oppressive weight of sin and realized that salvation involved a new birth. His conversion caused him to redefine the nature of salvation, the meaning of the church, and his own mission in life.

YOUTHFUL PHENOM

When he graduated from Oxford in 1736, Whitefield briefly considered settling in a parish, a course of action he quickly rejected. One can hardly imagine a person of Whitefield's temperament finding satisfaction in the routines of a parish priest.

His early experiences as a preacher seemed to confirm that Whitefield belonged on a larger stage. The young man was an overnight sensation. Within 18 months, Whitefield found himself preaching to crowds that greatly exceeded the capacity of most churches and were larger than any that had ever gathered in England to hear a preacher. Additional services were often scheduled to accommodate those who could not find seating.

Yet, the youthful superstar did not fit later celebrity stereotypes. Of medium height, his round face became increasingly pudgy with age. On top of that, because of a childhood bout with the measles, one of his eyes was permanently crossed, making him a somewhat comic figure. But Whitefield's unusual appearance did not inhibit him a bit; in fact, his cross-eyed stare seemed at times to mesmerize his audiences.

Popularity and success in preaching were not enough. Whitefield looked for bigger worlds to conquer. He found one in America, learning of the opportunities in far away Georgia from the Wesleys who had gone to the infant colony in 1735. They had failed miserably, leaving before Whitefield arrived in 1738. With his easy and adaptable manner, Whitefield was an instant hit. The

Whitefield developed a new form of preaching—more dramatic and visual, appealing to the emotions rather than to the mind.

colonists loved him, and Whitefield was captivated by the colonies, eventually crossing the Atlantic 13 times. In addition to preaching, he founded an orphanage which he named Bethesda. It became the love of his life, occupying far more of his time and energy than his wife Elizabeth.

WHITEFIELD AND THE GREAT AWAKENING

In October 1739, Whitefield returned to the colonies to begin a barnstorming tour that ended 11 months later. He traveled the length of the colonies, speaking in every city or town of any size, often preaching two or three times a day. Everywhere Whitefield went, he spoke to crowds that would be impressive in our day and were unheard of in his. His last service in Boston (population at the time, 17,000) drew more than 20,000 people.

The era of colonial revivals did not start with Whitefield, but his tour became the catalyst for a new phase of development. Revivals had been occurring in the Middle Colonies and New England for nearly 15 years, first among the Dutch and Scotch-Irish settlers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. A few years later, a revival started in Northampton, Massachusetts, under Jonathan Edwards that spread to more than 30 towns in the Connecticut Valley. These early revivals had a powerful impact with several thousand people experiencing new birth. But these revivals were largely regional or local affairs, and their leaders were isolated from one another.

Whitefield's tour changed that. Because of his success, revival became an intercolonial event, indeed, the first truly national event up to that point in American history. Whitefield's services made news everywhere he went, and he became the first "American" celebrity. Although some Christian leaders fear the dangers of celebrity evangelism, there can be no doubt that Whitefield's celebrity status gave the cause of revivalism a visibility that helped

galvanize the revival forces in America.

Whitefield redefined revivals. Jonathan Edwards had described the revival in Northampton as "a surprising work of God." But for Whitefield, revivals were neither mysterious nor surprising. He believed they could be organized and promoted. As a result of this new philosophy, Whitefield became the progenitor of a distinctive approach to revivalism that practically assured large, eager, responsive crowds wherever he went.

A NEW PREACHING STYLE

The size of the crowds and the resistance of most of the Anglican clergy caused Whitefield to move his preaching from the church to the marketplace. He was not the first to abandon the traditional venue of the pulpit, but he grasped the importance of shifting locations as did few others in his time, or since. One could hardly find a place in England in the 1730s where more than 10 percent of the population attended church services. Preaching only from pulpits, however eloquent or compelling, could only reach a very small slice of England's population. Whitefield opted for going to where the people were, or to where they would come—the marketplace, open fields, and coal mines.

Whitefield also recognized that preaching had to change in order to be heard in the marketplace. The early 18th century marked the advent of the consumer society and the impersonal marketplace. People made purchasing decisions based on appeal and price rather than on personal relationships. It was a new world—less traditional, less hierarchical, and more competitive. Persuasion was becoming increasingly important. Whitefield knew that the

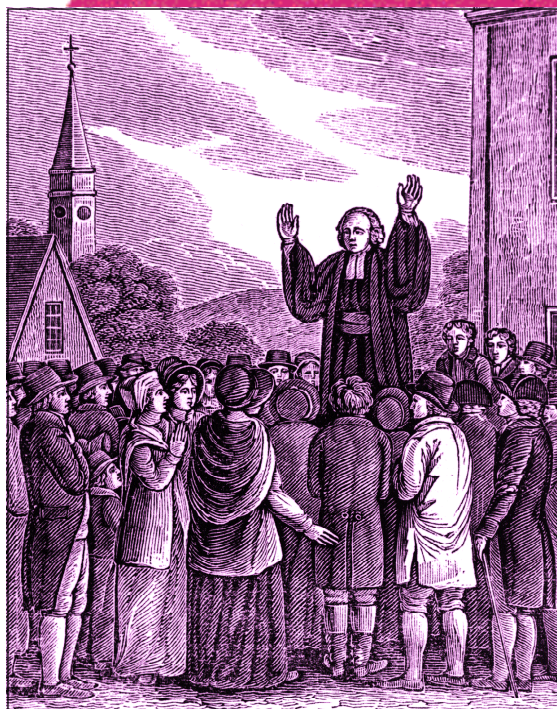


PHOTO: BILLY GRAHAM CENTER MUSEUM

traditional sermon could never compete with actors and peddlers for people's attention.

With his flare for performance, Whitefield developed a new form of preaching—more dramatic and visual, appealing to the emotions rather than to the mind. He frequently took on the persona of a Bible character. He laughed. He wept. He climbed trees. Whitefield became his message and transformed preaching into a dramatic event.

Little wonder the crowds loved him as they did. Whitefield brought biblical characters and themes alive. The most acclaimed actor of the time, David Garrick, said, "I would pay two guineas to say 'Oh!' like Mr. Whitefield." As historian Harry Stout observed, Whitefield "showed how religion could be popular."

"THE PEDLAR OF DIVINITY"

One of Whitefield's critics labeled him, "the pedlar of divinity." George Whitefield was a born promoter. He recognized that promoting revival entailed more than preaching; it required marketing, and no one ever did it better.

Inspired by the effect newspaper reports had on the size of his crowds and his popularity, Whitefield adopted a

"print and preach" strategy for extending the evangelical revival. The first edition of his *Journals*, an account of his life and ministry, was printed in 1740 when he was 25. This may seem as egotistical as some young athletes today who write their life stories before they really have one. Whitefield never intended the *Journals* as autobiography but saw them as promotional tracts to encourage the growth of revivalistic religion and to serve the need for advance publicity. In 1742, he launched *Christian History*, a monthly periodical to report the successes of his revivals and revivals of others.

The entrepreneur in Whitefield knew he would need financing to achieve his goals. George had a knack for winning the favor of wealthy and influential people who gave generously to support his evangelical ministry and the orphan house. He not only solicited funds from individuals but developed a system for translating contacts into regular supporters. This is not to imply inappropriate behavior on Whitefield's part; he simply loved people and had an uncanny ability to gain their support. He was

passionately devoted to the cause of revival and never seemed hesitant to ask for money.

An almost compulsive networker, Whitefield, through his preaching, personal contacts, and writing, became the most significant force in transforming evangelical revivalism into an international movement. Because of his catholic and irenic spirit, he brought, almost singlehandedly, disparate people together across denominational lines on two continents, although he remained Anglican.

THE CONTROVERSIALIST

Revivals have always been controversial. Whitefield's were certainly no exception. At times, he seemed to court controversy, going out of his way to antagonize clergy critics.

At a deeper level, Whitefield offended those who exalted reason and disparaged all emotion in religion. He was often the target of scurrilous attacks in the press and by some of the clergy. His crossed eyes inspired one critic to dub him "Dr. Squintum." The famed artist, William Hogarth produced a caricature

of a cherubic Whitefield delivering a message to "St. Money-Trap." The young Whitefield usually responded in kind. To the criticisms of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he declared that the prelate "knew nothing more about Christ than he did of Mahomet."

Controversy forced him to refine his understanding of the new birth and of revival. He benefited from his critics by evaluating his own motives and methods, so that the older Whitefield became a more mellow and gracious figure.

BLIND SPOTS

There has never been a revivalist, or any other minister for that matter, without a few blind spots. Whitefield was no exception.

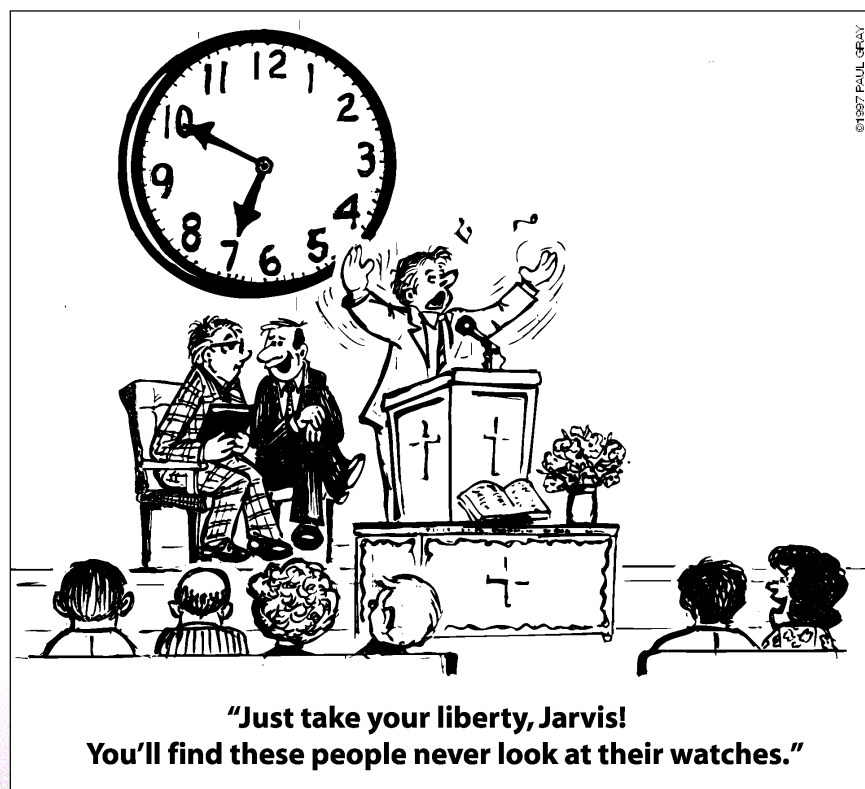
The young Whitefield was quite full of himself. The press releases he wrote during his early years offended many. To his credit, maturity and controversy brought him to a more realistic self-appraisal.

Whitefield's social vision was underdeveloped. He was personally compassionate but socially conservative. Bethesda was Whitefield's personal response to the tragedy of orphaned children in Georgia. But his attitude toward black slavery shows his superficial understanding of social issues. He loved the slaves and took pains to spread the gospel to them. Yet, Whitefield encouraged the trustees of Georgia to introduce slavery to the struggling colony to foster economic development. On the slavery issue, Whitefield is a good illustration of the fact that effectiveness in evangelism is no guarantee of universal competence or insight.

Finally, Whitefield never could handle money, as his management of the orphan house attests. He was frequently in debt, borrowing heavily to finance his transatlantic ventures and to keep Bethesda afloat.

EXITING THE STAGE

Whitefield pushed himself mercilessly. The years of ceaseless exertion and constant travel finally caught up with



him. By the time he reached his mid-fifties, his health was all but gone. Suffering from heart disease and knowing that his time was short, the Grand Itinerant wanted to make one more tour of his beloved colonies. He arrived in Charleston in November 1769. Unbelievably, despite his steady loss of strength, he made it as far as Exeter, Massachusetts. He died, at age 55, the morning after preaching his last sermon on September 29, 1770.

EVALUATING WHITEFIELD

George Whitefield often suffers by comparison to his friend and contemporary John Wesley. Whitefield's critics point out that despite his strenuous efforts, the Grand Itinerant left nothing behind, unlike the organizationally minded Wesley who left the Methodist church.

It is true that he possessed none of Wesley's organizational genius. His management of the orphan house and frequent financial difficulties provide abundant testimony to this. Apart from the multitudes of people who came to

He recognized that promoting revival entailed more than preaching; it required marketing, and no one ever did it better.

saving faith under his preaching, Whitefield may have made his greatest contribution to the spectacular surge of revivalistic religion in the 18th century by serving as the primary catalyst for the creation of a transatlantic evangelical network. This may be his most enduring achievement.

Whitefield (and the rest of us) should not be judged by the accomplishments of others but by faithfulness to his (and our) own gifts and calling. George Whitefield was an evangelist, and for 33

years he gave himself unsparingly to that call. He traveled hundreds of thousands of miles and preached more than 18,000 sermons. Whitefield defined the term *evangelist* and became the prototype, inspiring a multitude in his time and in the two centuries since his death. **E**

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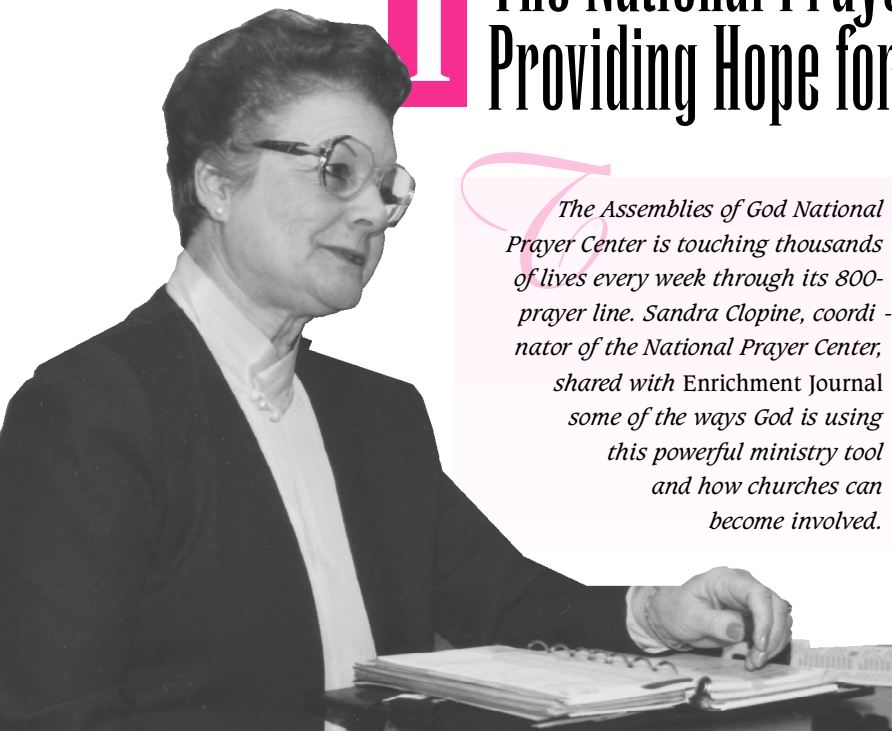
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INTERVIEW WITH SANDRA G. CLOPINE

The National Prayer Center— Providing Hope for the Hurting



The Assemblies of God National Prayer Center is touching thousands of lives every week through its 800-prayer line. Sandra Clopine, coordinator of the National Prayer Center, shared with Enrichment Journal some of the ways God is using this powerful ministry tool and how churches can become involved.

Sometimes [people] see our number on a bumper sticker and call in...and say: "I see this number on the car in front of me. Can you help me find God?"

TELL US ABOUT THE NATIONAL PRAYER CENTER?

In July 1994, we started working toward opening a prayer center. We opened on October 1, 1994, with five phone lines. We received 22 calls the first day. Presently, we receive between 1,000 and 1,200 calls a week and another 1,000 calls a week through our satellite prayer centers. We can receive calls from anybody in the United States and Puerto Rico. The National Prayer Center's hours are Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CDT. If people call after hours, they receive a recorded message and prayer. (We've had people write or call saying that even the recorded prayer helped them.)

GENERALLY, WHAT TYPES OF PHONE CALLS DO YOU RECEIVE?

We get calls for physical healing, desperate calls for prayer from people who are in abusive situations, calls to pray for the salvation of loved ones, and calls from people wanting to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We've even had some receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit as we've prayed for them over the phone.

Many people have recently prayed the sinner's prayer. Sometimes they see our number on a bumper sticker and call in on their cellular phone and say: "I see this number on the car in front of me. Can you help me find God?"

HOW ARE CALLERS HELPED? DOES THE NATIONAL PRAYER CENTER PROVIDE SPIRITUAL COUNSELING?

We have volunteers who are trained to listen to the need and pray with the caller. We try to emphasize in our training video and print materials that the National Prayer Center is not a counseling ministry. We cannot understand in just a few moments of time a person's exact situation. We tell them: "We can't advise you, but God is able to speak to your heart, direct you, and answer your prayer."

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE TESTIMONIES OF ANSWERS TO PRAYER?

So many have called and said, "Our marriage has been restored." We've also had wonderful testimonies of healings. Just this past week we had a call about a young man in Kansas City who had a car accident and was in a coma. After prayer, the report came in the next day that he was conscious.

One of the outstanding reports was from the family of a 3-year-old girl in Washington who was outside playing with her grandfather. A runaway car came into the yard and killed the grandfather and terribly injured the little girl. After prayer, God miraculously healed her, and she went home 5 days later.

We recently received this E-mail from Pastor Michael T. Goodling in Galeton, Pennsylvania:

"Yesterday I requested prayer for my wife Darlene. She was told by her eye doctor that the retina in her right eye was damaged. Today we went to a specialist who told us her eye had completely healed since her eye surgery. She never had eye surgery—just prayer! The

medical staff verified surgical scar tissue present in her eye as proof of surgery God performed the surgery as a testimony to the medical profession and to our church. She is completely healed. Thank you for praying.”

WHAT ARE SATELLITE PRAYER CENTERS?

The vision I have is for the National Prayer Center to belong to our entire constituency, not just to those serving the ministry here in Springfield.

Even before we opened the Prayer Center, we visited the Upper Room in Nashville, Tennessee, where the United Methodists have a phone diverting system for their prayer ministry. When we realized we needed additional help with our volume of calls, we worked at getting the technology. Finally by the middle of the summer 1996, we were able to start sending calls out to church locations. Now when someone dials 1-800-4-PRAYER, the satellite simply sends the call to the first open line.

The reports we've received from the churches involved is that the prayer ministry is blessing their people. We ask for a 3-month commitment from

the satellite churches. We send them a training video and materials. All they have to do is duplicate reporting forms and request forms that the volunteers fill out. They send us weekly reports of how many calls they received and how many volunteer hours were contributed.

All the requests that come into the National Prayer Center are put on prayer request lists. Those lists not only go to our intercessors that come into the prayer chapel but are sent weekly to our 60 intercessory prayer groups that network with us. I believe that's why we've seen such good results. Not only are people prayed for over the telephone, but they are also prayed for by intercessors.

HOW MANY SATELLITE PRAYER CENTERS DO YOU HAVE?

Right now we have 20. We have satellite prayer centers in:

Appalachian District Office, Ghent, West Virginia;
Ava Assembly of God, Ava, Missouri;
Calvary Temple, Springfield, Missouri;
Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri;
Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri;
Crown Christian Center, Charlotte, North Carolina;
Daystar Assembly of God, North Port, Alabama;
First Assembly of God, Olivet, Michigan;
Galeton Assembly of God, Galeton, Pennsylvania;
Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri;
Harvest Heights Assembly of God, Kennewick, Washington;

Highview Assembly of God, Lampe, Missouri;
Ledyard Assembly of God, Ledyard, Connecticut;
Lighthouse Assembly of

God, Loco, Oklahoma;
Metro Harvest Assembly of God, Dorchester, Massachusetts;
Northside Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri;
New Hope Assembly of God, Homestead, Florida;
Oak Grove Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri;
Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, Lakeland, Florida;
Word of Life Assembly of God, Springfield, Virginia.

Any church interested in becoming a satellite prayer center can call our office, and we will send them the information they need.




The National Prayer Center is not a counseling ministry.... We tell [people]: "We can't advise you, but God is able to speak to your heart, direct you, and answer your prayer."

WHAT IS THE GREATEST BENEFIT OF HAVING THE NATIONAL PRAYER CENTER FOR THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD?

Having the National Prayer Center keeps prayer a focal point in our Fellowship—we *are* a praying church. We receive calls from pastors saying, "Can you help us with ideas for instituting more prayer ministries in our church?"

WHO SHOULD CHURCHES CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATIONAL PRAYER CENTER?

For information or to order materials, churches can write to us at: Assemblies of God Headquarters National Prayer Center, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Missouri; or call 417-862-2781, extension 1551.

Just a word of reminder: Our 1-800-4-PRAYER number is reserved for prayer requests only. 

Sandra G. Clopine is coordinator of the National Prayer Center, Springfield, Missouri.

NATIONAL PRAYER CENTER
1-800-4-PRAYER
Monday through Friday
7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CDT

Jesus: Superior to the Tabernacle

PART 6

TEXT: *Hebrews 9:1–10**

BY RICHARD L.
DRESSELHAUS

The Earthly Tabernacle: A tabernacle was set up

1. First room: In its first room were
(Holy Place)
 - a. Lampstand
 - b. Table
 - c. Consecrated bread
2. Second room: Behind the second curtain
(Most Holy Place)
 - a. Golden altar of incense
 - b. Gold-covered ark of the covenant
(above the ark—cherubim of the Glory)
 - 1) Gold jar of manna
 - 2) Aaron's rod that budded
 - 3) Stone tablets of the covenant

The Priestly Presence: When everything had been arranged like this

1. Outer room: The priests entered regularly...to carry on their ministry.
2. Inner room: Only the high priest entered the inner room
 - once a year
 - never without blood
 - for himself
 - for the sins of the people (committed in ignorance)

The Significant Meaning: The Holy Spirit was showing by this

I. Direct Access to the Father

- a. That the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed (as long as the first tabernacle was still standing).

II. Cleansing for the Conscience

- b. [That] this is an illustration for the present time (indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper).
cf. Hebrews 9:11–14, 23–28

III. Author of a New Order

- c. [That] they are only a matter of food and drink (and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order).
cf. Hebrews 9:11–14, 23–28

***You cannot miss
Christ in the
tabernacle.
Everything
there seems
to speak of Him.***

Several months ago my wife Elnora and I visited a full-scale model of Moses' tabernacle. It was complete to the minutest detail. Just to walk through it was a significant experience.

You cannot miss Christ in the tabernacle. Everything there seems to speak of Him. The

coverings, woods, utensils, activities, offerings, furnishings—they all speak of Christ.

But there is also another inescapable sense. Good as the tabernacle is, with all of its symbolism and typology, it still falls far short. Jesus is superior to it by far. He stands alone as the incomparable One. The shadow and

type can never match the reality.

Therefore, the writer to the Hebrews concludes that: (1) The tabernacle could not provide access to the real presence of God—only Christ could do that. (2) The gifts and offerings could not clear the troubled conscience—only Christ could do that. (3) The tabernacle, with all of its ceremony and ritualism, dealt only in matters of the external—only Christ could reach to the heart. Its worshipers could only wait for the fulfillment of all that the tabernacle prefigured.

The tabernacle could not provide access to the real presence of God—only Christ could do that.

Typology is a subject that attracts controversy. Some reject it outright, arguing that subjectivity has invalidated the work of the typologist. Others are so drawn by its mystery that they see Jesus reflected in places and ways far beyond the intent of the original author. Pastor, you will be safe if you stay with what is obvious and avoid the obscure.

From the analytical outline, you will note that the early verses of the passage are introductory. The heart of the message is found in verses 6–10. The commentary on these verses is found in verses 11–14 and 23–28. In summary, the writer is showing that Jesus is superior to the earthly tabernacle in: (1) His ability to provide direct access to God's presence; (2) His power to cleanse an individual's conscience by His blood; and (3) His authorship of a new order that includes His second return for those who wait for Him.

How can you develop this message to make sure that each listener is challenged? What should the response be? Consider these application questions: (1) Does each listener enjoy full access to God? (2) Has each listener

experienced the purging of the conscience? (3) Has each listener grasped the truth that Jesus is coming again for those who are waiting for Him? Although it is usually best for a message to have a single focus, you may want to challenge your listeners on each of these questions.

Think about it further. Are your people really living in God's presence? Are they living guilt-free lives? Are they hopefully awaiting Christ's coming? These are critical issues that together can present a powerful challenge. Pastor, allow the incomparable Christ to rise up in your mind as you show forth His glorious superiority over the earthly and temporary tabernacle of Moses.

DIRECT ACCESS TO THE FATHER

Ready access is the promise of the gospel. Originally only the high priest gained it once a year. Now it is for everyone in an ongoing way. True believers do not need to wait on a priest, hope for some vicarious encounter, and wonder whether or not God will provide entry into His presence. It is all assured by the once-and-for-all shed blood of Christ.

True believers do not need to wait on a priest.... It is all assured by the once-and-for-all shed blood of Christ.

Modern theology speaks of the *universal priesthood*—meaning every true believer may now approach God the Father in the name of Jesus. The way has been opened. The invitation has been given. Acceptance has been assured—day or night, in sadness or gladness, in loss or gain, in faith or doubt—the way is always open.

The tabernacle... dealt only in matters of the external—only Christ could reach to the heart.

Modern theology speaks of the universal priesthood—meaning every true believer may now approach God the Father in the name of Jesus.

It is impossible to emphasize this truth too forcibly. Remember, some of your listeners may know this truth theoretically yet have not learned to go to God with boldness. As a child feels at liberty to run to a parent with arms outstretched, so every child of God may *run* to the Father and know he or she will find acceptance there. There is a promised access to God Almighty for every believer. What a source of incredible joy and blessing.

CLEANSING THE CONSCIENCE

Guilt is a needless and crippling disorder in the body of Christ. Many devout Christians and active church members live with continual guilt and a troubled conscience. Sins may have been confessed, appropriate restitution made, alterations in conduct instituted, but the conscience is not free.

The writer to the Hebrews sees the New Testament believer in a favored position—for under grace Christ's blood does what animal blood could never do. It reaches deep into the human spirit and eradicates guilt. This is a position of great favor—freedom from the debilitating effects of guilt.

But wait. What about conviction? What about the troubled conscience? This may be the authentic work of the Holy Spirit to dislodge and uproot sin. For this is the ongoing ministry of the Spirit in every believer's life. But this condition is quite different from a

pointless guilt that lingers long after repentance has brought relief and pardon.

Many of those who hear your message are in great need of deliverance from guilt. To invite them to accept the cleansing of their conscience by Christ's blood will be your joy and privilege. Believe that many will be set free.

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1,2). This is the apostle's strong testimony. Though he could have offered an excuse for guilt's presence, instead he renounced it all in Christ. His freedom was from Christ.

AUTHOR OF A NEW ORDER

Interestingly, the writer pulls himself away from the ideas of the present and puts a focus on what was ahead: "...to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:28). A few verses before, the writer speaks of the work of the tabernacle as external and applicable only "until the time of the new order" (Hebrews 9:10). Both references are clearly linked to the dispensation of grace. One looks to its culmination in the second coming of Christ, and the other looks to the dispensation itself. Jesus is viewed as the Author of a new order.

This thought puts the cap on the focus of this message. To summarize: Jesus is far better than the tabernacle and its services. The earthly house pointed only to what He would fulfill. In His death He made up for all of the tabernacle's deficiencies, and by His blood He ushered in a new order. We only wait now for the moment when "he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

Pastor, as you move into the altar call, believe with all your heart that people will respond to: (1) the invitation of free access to God, (2) the alleviation of needless feelings of guilt, (3) the blessed hope of Christ's presence at His coming.

The incomparable Christ emerges in all His resplendent glory. 

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

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Spiritual Gifts in the Church Today

PART 2: The Word Gifts

This installment of the series will focus on the two “word” gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12:8—“word of wisdom” (*sophia*) and “word of knowledge” (*gnōsis*).

DEFINITION OF WORD GIFTS

Word of wisdom and word of knowledge are usually defined in one of two basic senses. In one sense, they are defined as gifts of instruction and are *nonmiraculous* in nature.¹ These are gifts of natural ability used to speak with insight (*sophia*) to a particular situation or with information (*gnōsis*) obtained through study and experience. In view here is, for example, the ministry of a Bible teacher who is empowered by the Spirit and whose abilities are consecrated to service in the church.

In another sense, these gifts are *miraculous* in nature and based on special revelation from the Spirit apart from ordinary means.² They are spontaneous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in a worship context. Word of wisdom (*logos sophias*) supernaturally enables an individual to speak with God-given insight or divine perspective in resolving some situation in the church. Word of knowledge (*logos gnōseōs*) provides factual information about a situation or individual in the church which was not acquired through ordinary means. This *revelatory* view has some overlap with the gift of prophecy. Moreover, it is possible that word of wisdom and word of knowledge are intended to operate in tandem. Knowledge alone puffs up (1 Corinthians 8:1), but applied with wisdom, it will encourage.

First Corinthians 12:8 is the only place these gifts are mentioned. The nearest language we have is the “spirit of wisdom and understanding” (e.g., Isaiah 11:2; Ephesians 1:17). So, any conclusion we draw is of necessity not firm. Wisdom from God is, however, one of the preeminent characteristics of a spiritual person (e.g., Proverbs 4:7; 1 Corinthians 2:6–16).

Note that Paul, who first mentions gifts related to wisdom, sets the wisdom from God in stark contrast to human wisdom (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:16).

The scriptural context seems to indicate that the gifts in the list are spontaneously given by the Spirit when the congregation is gathered for corporate worship. This does not rule out an instructive function, neither does it rule out miraculously imparted insight or information that is used to address previously irresolvable or hidden issues.³ In my opinion, the instruction of 1 Corinthians 12 indicates that the word gifts are more probably supernatural impartations of insight and information for the common good of the people of God at worship.

Since no absolute conclusion can be drawn concerning the nature of these gifts, it is best to remain focused on their broader function and purpose. Whether instructive, revelatory, or both, the manifestation of the Spirit in these gifts fits the teaching of Scripture.

CONTRIBUTION OF WORD GIFTS TO MINISTRY

Word gifts have specific benefits in the context of ministry.

- Word of wisdom often provides guidance in the application of other gifts, such as prophecy and knowledge.
- Word of wisdom and/or word of knowledge can direct a minister in how to pray for an individual.
- When individuals or groups are confronted with difficult situations, these gifts can help the minister encourage and build faith as he or she uses the divinely imparted insight to speak to specific needs.⁴
- In prayer ministry, God has often used a word of knowledge, applied according to a word of wisdom, to bring repentance. These matters are best handled quietly around the altars or in private settings—the public calling out of

BY DOUGLAS A. OSS

It is possible that word of wisdom and word of knowledge are intended to operate in tandem. Knowledge alone puffs up..., but applied with wisdom, it will encourage.

supposed individual sin does not follow the biblical teaching of first approaching a brother or sister privately. Nevertheless, when individuals receive a word from the minister who had no way of knowing through ordinary means, many are suddenly broken and humbled before God—their spirits open to receive forgiveness, healing, and renewal from the Lord.

God chooses surrendered lives for manifestations of His power. In the context of ministry, the exercise of word gifts will be fully effective only when they occur through ministers who maintain a prayerful, intimate, and right relationship with Him.

When the Spirit does use us in the exercise of word gifts, the information may come in several different ways:

- Through a vision or dream (sometimes visible only to our spirit);
- Through hearing God's voice (again sometimes only in our spirit);
- Through feeling what the other person is feeling (whether physical or spiritual);
- Through sensing the Spirit's power coming on us as a signal that God wants us to minister to someone who is present.⁵

Words of wisdom and knowledge should be encouraged in a corporate worship setting, especially if an experienced person can be consulted as a safeguard against unwise use of spiritual gifts. When a word is given publicly, it will build faith and will fit with what the Spirit is already doing in the worship service. A word from God will never destroy, tear down, or leave the congregation wondering how it is supposed to fit. Even when a word focuses on repentance, God does not condemn; He calls.

RECEIPT OF WORD GIFTS

The same principles apply to receiving any of the gifts of the Spirit.

1. The gifts of the Spirit are distributed sovereignly by God according to His own will

(1 Corinthians 12:11).


2. We are exhorted to seek and desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1) with proper motivation, so that God may be glorified through us and His church may be encouraged.

3. Only God gives gifts. But He may accomplish this through the laying on of hands by an anointed person(s) (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

4. When we simply trust in God and engage in ministry, we can receive the gifts we need for the task at hand, even if the particular endowment is temporary.

There is divine mystery concerning whom God chooses for His anointing in any particular ministry. The single most important principle to remember in receiving gifts is this: Give up all things pertaining to self and surrender in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then can God do everything He wants through us.

CONCLUSION

We have observed how word gifts function in both private and public settings and how they might effectively be exercised in both. Encourage people in these gifts and pastor gifted people with a shepherd's touch. Words of wisdom and knowledge will build up the flock with increasing faith and witness. 

ENDNOTES

1. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994) 1080–88.
2. Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* rev. ed. (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1972) 30; David Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1985) 92–108.
3. Grudem, 1081ff.; Pytches, 92–108.
4. Pytches, 96–97.
5. Gee, 31–41; Pytches, 106–107.

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In my opinion, the instruction of 1 Corinthians 12 indicates that the word gifts are more probably supernatural impartations of insight and information for the common good of the people of God at worship.



Judging Without Being Judgmental

BY W.E. NUNNALLY

*Our judgment must
be righteous—
mirroring the way
God seeks to
strengthen and
edify each
individual
and the church.*

Judging. We all do it, whether we admit it or not. We make judgments every day: what car to buy, whom to vote for, what clothes to wear, what food to eat, whom to marry, whom we will invite as a guest speaker, who our next youth pastor will be.

We also make religious judgments. For example, we who follow Jesus have rejected other world religions and pseudo-Christian cults. When it comes to in-house matters such as judging fellow Christians or teachings, red flags are raised, and everyone puts on the brakes.

What is the reason for this inconsistency? It seems to be rooted in a possible misunderstanding and misapplication of Jesus' teaching: "Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves" (Matthew 7:1, NASB). On the surface, this command appears to be straightforward: easy to understand and apply. It enjoys constant repetition by Christian and non-Christian alike. A real dilemma arises, however, when we encounter other sayings of Jesus such as: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24, NASB); and "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?" (Luke 12:57, NIV). Jesus said: "I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.... But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (Revelation 2:2,6, NIV).

*The New Testament places a high
priority upon the gift of discernment.*

Thus, the way some have interpreted and applied Matthew 7:1, they have created an inconsistency and even a contradiction in the

teachings of Jesus. However, when Scripture appears to contradict itself, the problem is always with the human interpreter, not the divine Author of Scripture. Therefore, a closer look at Matthew 7:1 is required, viewing it within its larger context.

JESUS' TEACHING ON JUDGMENT

When studying a passage of Scripture, it is important to read it in relation to its larger context. When working in the Synoptic Gospels, however, it is crucial to read passages which appear in two or more of the Gospels in tandem with one another. By using this method, we see that Luke actually provided an expanded commentary on the shorthand version in Matthew 7:1,

And do not pass *judgment* and you will not be judged;
and do not *condemn*, and you shall not be condemned;
pardon, and you will be pardoned
(Luke 6:37, NASB).

The form of speech we find in Luke's version is called *Hebrew poetic parallelism*. Generally in such a poetic structure, the B part of the verse amplifies and further clarifies the A part of the verse. In this passage, the parallel features of judgment, condemnation, and unforgiveness are so intimately connected as to become synonymous. Therefore, Luke helped clarify that the kind of judging Jesus forbade in Matthew was condemnatory, unforgiving judgmentalism. Such is the kind of judging that the Master prohibited.

Jesus continued: "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you" (Matthew 7:2, NASB). The parallel passage reads: "The measure you give will be the measure you get" (Mark 4:24, RSV). The rabbi of Jesus' day applied this formula when punishing people whose false judgment and

testimony were intended to cause harm to a fellow covenant member.¹ Jesus' use of this legal formula was another indication that He was not requiring the suspension of all critical thinking (discernment). Rather, He was prohibiting judgment that was intentionally inaccurate and malicious.

He added: "And why do you look at the speck [chip of sawdust] in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log [structural timber] that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3,4, NASB). Here Jesus used carpenter shop language to further define the form of judging He was forbidding. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) uses these terms for the tiny olive sprig which the dove brought back to Noah and the roof beams Solomon used to build the temple. Such is the vivid contrast Jesus employed here.

The kind of persons Jesus described could not render evenhanded, constructive criticism because they had not dealt effectively with their own faults. They could not be just in judgment because they covered up their own shortcomings by nit-picking and pointing out minor flaws in others.

Jesus further defined the persons He had in mind in this passage: "You hypocrite" (Matthew 7:5, NASB). Jesus' prohibition against judging was aimed at hypocrites. The language used here is quite similar to Jesus describing hypocrites as those "who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24, NASB). The hypocrites were thus defined as those who focused on the minor and on the external.

Jesus did not forbid all use of critical thinking and spiritual discernment. His prohibition was directed toward hypocrites who judge with wrong motives. They did not seek to correct, forgive, restore, and reconcile brothers and sisters to God. Rather, they intentionally sought to injure others for personal gain.

Even concerning hypocrites, Jesus' prohibition was not comprehensive. In concert with the rest of Scripture, Jesus commanded hypocritical judges to deal with the sin in their lives so that ultimately they could function in positive ways in the community. This was done by allowing the Holy Spirit to cleanse their lives

of the sins that clouded their vision, not by complete suspension of judgment and discernment. Judges could then judge from God's perspective: in love, seeking the best interest of the person being judged. The goal of righteous judgment is to bring another person closer to God, not to exalt oneself at the expense of the person being judged.

This interpretation fits well with the message of the remainder of the section. For example, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (Matthew 7:6, NASB). Jesus requires us to be able to make judgments about what is precious ("holy," "pearls") and what is not; who is worthy and who is not ("dogs," "swine"). Later He commands us: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits [observable, objective criteria which can be compared to biblical standards]" (Matthew 7:15,16, NASB)." Jesus calls on us to make value judgments concerning such individuals. He requires us to judge in matters of substance.

Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the Matthew 7 prohibition is not a comprehensive prohibition; rather, it establishes when and how Christians should judge. Our judging

We need to remind our disciples to exercise biblical discernment.



must not nitpick—focusing on peripheral matters, gray areas, or personal opinion. Our judgment must be righteous—mirroring the way God seeks to strengthen and edify each individual and the church. Thus, we see that Jesus’ teaching here is fully compatible with His teachings elsewhere (cf. Luke 12:57; John 7:24; Revelation 2:2,6).

PAUL’S TEACHING ON JUDGMENT

The New Testament places a high priority upon the gift of discernment. Like Jesus, Paul expects us to make judgments, giving guidelines for judging in his epistles. He informs us that: “The spiritual man makes judgments about all things” (1 Corinthians 2:15, NIV). He lists “the ability to distinguish between spirits” among the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:10, NIV), placing this gift on equal par with tongues, healings, miracles, and prophecy. He even subjects the revelatory gifts to the spiritual judgment of the church: “And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment” (1 Corinthians 14:29, NASB).

Paul’s teaching spells out what is inherent in the teaching of Jesus by requiring us to judge in two specific areas: *morality* and *doctrine*. For example, he called upon the Corinthians to pass judgment on a member of the church living in immorality (probably following the principles of Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 18:15–18). He announced, “I...have already judged him” and called for the church to “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 5:3,5, NASB). Paul’s purpose in judging this man was to preserve the witness of the church and bring the man to repentance. Next, Paul reminded them of their responsibility to judge sin (see verses 9–11). He concluded by asking, “Do you not judge those who are within the church?” (verse 12, NASB).

Doctrine is the other area in which

Paul requires judgments to be made. He told the Corinthians, “Judge what I say” (1 Corinthians 10:15, NASB). The pastoral model he preferred was to challenge his followers to grow in spiritual discernment rather than remain in spiritual infancy. If we are to grow spiritually mature congregations today, we must follow the same model: (1) Our disciples need to see their leaders standing firmly on the Word of God; (2) We need to enable our disciples to apply the dynamics of God’s Word to the things that confront them; (3) We need to remind our disciples to exercise biblical discernment.

Paul did. He instructed the Galatians to reject any gospel contrary to the one they first received. Paul saw the havoc the false gospel was causing in the Galatian church. He reminded members of the true gospel to maintain the health of the Body by judging in matters of doctrine.

Are we, as leaders, willing to denounce sin and prophesy God’s judgment upon it?

Paul made statements similar to those made by Jesus in Matthew 7, such as: “Accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment” (Romans 14:1, NASB). “Who are you to judge the servant of another?” (Romans 14:4, NASB); and “Why do you judge your brother?” (Romans 14:10, NASB). Just as in the case of Jesus in Matthew 7, a closer look reveals that Paul forbade judging on matters of “opinions” (cf. Romans 14:1). The areas of “opinion” are further described as matters of cuisine and calendar (cf. Romans 14:2,3,5,6), not matters of morality or doctrine. Both Jesus and Paul require us to judge in essential matters (morality and doctrine).

JUDGING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

How did the Early Church understand and apply their teachings on judging?

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is an excellent example of how the Early Church judged itself. Peter made a judgment about Ananias, saying he had lied to the Holy Spirit. He then prophesied that divine judgment would follow (cf. Acts 5:1–16).

Are we willing to confront those who consistently bring injury to the integrity of the gospel?

In another incident, Peter encountered Simon the sorcerer who tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 8:9–24). Peter responded: “You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God” (verse 21, NASB). By his words, Peter made an accurate judgment about the condition of Simon’s heart.

Later, Paul was opposed by a false prophet who was attempting to hinder the gospel (cf. Acts 13:6–12). Paul immediately confronted him: “You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?” (verse 10, NASB). Then Paul foretold that the false prophet would go blind. The revival which resulted is similar to that of the Ananias and Sapphira episode.

Some may question the relevance of these last two examples since the persons being judged were not Christians. However, Ananias and Sapphira (cf. Acts 5) and the church member living in immorality (cf. 1 Corinthians 5) are examples already cited of believers being judged. Elsewhere, when Peter acted in such a way as to compromise on the way of salvation and the status of Gentiles coming directly into Christianity and bypassing Judaism, Paul responded in much the same way. He stated that he “opposed him [Peter] to his face...in the presence of all.” Paul noted that Peter “stood condemned,” was acting in “hypocrisy,” and was “not straightforward about the truth of the

gospel” (Galatians 2:11–14, NASB).

Paul would win no awards for pastoral etiquette by today’s standards. He even called moral and doctrinal deviants by name (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18–20; 2 Timothy 2:15–18). Based on the evidence of Scripture, it would appear that this was the rule and not the exception in the Early Church (cf. Matthew 23:13–33; 3 John 9–11; Revelation 2:6,20).

Judgment exclusively on matters of morality and doctrine continues throughout the New Testament. For example, Jude wrote: “For certain men whose condemnation was written about

***Biblical judgment must
be a part of the life
of every Christian.***


long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality [morality] and deny Jesus Christ [doctrine] our only Sovereign and

Lord” (Jude 4, NIV; cf. verses 12,13). Jesus chastised the church of Thyatira: “You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching [doctrine] she misleads my servants into sexual immorality [morality] and the eating of food sacrificed to idols [morality]” (Revelation 2:20, NIV; cf. Rev. 2:2).

CONCLUSION

Are we as leaders willing to denounce sin and prophesy God’s judgment upon it? Are we willing to confront those who consistently bring injury to the integrity of the gospel and the witness of the church by their immoral lifestyle or their unscriptural teachings? If we are, God will reward our obedience in much the same way He rewarded the Early Church.

Today, we often think and act as though God doesn’t require us to judge any more. Such ideas do not reflect biblical reality nor our Pentecostal heritage (cf. Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17).

The passages of Scripture discussed herein underscore the important part judging plays in maintaining high moral and doctrinal standards within the church. Biblical judgment must be a part of the life of every Christian. To be proper role models, leaders need to judge scripturally—having pure motivations and dealing with the right things for the right reasons. Refusal to judge and unbiblical judgmentalism are both extremes that weaken the church. Biblical judgment, however, produces a morally and doctrinally healthy church—giving us the integrity to speak to the world and the standing with God to see mountains moved. 

ENDNOTE

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1. Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 372. Cf. Deuteronomy 19:16–21 for the biblical foundations of this practice.

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Church Management—Developing Good Bottom-Line Business Sense

BY MICHAEL
D. COMER

Church management is more of an art than a science.... [it] is often learned through experience and advice.

Often new pastors are quickly awakened as they leave Bible school or seminary and begin pastoring their first church. They spend much of their time performing business functions. While most Bible schools do a wonderful job of teaching theology, hermeneutics, homiletics, and basic Bible knowledge, few schools adequately prepare a pastor to deal with finances, accounting statements, legal matters, building programs, and basic personnel supervision. In my experience dealing with churches, church denominations, and corporations, I have found church management is more of an art than a science. Although basic management can be taught in formal classes, true church business management is often learned through experience and advice.

I have learned five basic church administration principles that help a pastor develop a business sense.

MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE

How many times have you arrived at the end of a busy day and realized you really didn't accomplish anything? In our zeal to accomplish things, we often concentrate on the urgent and not the important. Church administration, as well as all aspects of ministry, calls for concentrating on what is important.

A principle often taught in management classes is the Pareto Principle or the 20/80 principle. It means that as a pastor you need to spend 80 percent of your time on the 20 percent that really matters. John Maxwell, in his book *Developing the Leader Within You*, uses the following example to illustrate the Pareto Principle:

Time—20 percent of our time produces 80 percent of the results.

Counseling—20 percent of the people take up 80 percent of our time.

Reading—20 percent of a book contains 80 percent of the content.

Donations—20 percent of the people will give 80 percent of the money.

Speech—20 percent of our presentation produces 80 percent of the impact.

Picnic—20 percent of the people will eat 80 percent of the food.

In a church administration role, I have spent time making decisions about colors of paper, tablecloths, phone numbers, and broken copiers when I should have been empowering others to make those decisions. Resist the idea that it is easier to make a decision and do the job yourself. Instead, take time to train and provide information to others to make the management of the church self-governing.

Setting priorities in management and ministry and equipping others will assist in maintaining proper perspective.

Bottom Line: *When speaking of perspective ask yourself: "Will it really matter 1 month from now, 1 year from now, 100 years from now?"*

BUILD A GOOD BUSINESS REPUTATION

The wisest administrator who ever lived said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1). Always remember the timeliness and method in which you pay your bills is a reflection of you, your ministry, and the church. One pastor stated that when he first became pastor of a well-established church, he was surprised that the church owed a local supplier a sum of money. However, the church had more than enough money in its bank account to pay the creditor and still cover operating expenses. When he asked why the account hadn't been paid, he was told: "When the supplier owners need their money, they will ask again."

Just as with our personal bills, church bills must be paid on time. A good administrator not only pays bills on time but saves for a

rainy day. The biblical perspective of being a wise steward extends beyond how we spend money to how we save money. The wise pastor maintains adequate reserves for church emergencies but also realizes the church is not the place to store up large reserves. Investing in ministry opportunities, missions projects, giving to other churches, and supporting national and district ministries should be foremost as the Lord blesses the finances of the local church.

Maintaining a good business reputation also means wise borrowing of money. Although steps of faith are often called for in reaching the vision of ministry, mortgages and indebtedness can severely hinder the daily business operations of the church as well as negatively affect attitudes of community members and church attendees. Larry Burkett, in his book *Business by the Book*, lists some scriptural principles for borrowing:

1. Borrowing should be only occasional—Luke 12:58,59.
2. Avoid signing surety on a loan—Proverbs 6:1–3.
3. Stay out of long-term debt—Proverbs 22:7.

Bottom Line: *A good reputation is earned by a pastor, ministry, and church. Once obtained, it should be protected daily. A church's strong business reputation says: "Our organization spends wisely, saves wisely, pays its bills on time, and invests in ministry."*

ENHANCE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

How often have I thought: *My job would be easy if only I didn't have to work with people.* The reality of ministry and church administration is that our business is people. People are an organization's most valuable resource. Yet, in many Christian organizations their value is frequently overlooked. As administrators, it is

our duty to *equip* people with the right tools to accomplish their tasks without constantly telling them what to do—not *do* their jobs for them.

Management guru Stephen Covey uses the analogy of clearing a jungle. The workers are busy cutting, clearing, and removing trees while the managers are continually sharpening the axes for the workers to do their jobs. Enhanced working relationships should reflect our mentoring and developing of those around us in the community and with the church staff (whether paid or volunteer).

Some basic principles of people management are listed in the book *Management: A Biblical Approach* by Myron Rush. He urges the ministry executive to remember these basic points:

- People are creative.
 - People need to be needed.
 - People need to be trusted.
 - People need to be given decision-making power with parameters.
 - People need to be recognized.
- Bottom Line: *A good manager spends time with people by mentoring, teaching, and developing them.*

PLAN AND PREPARE

Someone once said, "It's not how hard you work; it's how smart you work." Being an effective administrator requires organization and constant planning. We often react to situations instead of being proactive *toward* situations—i.e., planning, anticipating, and putting steps in place to avoid disaster.

I recently heard a pastor who accepted the pastorate of a small congregation with a large church building and a large building debt tell about his first meeting with the board of the bank carrying the church loan. The board members wanted to know his immediate plans for reducing the indebtedness of the

Church administration, as well as all aspects of ministry, calls for concentrating on what is important.

million-dollar building.

A good administrator:

- Plans for each day but has a series of short- and long-term plans.
- Continually forms, revises, and reviews goals and objectives.
- Uses agendas, to-do lists, and daily calendars as tools for ministry management.
- Does not minimize the effect of preparing for a meeting.

Early in my career as a management consultant and after leading a chaotic meeting, I received this advice from my supervisor: "Always think, *What is the worst thing that can happen in this meeting?* Then prepare for it!" Some pastors may wish they would have had this advice before their annual business meetings.

Being prepared for administrative meetings, doing your homework, developing objectives for meetings, and operating on monthly and yearly goals gives both the pastor and the church a perception of efficiency. Researcher George Barna, in his book *The Frog in the Kettle*, reminds us that church members' expectations are shifting. What used to

be *trust* among church leadership has now shifted to *proven integrity*. Church members demand greater accountability and have higher expectations of the business operations of the local church. After spending all week in a downsized business environment where spending is closely watched and quality is a daily buzzword, church members do not want to be part of an unorganized church business meeting.

Bottom Line: *Planning and organizing are musts in the ministry environment. The Boy Scout motto works equally well for pastors: "Be prepared."*

As a pastor you need to spend 80 percent of your time on the 20 percent that really matters.

UNDERSTAND CHANGE

In today's environment, change is a constant force that continually challenges the church administrator/pastor—changes in technology, business processes, laws, individuals, and ministry opportunities. A primary principle

for church leaders to remember is that although we have an unchanging message, we live in a changing world.

In the church world, we live with the adage: "We've always done it that way." With this mind-set it is imperative that the pastor, as a good leader, help people cope with change, help move church leaders toward accepting change, and apply changing technologies and processes to church business operations.

A pastor friend recently told me of his first board meeting at his present church. It was 15 years ago, and the congregation was about 250 people. He said the board spent 45 minutes discussing whether to buy a \$250 calculator. Fifteen years later the church has grown to 2,500 attendees, and many of the original board members remain. However, now the board members discuss strategic goals, long-range planning, important expense items, and how to effectively reach their city. In addition to the phenomenal growth of the church, some major changes in thinking have occurred among the board leadership. With strong leadership from the senior pastor, the board has moved to a higher level of thinking, and small decisions are left to a church staff member.

Ways for an administrator to help the board, congregation, and staff accept change include:

1. Communicate impending change.
2. Involve others in decision making.
3. Do not change too much at any one time.
4. Support and counsel those who are overwhelmed by change.
5. Build an environment of trust in the administrative skills of the leader.

A good administrator realizes that change is inevitable, but progress is not inevitable. To keep abreast of changes and to effectively utilize changes in administration, pastors can:

- Read about the newest methods of administration. Information about computer technology, electronic mail, on-line biblical aids, and voice mail is available in magazines such as



"Today, we met for 3 hours to assess whether we spend too much time in meetings."


Christian Computing and *PC World*.

- Ask business people in the congregation for advice about the church business operations.

- Take a continuing education class in computer technology or in a business related area to become aware of important tools for effectiveness and efficiency.

Constant change should not be feared but harnessed and directed to make church administration and ministry

more effective. Understanding and directing change can make the difference between a good administrator and a great administrator.

Bottom Line: *Seeing change and managing it are skills of a good manager. Anticipating change and directing it are skills of a great leader.* 

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Issues Every Evangelist Must Face

BY RICH WILKERSON

I officially entered full-time ministry August 1972. Almost from the beginning, I knew I would eventually become an evangelist. As a boy growing up in my father's church, I eagerly anticipated evangelists coming for special meetings. Sharing my faith in junior and senior high school was the joy of my heart.

Finally in 1979, the Lord led my wife and me into full-time evangelistic service. We have never looked back, and I thank God for allowing us this marvelous opportunity.

Evangelists bring balance to the body of Christ.

In the five-fold list of ministries to the church, the evangelist is placed in the center: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11,12, NASB). The perceived *radical* side of ministry—apostles and prophets—is on one side of the evangelist. The perceived *practical* side of ministry—pastors and teachers—is on the other side of the evangelist. This cannot be a coincidence.

The evangelist walks a fine line. To the more radical side of the church, the evangelist seems far too practical. But to the practical side of the church, the evangelist appears too radical. Evangelists bring balance to the body of Christ.

I want to address five issues every evangelist must face.

KNOWING

To be an effective evangelist, you must know that God has called you, and you must know what kind of evangelist God wants you to become.

- *One-on-one evangelism.* Some evangelists are called to one-on-one evangelism. For example, although my good friend Ken Gaub has a national evangelistic ministry, his first love is one-on-one evangelism. Over the past 20 years whenever he is on a plane, he endeavors to lead someone to the Lord.

- *Local evangelism.* My friend Denny Duron is a good example of an evangelist called to local evangelism. He preaches nearly every Sunday in his father's church in Shreveport, Louisiana. He is called to evangelize Shreveport and touch the lives of thousands in that city.

- *Traveling evangelism.* Of course when people think of evangelism, they imagine the traveling evangelist. Traveling evangelists also share their faith one-on-one and locally.

*To be an effective evangelist,
you must know God
has called you, and you
must know what kind
of evangelist God
wants you to become.*

DEVOTION

- *Devoted to God.* Your devotion to God will promote you to winning or losing on the evangelistic circuit (cf. Daniel 6:3,4; Matthew 22:37,38).

For many years I have tried to do two

things that have helped me stay close to God. First, every January I go on a 40-day fast to cleanse my spirit, soul, and body. It is not a strict fast. It allows for soups and juices, but it reminds me that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Second, I read my Bible through each year. I often start a new Bible every January so that I depend on the Bible hidden in my heart, not in my hand. My staff has also committed to read the Bible through, and it has kept us closer to the Lord and to one another (cf. Psalm 119:11).

Through prayer and Bible study, I want God to know I am devoted to Him with all my heart (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:21,22).

- *Devoted to living by faith.* One issue that is often unaddressed at ministers conferences is living by faith. Many today are living yesterday's blessings, yesterday's knowledge, and yesterday's messages. Too few are living on *faith's edge*. Faith's edge means we say to God: "If You don't come through for me, I've had it!" (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 10:38). To be in the position of trusting God fully is a decision leaders must make for themselves (cf. Proverbs 3:5,6).

A number of years ago I had set my sights on what I could achieve in the natural. Jim Cymbala, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, said to me: "Rich, go beyond yourself." He challenged me to live on faith's edge. You cannot trust in your own ability to get you through; you must learn to trust God.

Are you devoted to living by faith?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 104

National Pastor– Evangelist Survey

Do evangelists and pastors understand each other today? Is it possible for evangelists to better understand pastors' concerns about evangelistic ministries and for pastors to comprehend the demands of itinerant ministry for contemporary evangelists?

The National Evangelists Office of the Assemblies of God recently conducted the first major survey specifically relating to the ministry of the evangelist. Of 2,000 leading pastors surveyed (according to Sunday morning attendance), 600 responded; and of the 850 evangelists surveyed, 200 responded. (It is interesting to note that there are more evangelists in the Assemblies of God than any other denomina-

tion in North America, and there are as many evangelist couples as there are foreign missionary couples in the Assemblies of God.) The

objectives of the study were: (1) to determine the overall pastoral perception of specific topics relating to evangelists, and (2) to determine the most important needs of evangelists.

Chart 1 visually displays the statistical results of the pastors' survey. A composite summary follows the chart and paints the overall picture of pastoral opinion regarding evangelists in the Assemblies

of God. When a survey question had the possibility of more than three choices, only the top three were recorded to bring further clarity to pastoral opinion regarding evangelists.

The evangelist's unique challenge pertains to even having the opportunity of fulfilling the biblical purpose and pattern for this ministry gift in the body of Christ.

BY JAMES O. DAVIS

The two greatest challenges pastors face regarding evangelists are finding the right evangelist for their church and getting people to attend the crusade.

Chart 1: 1996 SURVEY OF LEADING PASTORS ABOUT EVANGELISTS*

1. Main qualities looked for in evangelists?

- a. Integrity (80.6%)
- b. Solid Bible preacher (70.1%)
- c. Fruitful ministry (60.2%)

2. Hosted campaign within last year?

- a. Yes (80.6%)
- b. No (19.4)

3. Last campaign successful?

- a. Yes (85.2%)
- b. No (14.8)

4. Why was campaign successful?

- a. Souls saved (60.7%)
- b. Holy Spirit baptisms (48.5%)
- c. Dynamic preaching (47.7%)

5. How often invite evangelists?

- a. 1–3 times per year (87.9%)
- b. 4+ times per year (6.3%)
- c. Never (5.8%)

6. Greatest challenge?

- a. Right evangelist (54.9%)
- b. Attendance (37.0%)
- c. Finances (8.3%)

7. Negative characteristics of evangelists?

- a. Financially demanding (40.3%)
- b. Altar manipulation (36.3%)
- c. Nonservant (33.1%)

8. How can evangelists be more effective?

- a. Relevant message (74.6%)
- b. Dynamic altar services (72.9%)
- c. Better correspondence (21.8%)

9. Desired evangelistic ministry?

- a. Holy Spirit emphasis (67.3%)
- b. Adult ministry (63.7%)
- c. Youth ministry (56.0%)

*Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding and multiple responses.

Chart 2: SURVEY OF ACTIVE EVANGELISTS*

1. Length on evangelistic field?

- a. Under 1 year (4.6%)
- b. 1–5 years (27.9%)
- c. 5–10 years (20.8%)
- d. More than 10 years (46.7%)

2. Times speak per year?

- a. 0–100 (20.6%)
- b. 101–150 (17.5%)
- c. 151–200 (24.7%)
- d. 201–250 (18.6%)
- e. More than 250 (18.6%)

3. Full evangelistic schedule?

- a. Yes (72.7%)
- b. No (27.3%)

4. Years to fill preaching schedule?

- a. 0–3 years (80.1%)
- b. 4–6 years (14.4%)
- c. More than 6 years (5.5%)

5. Percentage of services from contacting pastors?

- a. 0–25% (37.4%)
- b. 26–50% (14.4%)
- c. 51–75% (15.4%)
- d. 76–100% (32.8%)

6. Percentage of services from invitations

- a. 0–25% (46.4%)
- b. 26–50% (17.3%)

- c. 51–75% (11.7%)
- d. 76–100% (24.5%)

7. Years of financial stability?

- a. 0–3 years (45.8%)
- b. 4–6 years (13.2%)
- c. More than 6 years (7.9%)
- d. Not making it (33.2%)

8. Health insurance?

- a. Yes (65.8%)
- b. No (34.2%)

9. Gross income from evangelism?

- a. \$10,000 or less (22.8%)
- b. \$10,001–\$24,999 (32.6%)
- c. \$25,000–\$39,999 (20.2%)
- d. \$40,000–\$59,999 (7.3%)
- e. \$60,000–\$79,999 (8.8%)
- f. \$80,000 or more (8.3%)

10. Cancellations per year?

- a. 0–5 (80.4%)
- b. 6–9 (16.0%)
- c. 10 or more (3.6%)

11. Main target audience?

- a. Children (8.6%)
- b. Youth (13.2%)
- c. Adult (87.0%)
- d. Other (11.2%)

12. Top needs of evangelists (top three)

- a. Finances (78.2%)
- b. Intimacy with God (66.0%)
- c. Respect (41.6%)

13. Evangelistic life on family?

- a. Not difficult (35.4%)
- b. Somewhat difficult (28.1%)
- c. Average difficulty (24.7%)
- d. Difficult (6.7%)
- e. Very difficult (5.1%)

14. Percentage of return ministry?

- a. 0–33% (22.7%)
- b. 34–66% (40.2%)
- c. 67% or more (37.1%)

15. New sermons per year

- a. 1–5 (11.8%)
- b. 6–10 (28.2%)
- c. 11 or more (60.0%)

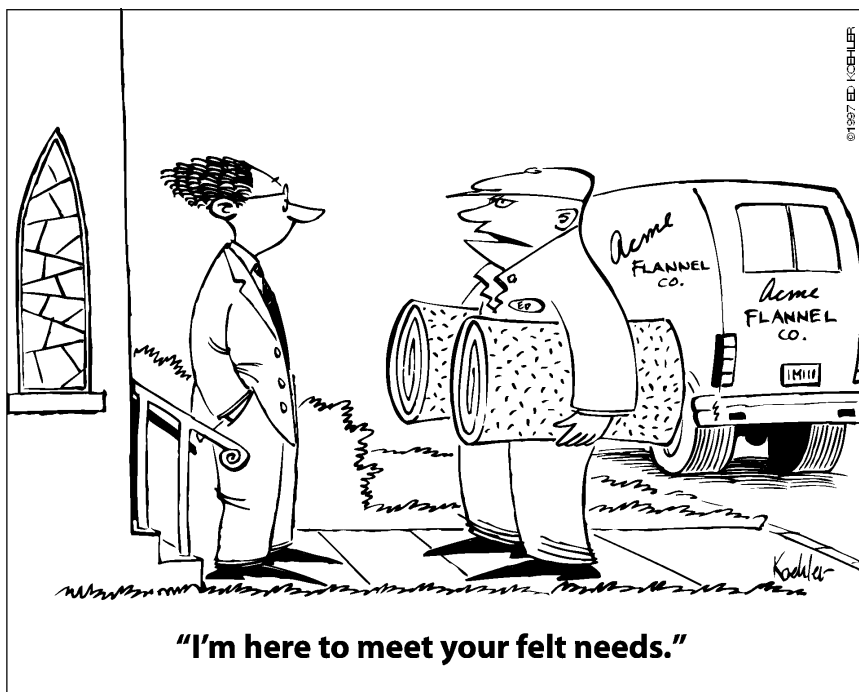
16. Sermons preached most?

- a. Topical (38.8%)
- b. Expository (36.2%)
- c. Illustrative (15.3%)
- d. Other (9.7%)

17. Bible college or seminary graduate?

- a. Yes (56.9%)
- b. No (43.1%)

*Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding and multiple responses.



Assemblies of God pastors are searching for integrity-centered evangelists who have solid Bible preaching and dynamic altar services with people being saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit. The two greatest challenges pastors face regarding evangelists are finding the *right* evangelist for their church and getting people to attend the crusade. The three biggest complaints of pastors relating to evangelists are that evangelists are financially demanding, manipulative during altar services, and possess a nonservant attitude. Overall, pastors still believe in the gift of the evangelist in the local church.

Chart 2 is a composite picture of the evangelists' survey. All responses are indicated except for the "top needs of evangelists." In this category only the

three main needs were listed.

The evangelist's unique challenge pertains to even having the *opportunity* of fulfilling the biblical purpose and pattern for this ministry gift in the body of Christ. The evangelist's life and ministry is physically, domestically, financially, mentally, and spiritually demanding. Of the active evangelists, only 37.2 percent preach more than 200 times per year, which averages between 4 and 6 times per week. Imagine the cumulative physical stress of nightly effective ministry.

Evangelistic families (64.6%) expressed some level of difficulty with the evangelistic lifestyle. (An entire survey devoted to the evangelist and the family would need to be conducted in order to ascertain a complete picture of family life "on the road.")

The financial burden of Assemblies of God evangelists is like the Dow Jones Industrial Average—up one week and down the next. (See item 9 in Chart 2 for the breakdown of income from evangelism.) This survey portrays the financial straits of evangelists today.

Only 24.5 percent of Assemblies of God evangelists are able to maintain a full-time evangelistic preaching ministry strictly from invitations from pastors. Moreover, 48.2 percent (items 5c and d) of evangelists initiate their crusade contacts in order to fill half of the their crusade schedules.

It is hard to comprehend the spiritual battles of full-time evangelists. Their No. 2 need is intimacy with God. The contemporary evangelist is bombarded with more responsibilities than a generation ago. A motel room has to serve as a place to sleep, as a prayer chamber, and as a full-functioning office.

The third greatest need among evangelists is respect. Every evangelist desires to be appreciated as a biblical gift in the body of Christ.

According to respondent answers, 80.1 percent of evangelists need 0 to 3 years to develop a full-time ministry, and 19.9 percent need 4 or more years.

In light of these survey results, what are some practical suggestions for


building solid pastor–evangelist relationships in the 21st century?

EVANGELISTS NEED TO:

- Focus more on integrity than image.
- Develop dynamic altar services without manipulating people.
- Become relevant Pentecostal Bible preachers.
- Seek to see souls saved.
- Preach and lead people into the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Not be financially demanding.
- Be servants.

PASTORS NEED TO:

- Refer to their National Evangelists Pictorial Directory to look for the *right* evangelist.
- Be sensitive to the physical, emotional, and domestic stresses of itinerant ministry on evangelists and their families.
- Consider inviting an Assemblies of God evangelist today.
- Think about financially supporting an evangelist monthly.
- Consider sending a Christmas offering to evangelists who ministered in your churches during the year.
- Initiate conversations about issues relating specifically to evangelists today.

- Realize that just as all pastors are not the same, evangelists are not either. 

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Issues Every Evangelist Must Face

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 100

• *Devoted to the long haul.* Are you considering becoming an evangelist because it appears to be exciting? Are you considering becoming an evangelist to cut back on your workload? Do you feel locked into your present ministry? Have you said to yourself, *I'll just travel around and do evangelistic ministry until something else opens up?*

One week after leaving my pastoral position in Sacramento, California, to travel as a full-time evangelist, David Wilkerson said to me: "Are you really committed to being an evangelist or are you just between churches?"

I pray this question will ring in your ears and burn in your heart, "Are you devoted to the long haul, or is evangelism like a toy you will play with until a new toy comes along?"

• *Devoted to your culture.* When a church pastor writes a message, it's for a local congregation and is usually preached only once. However, when an evangelist writes a message, it is for the entire nation and will be preached many times.

Unless you are devoted to your culture, it will be difficult to attract an audience. You must be well-read. Watch the polls—know what people are thinking. Watch, listen, and then pray...read...pray, and pray some more. Meditate on those things, and read God's Word. I promise God will give you a word for our world (cf. 1 Chronicles 12:32).

**Your devotion to God
will promote
you to winning
or losing on the
evangelistic circuit.**

FAMILY

• *Secure environment.* Nothing is more precious to me than my wife and

four sons. Early in our evangelistic ministry my wife traveled with me. As our four boys came along, she stayed home with them. To provide a secure and stable environment for our family, we decided to move to where my wife's family lived (cf. Acts 16:31).

• *Church attendance.* I realize that spiritual growth must be consistent and is foundational to each member of my family. Our boys have been in the same church, school, and house their entire lives. It breaks my heart when I talk to children of some very well-known evangelists who tell me, "We never went to church."

• *Time spent with family.* Since 1979, I have regularly returned from the road to be home Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. I have always tried to take the fifth week off, with no traveling. This way my children know that Daddy is a regular part of the family and not just a guest.

Another commitment my wife and I have made is to speak on the phone everyday while I am on the road. It has been quite expensive, but every relationship you value will cost you something (cf. Proverbs 22:6).

• *Calendar planning.* We schedule holidays and vacations with our family and spend quality time with our boys. With God's help, we are strict with these dates and will not break scheduled family times. I want to present my whole family—saved—to the Lord as my life's greatest act of evangelism.

Whatever it takes to maintain and institute a growing relationship with your family, do it now and do it joyfully.

ASSOCIATIONS

• *Four kinds of associations.* A wonderful elderly brother told me at the beginning of my ministry: "Rich, you need to be careful when you choose your associations." Then he explained: "Ministers of God need four kinds of people in their lives. They need a Solomon—someone who imparts wisdom; a Barnabas—someone who encourages; a Jonathan—someone who

will be a friend in Christian love for a lifetime; and a Timothy—someone to mentor and disciple."


• *Uplifting associations.* Make sure the friends you choose and the people you associate with are people who have utmost integrity and passion for Christ. They inspire you to reach up to their level of purity, conduct, and Christian ethics.

• *Pitfalls.* Avoid the pitfalls of loving money, yielding to sexual temptations, and laziness. Real friends will see signs in your life that indicate your resistance to these pitfalls is wavering. Through prayer, confession to God, and godly counsel with close associates, you can avoid the devil's pitfalls (cf. Proverbs 6:6–11; Ephesians 5:3–5; 1 Timothy 6:10).

**Many today are living
yesterday's blessings,
yesterday's knowledge,
and yesterday's messages.
Too few are living
on faith's edge.**

YOUR FIELD

Your mission field is a vast world of lost souls doomed to an eternal hell. As an evangelist, a burden for the lost must get you out of bed in the morning and awake you to prayer at midnight. The burden must grip you, motivate you, and at times overwhelm you.

The lostness of man is what moved God to send His Son. Nothing matters more to Him than individuals coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Knowing the heart of God should cause us to say today: "Lord, if I do not win souls for You, I will die!" (cf. Matthew 9:35–38; John 4:35). 

Rich Wilkerson is an Assemblies of God evangelist and is founder and director of Peacemakers, a mass evangelism program to the 39 largest cities in America. He lives in Tacoma, Washington.

Repressed Memories

INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD D. DOBBINS AND DONALD A. LICH

Memories of our own life change almost daily. We are continually editing our past, experiencing our present, and anticipating our future.

—Dobbins



Richard D. Dobbins

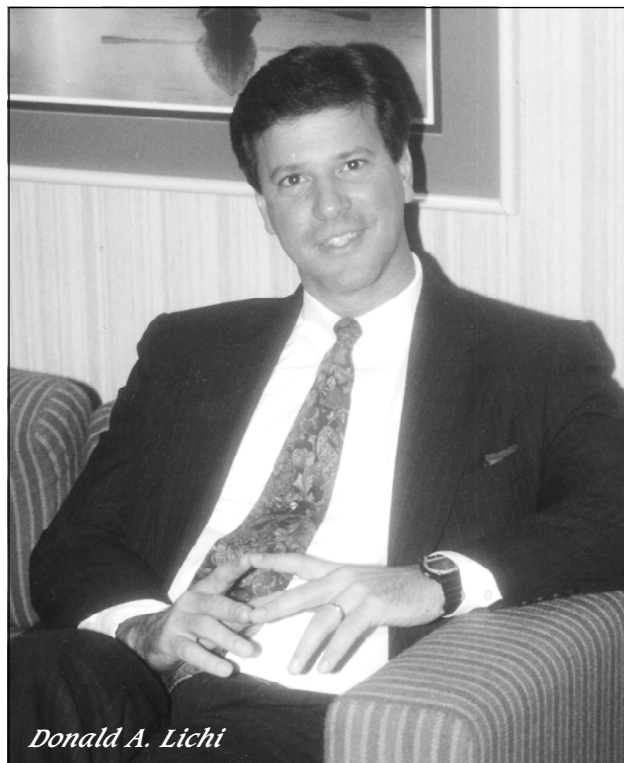
There is wide opinion today among mental health professionals on the subject of repressed memory. What should be the church's position on providing ministry to individuals who live with hurtful events in the past? In this interview Enrichment Executive Editor Wayde I. Goodall talked with Dr. Richard D. Dobbins and Dr. Donald A. Lichi from EMERGE Ministries to help bring clarity to the many issues surrounding repressed memory.

GOODALL: WHAT IS REPRESSED MEMORY?

DOBBINS: In general, studies indicate the inaccuracy of memories. Paul referred to our view of reality: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.... For now we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:9,12).

We don't live with the events of our past. Rather, we live with the memory and the interpretation that we choose to give to those events from our past.

—Lichi



Donald A. Lichi

Memories of our own life change almost daily. We are continually editing our past, experiencing our present, and anticipating our future. The picture in my memory of my relationship with my father is different today than 10 or 20 years ago. The factual history is lost.

My two sisters can tell you what they remember of my relationship with my father. But the version I live with—my reality—is my memory of it.

LICHI: Interpretations of memories generate feelings and intentions—a whole way of thinking. Counselors often say that we don't live with the events of our past. Rather, we live with the memory and the interpretation that we choose to give to those events from our past. With the help of the Holy Spirit, trained Christian counselors can play a real healing role in helping their counselees.

DOBBINS: Thank God we don't live with the events because the events will never change. The focus of quality Christian counseling is to redemptively edit those memories so that people can live with them more comfortably.

We often forget the many people who have been abused but have grown through that abuse. These people have gone on to healthy adult relationships with no further attention to the hurtful part of their past. The people who come to our attention are usually those who are unable to function in appropriate marriage relationships. They have been subjected to the kind of abuse that has crippled their efforts to lead normal adult lives.

The goal in treating these people is not to recreate their history but to help them lead normal lives, and if married have healthy Christian marriages.

LICHI: And to help them own responsibility for the choices that they make.

DOBBINS: Memory tends to repress the unpleasant and retain the pleasant. This is not true in all cases. Traumatic things happen to people that they don't forget—they do remember. But one of the ways in which the young child, in particular, manages trauma is to disassociate it from his or her present—through compartmentalization, through denial, and through willful suppression.

These are not very effective ways of

dealing with memory. At times, parts of memory begin to surface as people in their 20s or 30s deal with issues of life in marriage.

The focus of quality Christian counseling is to redemptively edit those memories so that people can live with them more comfortably.

—Dobbins

GOODALL: WHAT IS REPRESSED MEMORY COUNSELING?

DOBBINS: Child and sexual abuse began to come out of the closet in the 1970s. Victims began to come forward with legitimate complaints. Among the legitimate complaints were some false accusations. Some of these were initiated by counselees; others were the result of inappropriate interviewing techniques by inexperienced and untrained counselors.

It is inappropriate for a counselor to help a counselee create a story. If people have a story to tell, we believe the Holy Spirit will help them—without the use of hypnotism, guided imagery, or other conscious-altering methods—get in touch with whatever memories are necessary to restore them to health and make them productive functioning adults.

LICHI: Counselors should not pursue issues that counselees don't raise themselves. Where a lot of counselors get into trouble with repressed memory is when someone lists symptoms, and then the counselor responds by saying, "It sounds like this is what happened"; or "It sounds like you were abused." Even though what the counselor suggests never existed or happened, his or her suggestion can then become a part of the counselee's memory.

The first questions to ask if someone shares memory of abusive experiences are: "How did these memories start to

come to you?" and "To the best of your recollection has there been any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in your background?" Let the person answer. Do not suggest something that has happened beyond what the counselee is reporting.

Another issue around repressed memory syndrome is that counselees often refuse any kind of objective efforts to verify what happened. For example, they may refuse a gynecological examination or refuse to let us talk with siblings.

DOBBINS: Suppose a female counselee has a fixation with the color blue and also has problems functioning normally in marriage. An overambitious counselor might suggest that blue was the color worn when she was molested. The counselor has just created an explanation for why she is struggling with this part of her life. But the explanation did not come from the memory of the counselee. The memory came from the suggestion of the counselor.

LICHI: The human mind seems to have an innate desire to give a reason why something happened—to offer closure. When a counselee is feeling anxious about something and doesn't know why, a person in the role of a counselor might suggest a reason. The suggestion becomes the reality. As time goes on, the whole issue becomes so ingrained in the counselee's personality that it takes on a life of its own.

Memory tends to repress the unpleasant and retain the pleasant.

—Dobbins

DOBBINS: Suppose a young male adult has memories of being molested. He should remember with clarity certain details. The skilled clinical interviewer can help him recall his own memories without supplying any information for him. A counselor can usually bring

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH REPRESSED MEMORY

Some pastoral counselors have become involved in the practice of helping individuals recover repressed memories. How should pastors approach this issue and thereby avoid legal and interpersonal difficulties?

My recommendations divide pastors into two groups.

PASTORS WITH MINIMAL COUNSELING TRAINING

- 1. Refer anyone with extensive abuse or childhood trauma to a competent Christian mental health professional you trust and respect.** Do not attempt to do this counseling yourself. It is enormously time-consuming and requires a level of skill comparable to that of a surgeon. Encourage the counselee to work with the referred counselor and to trust the Great Physician to effect healing.
- 2. If you are counseling someone and he or she starts recovering memories of childhood abuse or trauma, refer that person immediately.**
- 3. In all cases, continue to be his or her pastor.** Continue to offer them full support as their pastor. Offer prayer for their healing, use and encourage their use of Scripture, and encourage their full participation in the life and ministry of the church.

PASTORS WITH EXTENSIVE COUNSELING TRAINING

- 1. Remember the basics.** Listen to your counselees' stories with empathy, acceptance, and respect. It is their story, and it is real to them. Let them tell it in their way.
- 2. Resist the need to be brilliant or to find support for some theory.** Never tell counselees what is (or may be) in their history. Let them tell you their history. Telling counselees what is in their history is taking a dangerous and unnecessary shortcut. Use counseling theory to help you understand and to explain *after* you've heard the whole story—not before. Avoid the serious mistake of creating, implanting, or suggesting a memory of an event that probably never happened.
- 3. Avoid extensive memory work.** Keep the primary focus on present circumstances and future behavior.
- 4. Avoid the use of abuse survivors' checklists.** These usually include possible symptoms that are nearly universal, negative, and tend to identify the counselee as a victim.
- 5. Encourage counselees to accept their past, take responsibility for making necessary changes, and plan and implement helpful solutions.**
- 6. Keep the counselee focused on personal and interpersonal healing, forgiveness, and restoration.** Encourage faith development and commitment through prayer, Scripture reading, and worship.
- 7. Get help when needed.** Getting outside help when needed is a sign of wisdom and strength. Consult with an experienced and trusted colleague. It can save you and your counselee a lot of unnecessary pain.
- 8. Seek legal consultation.** When you do not understand the legal ramifications of your counselee's situation or your legal responsibility, obtain legal advice.

—Paul A. Lee, Ph.D., is professor of family therapy and counseling, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

initiate offering details from his or her memory. Then the details should be verified, such as checking school records and checking for complaints made to a relative. In legitimate cases, enough details will surface to establish the facts without any suggestive interviewing techniques on the part of the counselor.

LICHI: Sometimes counselees come in knowing they will get more attention the more graphic and bizarre a story they have to tell. Inadvertently, the counselor may end up reinforcing the process.

DOBBINS: We must strive for balance. While it would be horrible to falsely accuse anyone, we certainly don't want to be put in the position of holding back on dealing with childhood abuse.

GOODALL: WHAT SHOULD A PASTOR, CHURCH LEADER, SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR, OR TEACHER DO IF HE OR SHE SUSPECTS A PROBLEM WITH SEXUAL ABUSE OR CHILD MOLESTATION?

LICHI: Pastors must be aware of their state's laws and the church's legal obligations. Child abuse is a criminal

Our counselors are trained not to pursue issues that counselees don't raise themselves.

—Lichi



another person or place into the memory by asking: "Who did you tell?" "Who might have known?" "Can you take me

back to the place?"

The key to establishing a legitimate case is initiation—the counselee must

offense. If there is good reason to believe that this has occurred, then it needs to be reported and investigated.

DOBBINS: Beyond the legal issue, there is the ethical issue. When children or young people complain about sexual abuse, we should be an advocate of children. That's the role our Lord took, and that's the role we should take.

However, when it comes to adult victims, I can't think of one good reason why a pastor should be involved in counseling this kind of case. It's a quagmire. The pastor or another staff member can offer pastoral support. But when it comes to exploring the issues of a childhood abuse complaint, in my opinion, the case should be referred to a competent Christian mental health professional.

LICHI: There's always some safety in referral. Untrained pastors can be held liable for damages if a victim retracts his or her complaint. Sometimes in the role of counselor, pastors can get in over their heads and run the risk of lawsuits.

GOODALL: CAN YOU GIVE US A PICTURE OF WHO ARE THE ACCUSERS AND WHO ARE THE ACCUSED IN CASES BASED ON MEMORIES OF PAST CHILDHOOD ABUSE?

LICHI: Here is an interesting profile of accusers:

- 92 percent of accusers are female.
- 93 percent of retractors are female.
- 74 percent are between ages 31 and 50.
- 31 percent have education beyond college.
- 60 percent report memory of abuse prior to age 4. (Memory is highly correlated with verbal ability.)

- 64 percent report memories from 20 to 39 years ago.

Now here's the profile of those who are accused:

- 62 percent accused their fathers of abuse.
- 30 percent accused both mothers and fathers of abuse.

- 18 percent included allegations of some kind of satanic ritual abuse. (Whenever these cases have come up at our center, not one case could be verified.)

A pastor in the role of counselor is placed in a position of trying to determine if in fact the counselee's memory is accurate. That's risky. The major points are: (1) Whenever you try to objectively verify a case, the accusers will often resist attempts at verification. (2) When verification is attempted, there's often just nothing there to verify.

For example, if a woman comes and says she was ritually abused, the counselor's obvious question is: "Have you had a complete physical exam?" A doctor's report can offer some of the verification needed.

DOBBINS: We must remember that the vast majority of people who report to us are legitimate victims of abuse. We do our best to use the means of grace and our training and experience to bring those people to healing and healthy functioning as Christian adults and spouses.

GOODALL: WHEN SHOULD A PASTOR REFER TO A PROFESSIONAL?

DOBBINS: Again, we can say succinctly that if a child or young person brings a complaint of being sexual molested, it must be dealt with immediately according to the laws of the state.

However, when the complaint comes as a memory from an adult member of the congregation, it is certainly appropriate for the pastor to be empathetic and supportive; but the person should be referred to an outside source of counseling. The pastor and congregation don't need that kind of legal liability.

The appropriate method of dealing with this kind of an issue is to place the person with the hurtful memories into the care of a competent Christian mental health professional who approaches his or her task from the biblical point of view. Because of their training and experience, these professionals are less



*In legitimate cases,
enough details will surface
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part of the counselor.*

—Dobbins

likely to make errors in their judgments.

As a professional, I don't exceed 12 to 20 sessions with the same counselee. If I were pastoring and I saw a person on three or at the most four occasions, and I couldn't resolve the problem, I would refer him or her.

I don't want to underestimate the role that reading Scripture and praying can play in the healing process. Pastors can see people for 20 or 30 minutes and read a passage of Scripture and have prayer for them—that's part of their pastoral role. But when it comes to dealing with issues from a person's remote past, accompanied by crippling symptoms of obsessive/compulsive behavior or recurrent and deep depressions, the average pastor normally feels overwhelmed. At that point the pastor needs to decide to refer the person.


LICHI: When pastors do need to make a referral, they can contact EMERGE Ministries or the Ministerial Enrichment

Office—both offices maintain referral lists of reputable Christian counselors nationwide.*

DOBBINS: If pastors do their own referring, they need to make sure the counselor is a reputable, well-trained Christian mental health professional. Pastors have to protect themselves from liability.

GOODALL: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING TREATMENT?

LICHI: When counselees receive good treatment, they will be able to reckon the past into the past without dwelling on every single detail. God through Scripture enables us to reckon and focus on the present—to move forward.

DOBBINS: In Scripture, Paul was able to put very painful memories of the past—the murder and imprisonment of Christians—behind him. If a person is trying to overcome a background of sexual abuse, the treatment should not focus on the history. The treatment should focus on what can be done now to help this person become a functional adult. The Holy Spirit can help any believer who has suffered childhood sexual abuse to overcome that past and be a healthy functioning marriage partner. That should be the goal of treatment—to concentrate on the present and the future, not on the past. 

** For referral lists, contact EMERGE Ministries at 216-867-5603 and the Ministerial Enrichment Office at 417-862-2781, ext. 3014.*

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Notifying Your Insurer of a Loss

BY RICHARD
R. HAMMAR

When a church provides its insurance broker with notice of an accident or loss, it is not necessarily notifying its insurance company.

Failure To Notify Promptly Can Result in Loss of Coverage

Did you know that your church liability insurance policy imposes a duty on the church to notify the insurance company promptly in the event of an accident or other loss? Even more importantly, did you know that failure to do so could result in a denial of coverage for the loss? These are questions of fundamental importance, as one church learned the hard way.

A RECENT CASE

A church member was injured when he fell on church property during a funeral. At the time of the injury the church had a general liability insurance policy that required the church to give the insurance company written notice of any accident "as soon as practicable." Immediately following the accident the pastor instructed the chairman of the board of trustees to notify the church's insurance broker about the accident. The chairman did so by calling the insurance broker's office. An employee of the broker assured the chairman that the insurance company would be duly notified. In fact, the insurance company was not notified.

Nine months later the church received a letter from an attorney for the injured member threatening to sue the church unless it paid the member a large amount of money. The church immediately turned this letter over to its insurance broker, who in turn forwarded it to the church's insurance company. The insurance company refused to provide the church with a defense of the lawsuit or pay any amount of money based on the accident since the church had failed to provide it with written notice of the accident "as soon as practicable" as required by the insurance policy.

The church responded by suing its insurance company. It sought a court order requiring the

insurance company to defend the church under the terms of the policy and to pay for any damages awarded by a jury. A trial court ruled in favor of the church, and the insurance company appealed.

THE COURT'S RULING

A state appeals court reversed the trial court's decision and ruled that the insurance company had no legal duty to defend the church or pay for any jury verdict since the church had failed to notify it of the accident "as soon as practicable."

- First, the court concluded that when the church gave notice of the accident to its insurance broker, it was not giving notice to its insurance company as required by the policy. Why? Because brokers are not necessarily "agents" of the insurance companies they represent. Rather, they are agents of the persons and organizations they insure. So, when the church gave notice to its broker, it was not giving notice to its insurance company since the broker was not an agent of the insurance company.

- Second, the court stressed that the insurance policy required that the church provide the insurance company with *written* notice of any accident. Even if the broker were an agent of the insurance company, the church still failed to comply with the terms of the insurance policy since it provided the broker with oral rather than written notice of the accident.

- Finally, the court concluded that the church's 9-month delay in providing the insurance company with written notice of the accident was not "as soon as practicable" as required by the policy, and as a result the insurance company had no legal duty to defend the church or pay any jury verdict based on the church's negligence.

IMPORTANCE TO CHURCH LEADERS

It is very important for pastors and other church leaders to be familiar with this case, for it illustrates three fundamental points:

1. *Notifying your broker may not be enough.* Many churches purchase their insurance through a local broker. Sometimes this person is a member of the congregation. Church leaders naturally assume that in the event of an accident or injury they can simply call this individual and everything will be “taken care of.” This case illustrates that such a conclusion may not always be correct. A broker may not be deemed to be an “agent” of the insurance companies he or she represents; accordingly, when a church provides its insurance broker with notice of an accident or loss, it is not necessarily notifying its insurance company.

TIP:

If you notify your insurance broker of a loss, insist on a written assurance that he or she will notify the insurance company in writing within the period of time specified in the insurance policy. If you do not hear back within a week or so, contact the broker again to follow up. Better yet, the church itself should notify both its broker and insurance company. The insurance company's address will be listed on your insurance policy. Ask the insurance company to provide you with written confirmation of receipt of your notice.

2. *Written rather than oral notice.* If your insurance policy requires written notice, then be sure you provide written rather than oral notice of a loss.

TIP:

Church leaders should be familiar with the insurance policy's provisions regarding notification of the insurance company. Is written notice required? If so, how soon after a loss? It is essential that these provisions be scrupulously followed in order to prevent a loss of coverage.

TIP:

If you change insurance companies, be sure to review the new insurance policy. Do not assume it will contain the same “notice” provisions as your previous policy.

3. *A reasonable time.* How soon does your church insurance policy require that notice be submitted to the insurance company following an accident or loss? Be sure you know and

then follow through on this requirement whenever there is an accident, personal injury, or other kind of loss.

TIP:

The duty to inform your insurance company of an accident or loss arises when the injury occurs, not when a lawsuit is filed. The purpose of the notice requirement is to give your insurance company sufficient time to investigate the incident and provide a defense.

EXAMPLE:

On February 15, 1997, the church board at First Church is informed by a parent that her minor child was molested by a church volunteer. The volunteer is questioned and admits having molested the child. This incident represents a potential “loss” under the church's insurance policy, triggering a duty to inform the church's insurance company of the loss within the period of time specified in the insurance policy. The church should inform its insurance company immediately. It is very important that the church not wait until a lawsuit is filed to notify its insurance company. Such a delay not only hinders the insurance company's ability to investigate the incident and defend the case, but it also may result in loss of coverage under the policy. This could have disastrous consequences to the church. **E**

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If you notify your insurance broker of a loss, insist on a written assurance that he or she will notify the insurance company in writing within the period of time specified in the insurance policy.



Character Formation in Children: Reversing the Effects of the “Sin of the Fathers”

Refer to: Deuteronomy 5:22; 6:1–9; Psalm 78:1–8.

CHILDREN TEND TO PRACTICE WHAT WE PRACTICE

As children grow into adulthood and enter marriage, they tend to recreate the kind of family atmosphere in which they have grown up. Many are fortunate enough to be raised by cooperative parents who work at communicating clearly with each other and who place themselves under the lordship of Christ. They have parents who are supportive of each other, honest in their business dealings, and fair in their relationships. These children are likely to grow up into the same kind of adults. However, children raised by parents who are always looking out for No. 1 tend to grow into yet another generation of adults who think of others first only when it is convenient or self-serving.

Of course, some children raised in the most devastating home atmospheres manage to create more Christlike homes when they become adults. The reverse is sometimes true as well. Children raised by loving, considerate parents may grow up to be selfish and inconsiderate.

TEACH CAREFULLY

Because God has created each of us with an individual will, no parent is entirely responsible for how his or her child turns out. If a child turns out well, the parent doesn't get all the credit. Likewise, parents don't deserve all the blame when things don't turn out so well. At some point, we all choose how we will behave and what we will value in life. However, no earthly individual has more influence over another's choices in this area than the influence parents have over their children. And when a second or third generation carries sinful attitudes and behaviors forward, this is how the “sin of the fathers” is passed from generation to generation.

As earthly parents, we teach our children—

“When you sow an action, you reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.” As this popular adage relates to parenting, it suggests that every decision we make should be made with at least three generations in mind.

What does Scripture mean when it refers to “the sin of the fathers” (Exodus 20:5*) being passed along to the third and fourth generation of a family? Why and how is the sin transmitted? How can we stand in the gap to reverse generational trends and sinful patterns and then pass on a more godly lifestyle to our children and grandchildren?

PERSONALITY VS. CHARACTER

To understand how the effects of sin are passed along from generation to generation, let's look first at the difference between *personality* and *character*. Personality is what others see when they look at us. Character is who we really are when no one else is around. Although personality elements *may* be transmitted to our children or their children, character elements *are* certainly transmitted to them. They look at us—and see into us—in those moments when we think nobody is watching. This is how each of us learned from our parents and grandparents in our own family of origin. From our family, we learn about ourselves (our self-esteem), about others, and how to have relationships. We also learn important family values including: level of spirituality, attitudes toward money, attitudes toward personal health, communication style, conformity or nonconformity to what are considered normal behaviors in society, competition vs. cooperation between family members, level of honesty, and approach to education.

BY DONALD A. LICH

**Every decision we
make should be made
with at least three
generations in mind.**

consciously and unconsciously—primarily in the same way God has taught us through His Son Jesus. Our most powerful teaching tool is that of modeling. Our children are far more likely to do what they see us do than they are to do what we tell them to do.

What character qualities do we want to pass on to our children? We must ask God to help us find ways to model the qualities in our own life that we want to see in our children and grandchildren 20 and 40 years from now. Ask Him to help you find substitute behaviors and learn new attitudes to replace the things you don't want to pass on to your heirs.

The battle for Christian character begins in the transformation of the mind by the empowerment of God's Holy Spirit. Christian writer and speaker Zig Ziglar has often said, "You are what you are, and you are where you are as a result of what has gone into your mind.... You can change what you are, and you can change where you are by changing what goes into your mind."

Dallas Willard explains in his compelling book *The Spirit of the Disciplines* the truth, "as a man thinks, so he is" (see Proverbs 23:7).

We can become like Christ by doing one thing—by following Him in the overall style of life He chose for himself—by practicing the types of activities He engaged in—by arranging our whole lives around the activities He himself practiced in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of His Father.

Admittedly, these are lofty goals and difficult to achieve. But they are goals worthy of pursuing in His strength because they will help us model for our children the kind of life pleasing to the Lord—a life benefiting future generations of our family.

Along with prayer and the determination to become more like Christ's example, there are some practical disciplines that we need to

build into our lives to help reverse the generational effects of sin. Until we are willing to accept responsibility for our behaviors and attitudes, we inhibit God's healing power to bring our lives in line with His Word and His example through Jesus.

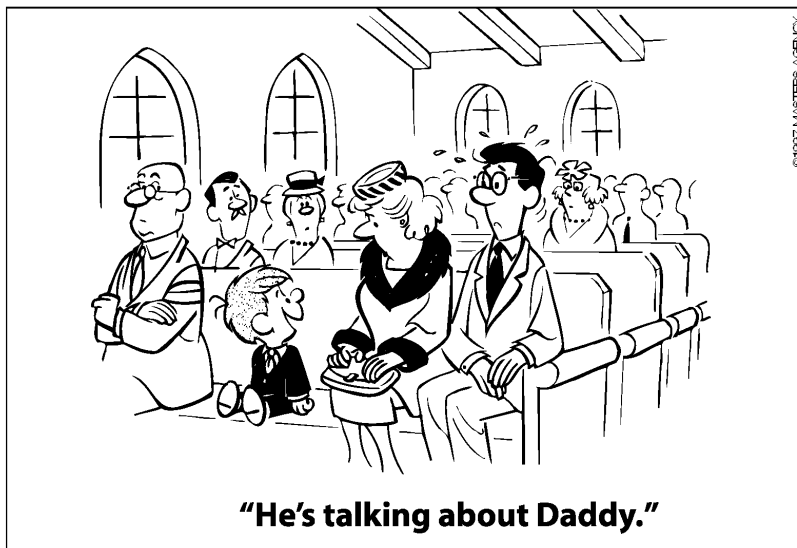
TIME FOR A CHECKUP?

Here is a brief look at five areas of our personal lives that need to come under the discipline of Christ—areas that lead to practical sanctification and godly character development. A mental checkup will allow us to see where we may need to make some adjustments for our own sake and for those we love.

1. *Physical.* This includes: body purity, moral purity, personal hygiene, exercise, rest, nutrition, health care. Depending on how well we care for our body, it can enhance or diminish the pleasures we experience in life (cf. Psalm 139:13–16; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 6:20).

2. *Intellectual.* The mind is what we think about and how we feel about ourselves (our self-talk). The cognitive part of us is heavily influenced by anything we allow into our

As children grow into adulthood and enter marriage, they tend to recreate the kind of family atmosphere in which they have grown up.



minds—what we read, what we view, and how we allow ourselves to be entertained (cf. Romans 12:1,2; Philippians 4:8).

3. *Emotional.* Our feelings are the affective part of us that can be constructive or destructive depending on how they influence us to act. We need to be aware of our feelings and be responsible in the way we express them (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:4,8; Proverbs 14:30; 17:22).

4. *Social.* Our relationships with our spouse, family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors are built on our attitudes of kindness, courtesy, respect, submission where appropriate, and personal accountability (cf. 1 John 3:11,16–18; 4:19–21).

5. *Spiritual.* This is the foundational area on which the other four are built. This is our personal relationship with God the Father through Christ the Son in the Holy Spirit. Our love for Christ is the impetus for our prayers and Bible reading and is the inspiration for our desire to align ourselves with God's Word and God's will. We need to be as holy in our lives as we are in our prayers (cf. 1 Timothy 4:7,8). Books such as Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* and Donald S. Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* offer help in developing the disciplines of the Christian life.

CONCLUSION

God has charged us to be models of godliness in creating a family atmosphere and to be aware of which values are being transmitted to our children. As parents, we must enter into the process of practical sanctification in each area of our lives. As God changes our character, the generational effects of sin in our own lives will begin to be reversed, and godly character will be passed on to the next generation. This is God's design.

May He help us pass on a godly heritage to the generation to come.

"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands" (Deuteronomy 7:9). **E**

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

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Decade of Harvest Update



BY CHARLIE HUNGERFORD

SINCE THE BEGINNING of the decade, churches around the world have endeavored to expand the kingdom of God in ever-increasing measure. With increased vigor, the Church continues to grow.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The church in communist Cuba is experiencing a Pentecostal revival with incredible church growth. In 1989 the Assemblies of God of Cuba numbered 89 churches. Today they number at least 1,400 congregations. "The church has multiplied so quickly no one can keep track of the number of house churches that have sprung up," said John Bueno, field director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Cuban churches are jammed to capacity; 75 percent of the congregations and 80 percent of the pastors are under 35 years of age. A large number of the new converts are highly-trained professionals, many of whom are responding to the call to ministry.

AFRICA

In Africa, church leaders are using the crusade method to plant churches and establish new works. A typical crusade lasts from 2 to 3 weeks and is followed by 2 weeks of discipleship services. In some cases, discipleship precedes or follows the evangelistic service each day. The result? "Planted churches," answered Don Corbin, field director for Africa.

- A crusade in Point Noire, Congo, spawned a church of some 150 adults.
- Full Gospel and Church of God

churches in Congo have grown to 275 assemblies.

- The Assemblies of God of Tanzania has grown to 1,200 churches and outstations.
- The Nigeria Assemblies of God has added more than 500 new fellowships during each year of the 1990s. At the end of 1996, the church had grown to 6,300 congregations with 1.3 million believers and adherents.
- In Cameroon, the Full Gospel Church now numbers more than 340 churches and annexes.

"The overall picture is one of vibrant Assemblies of God growth across Africa," said Corbin.

ASIA PACIFIC

A dynamic result of the growth experienced by churches in Asia Pacific is an increase in the number of Asian missionaries. Until recently, many of the Asian missionaries have done evangelism in their own cultural groups or with groups that are very similar. "There is, however, a new desire on the part of the young people in Asia Pacific to preach the gospel cross-culturally," said Bob Houlihan, field director for Asia Pacific.

An example of this is the church in the Philippines. In the past many Filipinos traveled as contract workers ministering to Filipinos in other nations. Today, one of the strongest groups evangelizing Muslims of the Near East are the Pentecostal workers from the Philippines. They are actively sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with their employers and others who will listen.

EURASIA

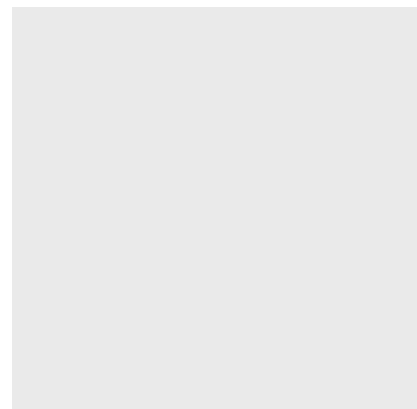
Since doors formerly closed to the West

have opened, the church in Eurasia has made tremendous gains in planting churches. The church in Romania is one example of this growth.

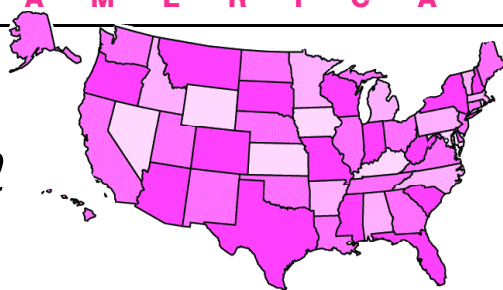
A container of medical equipment, sent just prior to the revolution which ended Ceausescu's regime, became the catalyst for a monumental outreach in the city of Pitesti. As a result, the church in Pitesti now has two congregations, operates a medical clinic, provides assistance in a government orphanage, and has developed a learning center for children on two floors of a former prison. "The battle for church planting is being won," said Jerry Parsley, field director for Eurasia.

In Europe, and around the world, one cannot escape the look of lostness deep in the eyes of those who do not know Christ. These souls are always looking but never finding satisfaction. Like the Early Church, the burgeoning Church is willing to do whatever it takes to see that the light of the gospel is spread everywhere. **E**

Charlie Hungerford is managing editor for the Division of Foreign Missions Communications Department, Springfield, Missouri.



The Need and Value of the Large Church



I was saved, baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, and called to preach while attending a small church. Millions of Christians in America are faithfully serving God and fulfilling the Great Commission as members of small churches. The only two churches I pastored were small when I assumed the pastorate. One of them grew into a megachurch with over 1,000 in attendance on Sunday morning. I thank God for the thousands of faithful pastors who serve small congregations. However, I want to encourage pastors to increase their numbers as long as there are lost people in their communities. Pastors should never reach the place where they say, "Our church is large enough, and we no longer want to grow numerically."

I want to list some of the blessings I experienced as I saw First Assembly in Lafayette, Indiana, move from a small, struggling body to the largest congregation in the county.

A LARGE CHURCH IS EASIER TO PASTOR

It's exciting, interesting, and just plain fun to go to church where hundreds of people show up. I preached better sermons when the church was filled to overflowing. Large crowds generate an electricity that makes it difficult for negative and critical people to get a hearing—they either get over it or leave. When churches are growing, pastors have overwhelming support as long as they lead from a godly perspective.

I know what it's like to have very few options when it comes to music and singing. The entire music ministry hinged on the whims of two or three people. What a glorious day it was when we had a large selection of people who could bless the church with their gifts. When people became carnal in their attitudes, we simply set them aside. We valued each person, but no one was allowed to set the

church agenda or music simply because he or she could sing on key.

A LARGE CHURCH IMPACTS A CITY

We impacted our city in several ways: a church-owned radio station, a major presence on local TV, city-wide campaigns, and by encouraging Christians to run for public office. Not everyone liked us or agreed with our theology, but everyone knew who we were and where the church was located. This is an advantage because many people are looking for a good church. More than one family was drawn to our church simply because of the large crowd. One man told me his family came because they knew "something was going on" at our church.

A LARGE CHURCH GENERATES MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR MISSIONS

What a blessing it was to be able to say to a missionary or a church planter, "We will fund your entire project." I have seen unbelievable amounts of money given in one service for missions as the spirit of giving surged through the people. Successful people in business tend to look for a church that meets their criteria for success. One of those criterion is size. Large churches draw people who have the resources to bless the kingdom of God with their giving. They, in turn, inspire others to raise their level of giving.

I have by no means listed all the blessings of the large church, but I hope I've inspired pastors to reach out to the lost in their communities. And as a result, pastors will see hundreds, even thousands, crowding into their churches to honor Jesus, the Lord over all. **E**

Charles E. Hackett is executive director of the Division of Home Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

*BY CHARLES
E. HACKETT*

I want to encourage pastors to increase their numbers as long as there are lost people in their communities.



A DAY OF THANKSGIVING

1 Chronicles 16:1-36

INTRODUCTION:

David had good reason to be thankful. God had brought him through years of struggle and established his throne. (Cf. chapters 12-15.)

When the ark had finally been put in its proper place: "Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the Lord" (1 Chronicles 16:7).

MESSAGE:

1. How David thanked the Lord

- a. By offering sacrifices (verse 1).

- b. By sharing with others (verse 3).
- c. By appointing worship (verses 4-6).

2. How the people were to thank the Lord

- a. By making known His deeds (verse 8).
- b. By singing psalms (verse 9).
- c. By seeking the Lord (verse 11).
- d. By remembering His marvelous works (verse 12).

3. What David said about God

- a. He is the great Creator (verse 25,26).
- b. In His presence are glory, honor, strength, and gladness (verse 27).
- c. The Lord reigneth (verse 31).

- d. He will come to judge the earth (verse 33).

- e. He is good; His mercy endures forever (verse 34).

4. How the people responded

- a. They all said, "Amen" (verse 36).
- b. They praised the Lord (verse 36).

CONCLUSION:

Special days call for special thanksgiving, but every day we have reasons for praising God and giving thanks.

—Harold V. George, Glendora, California

KEYS TO SOUL WINNING

Acts 8:26-37

INTRODUCTION:

Soul winning is the key ingredient to church growth and is the responsibility of every born-again believer.

MESSAGE:

This passage reveals five keys to soul winning.

1. Lost souls (verses 26,27)

- a. The Ethiopian eunuch was the lost soul Philip approached.
- b. Lost souls are of supreme importance to God (cf. John 3:16).
- c. Nothing is as valuable as a person's

soul (cf. Matthew 16:26).

2. Obedience (verses 26,29)

- a. Philip obeyed the angel's commands by going and witnessing.
- b. We must obey the commandment to win the lost (cf. Luke 14:23; John 14:15).

3. Enthusiasm (verse 30)

- a. Philip *ran* to the eunuch.
- b. His enthusiasm was characterized by urgency and expectation.
- c. There is joy in heaven when a soul is saved (cf. Luke 15:7,10)

4. Knowledge (verses 30-34)

- a. Philip knew the Word of God and was prepared to answer the eunuch's

questions (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15).

- b. Jesus knew the Word of God and used it to overcome Satan's temptation.

5. Message (verse 35)

Philip's message was to preach Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

As Christians, our No. 1 responsibility is to reach the lost with the gospel message. Will you accept that responsibility and make soul winning a priority in your life? (Cf. Romans 10:13-15.)

—Randy Cartwright
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

REQUIREMENTS FOR TRUE REPENTANCE

2 Chronicles 29:1-31:21

INTRODUCTION (29:1,2):

King Hezekiah (King Ahaz's son) did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. All Judah followed his example. This was a turnaround from their following King Ahaz (cf. 28:1-4,24,25).

When we sin, we must truly repent in order to be restored to a proper relationship with God.

MESSAGE:

1. True repentance requires conviction (29:3-14).

Repentance begins with the conviction

of the Holy Spirit as He deals with us concerning our sin. This conviction leads to a determination to make things right with God.

2. True repentance requires purification (29:15-19).

After the Holy Spirit convicts us, we must ask God to forgive us and cleanse us from our sin. This is initially the work of the Holy Spirit within us, but it may also require the removal and disposal of certain things in our life.

3. True repentance requires rededication (29:20-36).

After we have been forgiven, we must

rededicate ourselves to the Lord.

4. True repentance requires obedience (30:1-31:19).

Repentance is not yet *true* repentance until we turn away from our sin and walk in obedience to the Lord.

CONCLUSION (31:20,21):

When we sin, we need to follow Hezekiah's example by truly repenting. This requires conviction, purification, rededication, and obedience.

—Tim McIntyre, Mesquite, Texas



LEST WE FORGET (THANKSGIVING)

Psalm 103

INTRODUCTION:

One of the duties of the Levites was “to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even” (1 Chronicles 23:30). What a delightful privilege. Every day can be Thanksgiving. David exhorts us to “bless the Lord...and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

MESSAGE:

Our:

1. *Foremost need* (verse 3).
2. *Physical need* (verse 3).
3. *Soul's need* (verse 4).
4. *Daily need* (verse 4).
5. *Longing need* (verse 5).
6. *Constant need* (verse 13).

7. *Human need* (verse 14).
8. *Recurring need* (verse 14).

CONCLUSION:

We cry with David: “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name” (verse 1).

—Herb Hull, Muncie, Indiana

DON'T LEAVE YOUR CHOICE TO CHANCE

Luke 12:16-21

INTRODUCTION:

Some choices only have meaning if they are made quickly. In this parable, Jesus illustrated how waiting too long to make a positive choice could mean that the opportunity is lost forever.

MESSAGE:

1. *The futility of life without God.*
 - a. Life without God is fearful

(Proverbs 11:7; 28:1).

b. Life without God is foolish (Psalm 14:1; Proverbs 11:4; 19:3; Ecclesiastes 2:4-13).

c. Life without God is fatal (Psalm 146:3,4; Proverbs 14:12).

2. *The fullness of life with God.*

a. Life with God brings security (Psalm 119:165; 121; 147:11; 1 Timothy 6:6-12; Hebrews 13:5).

b. Life with God brings satisfaction

(Psalm 23; Philippians 4:11).

c. Life with God brings salvation (Proverbs 19:23; John 3:3,6,16; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2).

CONCLUSION:

Friend, don't leave your choice to chance. Choose the fullness of life with God rather than the futility of life without God.

—James T. Meadows, Kansas City, Missouri

DAVID'S SIN

2 Samuel 11:27; 12:9,10

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible is faithful to recount the sins as well as the virtues of its characters, such as David's sin, thus teaching us good lessons.

MESSAGE:

We are taught that:

1. If good people get their eyes off God and

His Word, they may easily fall into gross sin.

2. God never looks upon any person's sin with the least degree of allowance.

3. Whatsoever a person soweth, he or she shall also reap and, like the farmer, will reap much more than is sown.

4. The sins of God's servants give great occasion for the Lord's enemies to blaspheme.

5. The sin of God's people is base ingratitude toward God.

6. There is a brighter lesson from this dark story: There is full, free, abundant pardon for the vilest sinner.

7. God's pardon is to be found by the confession of our sin.

—R.A. Torrey (*Adapted from How To Promote and Conduct a Successful Revival, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1901.*)

A GREAT DESIRE

Psalm 37:4

INTRODUCTION:

The reason not much is done for God today is there is no desire. With determination and direction, you can accomplish what you desire. We are not to desire popularity, prestige, or prosperity.

MESSAGE:

We should desire:

1. *A worshiping heart to glorify Christ.*
 - a. The way: “in Spirit and in truth”

(John 4:24).

b. The worshipers: in heart, home, and church.

c. The wonder: in power, joy, and unity.

2. *A willing host to go for Christ.*

(Study Acts 1:8; Romans 12:1,2; Colossians 1:9.)

We should:

a. Ask through Him.

b. Attempt for Him.

c. Accomplish by Him.

3. *A wonderful harvest to give to Christ.*

(cf. Proverbs 11:30; Philippians 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 2:2.)

This will bring:

a. Deliverance to the lost.

b. Delight to the saved.

c. Diadem to crown the Savior.

CONCLUSION:

Why not desire things that will reap a harvest and bring glory to God?

—Buddy Barnett, Mathis, Texas



SEVEN LEGACIES

Acts 6:3-8

INTRODUCTION:

"As your professor I feel it is incumbent upon me to transmit to you a heritage of faith."

As I spoke those words, immediately the story of Stephen's stoning came to mind—an incident that will forever influence church history: "And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7:58). In one short generation, Saul (Paul) molded history around his dynamic encounter with

Stephen and later Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 9:1-19).

Stephen, whose name means *crown*, lived a life crowned with seven noble characteristics that enabled him to be chosen to serve as a deacon in the Early Church (Acts 6:2,3) and to give Paul the pattern of a servant's heart.

MESSAGE:

Stephen gave Paul:

1. The legacy of an *honest report* (verse 3).
2. The legacy of being full of the *Holy*

Ghost (verse 3).

3. The legacy of being full of *wisdom* (verse 3).

4. The legacy of being full of *faith* (verse 5).

5. The legacy of being *anointed* (verse 6).

6. The legacy of being full of *power* (verse 8).

7. The legacy of being full of *miracles* (verse 8).

—Mary Jackson, Arlington, Texas

GOD'S PLAN—NONNEGOTIABLE

Romans 5:18

INTRODUCTION:

Great attention has been given to the budgetary negotiations taking place in the nation's capitol. Adjustments and compromises are involved in the final agreed-upon plan. With God's plan of salvation, there is no negotiation.

MESSAGE:

1. Common denominator

- a. "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23).
- (1) God's viewpoint: The pronounce-

ment is final.

(2) Man's condition: The problem is terminal.

b. Inability to save self (Romans 3:28).

(1) Good deeds inadequate.

(2) God's approval the issue.

2. Common discovery

a. Justified by faith (Romans 5:1).

b. Compelled by compassion to make known God's plan.

c. Peace with God and the peace of God available to all.

3. Common destiny

a. "Eternal life by Jesus Christ"

(Romans 5:21).

b. Hell and eternal separation await the sinner.

c. Personal choice is necessary.

CONCLUSION:

God has established the plan of salvation that is available to all. There are no other plans for consideration.

—Michael O. Glover, Dexter, Missouri

THE WAR ON THE UNBORN

Matthew 2:16-18

INTRODUCTION:

No one can read this tragic account without being outraged at the barbaric savagery of King Herod. Nor can we abide the killing of innocent children every day in abortion mills across America. Already the total number of casualties in this war on the unborn is many times more than the total casualties the U.S. has suffered in all the wars in its 221-year history.

MESSAGE:

We are confronted with three questions.

1. How could this happen in the U.S.?

- a. Because it is legal.
- b. Because abortion is committed by

medical practitioners under the guise of medical treatment.

c. Because the innocent victims are never seen or heard except by their executioners.

d. Because abortion is big business. Abortion generates at least \$500 million a year—making it the largest unregulated business in the United States.

e. Because Americans remain largely ignorant of the truth about abortion—both its magnitude and its atrocities.

f. Because the church has failed to speak up (cf. Proverbs 31:8).

2. What does this portend for the American future?

- a. Unrestricted abortions of the most

horrendous kind.

b. A growing fascination with death. It is only a matter of time until that which has been done in secret will be made both public and legal.

c. Increased government persecution of Christians who are pro-life.

3. What can we do?

a. Pray as never before (cf. 2 Chronicles 7:14).

b. Work as never before at:

- (1) Crisis pregnancy centers.
- (2) Sidewalk counseling.
- (3) Postabortion recovery groups.
- (4) House meetings to educate others.

—Richard Exley, Tulsa, Oklahoma



HANGING OUT WITH TEENS

Teens will find a place to hang out with their friends. When the local newspaper reported teen activity on the downtown square, a group from our church went on a Friday night to observe.

Stirred by what he saw, our pastor told the congregation: "I'd like to take a busload of grandmas there and turn them loose just to hug those kids."

Grandma Shirley Emerick, 60, caught the vision and now spends most Friday nights (along with others from the church) hanging out with teens and giving them goodies she baked that day. It's a common sight to see her hugging a teen and crying and praying that God will save and deliver.

The approach is to build trust with these teens who have chosen alternative lifestyles. They have told us they don't trust adults and have no future, so they plan to party their lives away. Jesus told us, "Go." For Grandma Shirley and others, it's a matter of obedience.

—Ann Floyd, Springfield, Missouri

CHRISTIAN BOOK AND LITERATURE TABLE

At least one-third of our Assemblies of God churches are within 10 miles of a college campus. College campuses have thousands of students who need to hear the gospel for the first time. What creative ways can your church find to present the gospel to these students?

One way is to get permission to set up a Christian book and literature table on campus in an area heavily trafficked by students. Book-table ministry is a means to maintain visibility on campus, make contacts, and communicate the Christian message on a one-to-one basis. Five reasons for establishing a book-table ministry on the campus near you are:

1. To present Jesus Christ on campus.
2. To stimulate dialogue between Christians and non-Christians.
3. To make Christians visible on campus.
4. To encourage students to read good Christian books.
5. To train Christians in sharing the faith.¹

Where do you begin?

1. *Get permission from the college.*

Typically, if you are associated with a recognized student organization on campus, this is easy to do. You will need to select a location (such as the student center), arrange for a table, and determine days and hours of operation.

2. *Order materials for the table.* Include books, booklets, inexpensive New Testaments, tracts, and possibly back issues of a Christian student magazine or copies of a pertinent article. Include items to give away, sell, and loan.

3. *Train those who will oversee the book table.* Teach them to listen well, communicate the gospel clearly, become acquainted with student concerns and campus issues, become familiar with the material at the table, pray, initiate conversations, and follow up contacts. Coordinate teams of students to evangelize during class breaks, in addition to those who will work at the table.

4. *Display materials attractively.* Make use of banners, posters, and signs to attract attention to the book table. Advertise a booklet, offer a discount, or have students register for a free book. Consider having a drama or music group entertain alongside the table to cause people to stop and browse.

ENDNOTE

1. Five reasons taken from "Grow a Campus Book Table" brochure (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press).

—Kerry Batchman, Springfield, Missouri

GOSPEL COUNTY FAIR

On the Sunday before Labor Day, we rent a large tent and set up our children's church (grades 1–6) outside on the grass. We call it the Gospel County Fair. The fair is our kickoff for the new Sunday school year. Children can wear country or western clothing to go along with the fair theme. We praise, worship, and present the gospel country style.

Then we break up for some county fair activities and crafts. When the children check in, they are given tickets to use at the different booths.

In our gymnasium, our early childhood department has a fair of its own with activities and a puppet gospel presentation appropriate for our preschoolers.

The children look forward to the

annual Gospel County Fair and bring lots of visitors. Although most churches experience a decrease in attendance, this is always one of our biggest attendance days of the year, attracting many new families to hear the gospel.

—Tom Sinex, Lafayette, Indiana

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

We display a pictorial directory in the lobby of our church. Each Sunday volunteers have cameras and lights ready to photograph members of our church who haven't already had their pictures taken. Their photos and names are then displayed the following Sunday. We have found this a great communication help for our people to get to know one another. It enables them to put a name to a face.

—Dianna Coleman, Corpus Christi, Texas

NOAH'S ARK PARTY

Children like to dress up and have fun. So on October 31, we decorate our old sanctuary with its wood-beamed ceiling, to look like Noah's ark. We invite the church and community children to dress up as their favorite ark animal or Bible character. Each child donates wrapped candy to "help feed the animals."

At 6:30 p.m. the children sign in and receive a numbered plastic bag with a salvation tract inside. Then along with their parents, they gather in the main sanctuary for a puppet presentation of the story of Noah and the ark. We tell the children how God chose when to shut the door of the ark just as He will choose when to blow the trumpet signaling His return for those who are ready. Right on cue, we play a sound effect of a squeaking door that slams shut and we announce: "Now we are in the ark; there's no turning back. Just that quickly the Lord will come. Are you ready?" We lead everyone in the sinner's prayer and call their attention to the salvation tract in their bag.

The children are then dismissed to the old sanctuary for games, crafts, refreshments, and treats. We give all the activities fun names related to the ark, and the workers wear Bible costumes. We provide separate activities for the "wee animals" (ages 2–5). After an hour of activities, Noah announces that the ark has landed,



and all the animals are free to go.

We close the event at 8 p.m. by drawing numbers for door prizes. We had more than 250 children between ages 2–12—many had never been to our church before.

—Tom Sinex, Lafayette, Indiana

A LADIES LUNCHEON

With the kids back in school, fall is a good time to organize midweek luncheons for your ladies. Invite four to six women at a time to come, eat, visit, and relax.

Concentrate on setting a feminine table using seasonal items. Collect large autumn leaves and tie them to the napkins with a contrasting ribbon. Arrange fall leaves and berries as a centerpiece.

Soups are a good menu choice because they're inexpensive, can be made ahead of time, are light for midday eating, and make good leftovers. If your budget can stand it, offer a choice of two soups—one with meat and one with a vegetable.

Instead of coffee, offer an assortment of herbal teas. Serve sugar cookies for dessert.

Write a nonthreatening question on a place card (such as: Other than for mealtime, what was your kitchen table used for when you were growing up?) and put a different one at each setting. While eating, each lady reads her question aloud and answers it.

—Janice Hildreth, Boise, Idaho

GIFT EVANGELISM

Need a new way to fill the pews?

Personally delivered invitations are our most effective evangelism tool. On the Sunday morning before a big-event Sunday, we provide our church families with invitations attached to gifts to distribute to friends and neighbors.

We have found that an invitation tied to a gift is the best option for two reasons: (1) Our members are more apt to distribute

something of value. (2) Our prospects are more apt to accept our invitation when they receive a gift.

Each gift is attached to a special-event invitation that gives only the name of our church, address, phone number, and service times and includes a map to the church. (Doctrinal and purpose statements are not included.)

We have used the following themes and gifts for big-event Sundays:

Easter: "Come grow with us"—photos of baby animals; or

"A place for the family"—three plastic Easter eggs with invitations enclosed; or

"Growing healthy homes"—package of flower seeds; or

"Celebrate life at ..."—potted Easter lily.

Mother's Day: "Mom, for all you do, this day is for you"—carnation.

Father's Day: "A field of dreams"—Baby Ruth® candy bar.

Fourth of July: "God shed His grace on thee"—small flag.

Harvest Season: "Harvest festival"—bag of autumn leaf pasta or pumpkin-shaped sponge.

Christmas: "Enjoy a cup of Christmas cheer"—Christmas coffee mug filled with chocolates; or

"To help to make your season bright"—poinsettia.

Other ideas: "For a fresh approach to life"—stick-up air freshener; or

"When you need help, call..."—magnet with emergency phone numbers (include the church's number); or

"How about a Sunday drive?"—bag of church-name golf tees.

Many folks in the pews do not see themselves as effective evangelists, but everyone can give gifts to friends and neighbors. The benefits of gift evangelism are:

1. *It is a starting point for evangelism.* When most Christians become more confident, they will develop and broaden their evangelism skills.

2. *It increases the number of members actively involved in your evangelistic efforts.* Most people are ready and willing to distribute gifts to friends and neighbors.

3. *Members are inevitably given a*



chance to share their faith. It is amazing how giving a gift can open up a conversation between two people.

Bottom line: Gift evangelism works. When invited in such a way, most people come.

—Doug Green, Brea, California

IS SUNDAY SCHOOL OBSOLETE?

We are a young, growing church meeting in a rented facility. When asked about our ministry to children, I used to apologize for not having traditional Sunday school classes. Because of limitations in our rented facility, we are not able to divide our growing congregation into individual classrooms. What we began was considered at first to be a second-best alternative that would only partially fill the Sunday school void. Now, however, I see the alternative for what it is—a 21st-century interactive, intergenerational learning concept that enhances Christian family communication, visitor participation, and unity that cannot be achieved through age-segregated classrooms.

We dedicate approximately 10 minutes of our 1 1/2 hour worship service to ministering to children. The children go to the front of the sanctuary during this time, and the adults participate by learning new choruses, memory verses, or by playing the part of some Bible character. We are also training our youth group to present puppet programs and skits as part of this segment.

Parents are encouraged to work with their children during the week on memory verses and other handouts. This means families are talking about spiritual matters more than just on Sundays.

The regular worship service follows the children's segment. This is an important time as children observe their parents praising and worshiping God. If children are considered part of the audience and addressed as such, they will sit still and pay attention during the sermon.

During the week, a host home provides a more traditional Sunday school setting for the children while the adults study together in another part of the home. Sunday school, Royal Rangers, and Missionettes don't have to be on a particular day or night. Our Missionettes meet

after school twice a month and then serve as helpers during the Wednesday evening cell group.

Being a Decade of Harvest church gives us the advantage of not having to undo anything that has already become a church tradition. God has given us creative minds to help build His kingdom. This concept is working for our church; maybe it can work for yours too.

—Larry L. Refsland, Perham, Minnesota

COLLEGE MINISTRY AND E-MAIL

One of the unique challenges for a church college ministry is keeping in touch with students who have gone away to college.

We use E-mail in a number of different ways to facilitate a care ministry to our college students:

1. *We E-mail the Chi Alpha director.* If such a ministry is available, we provide the director with the names of students and the date of their arrival. When the students arrive on campus, they are pleasantly surprised when a Chi Alpha member contacts them. And we know they are connected to a Spirit-filled campus ministry and Christian friends.

2. *We give students leaving for college our E-mail address.* Access to the Internet is available in most college libraries. A free E-mail address can be accessed through Hot Mail at <http://hotmail.com/>. Our college students can then E-mail us with their new address, and communication begins. We receive E-mail every day from students saying hello or requesting prayer.

3. *We communicate upcoming events*

for college students. They reply and let us know if they are coming in that weekend.

Our college students love the E-mail messages because when they come home, there is no communication gap. They can easily step back in, totally aware of what has been going on in the college ministry while they've been gone.

—T. Suzanne Eller, Muskogee, Oklahoma

SATURATION MAILING

- Saturation mailing is an effective means of reaching people for a special event.

- Saturation mailing is an effective avenue of evangelism.

- Saturation mailing is an inexpensive means of telling people about your church.

How does it work? Steps to take include:

1. *Talk to the postmaster.*

- Ask for the number of people in and location of each route.

- Select the route location and number of people you would like to reach.

- Purchase a nonprofit or bulk-mailing permit. Remember if you do purchase a nonprofit postal permit, you cannot advertise for any businesses. If you are going to advertise to offset your cost, then purchase a bulk-mailing permit. This enables you to send mail at a reduced cost.

- Ask how each piece should be labeled for a saturation route (for example, Occupant).

2. *Check printing costs.* The printers will need the approximate format, dimensions, and quantity of your mailing. They can help you with ideas for layout and



design. The mailing should be attractive but does not have to be expensive. Cost per reached family is arrived at by adding the printing and mailing costs and dividing by the total number of pieces in the mailing.

3. *Advertise special services, activities, or ministries.* Don't clutter and confuse, but inform. If you decide to send a newsletter, remember you're reaching many unchurched people who don't understand church happenings and language.

4. *Separate and bundle the pieces according to the number of people in each route.*

For an even more effective outreach, you may wish to follow up your mailing by calling individuals on the route and issuing a personal invitation.

—Jim Laudell, Watts, Oklahoma

“INREACH” IDEAS

Dinners for Eight. Eight people gather for dinner, fellowship, and fun. When a few non-Christians are included, new relationships often emerge, leading to opportunities to invite people to church services and events where the gospel is presented.

Fondue Party. Who can resist

chocolate? Invite a group over with the explicit theme: “Fondue and a Discussion of the Christian Faith.” After socializing and eating dessert, have a spiritually mature person give a 10-minute presentation on the relevancy of a relationship with Christ. Open a discussion time and allow questions. A group of 20 people is best, half non-Christians. You could also host evangelistic barbecues, coffee-tasting parties, or a burrito buffet.

Literary Society. Reading groups are popular. Begin your own literary society that includes believers and non-Christians. Gather monthly to discuss, debate, and dissect a selected reading. Choose Christian and secular authors. Whatever book is chosen, believers can contribute a Christian perspective to the discussion.

—Keith D. Wright
Kansas City, Missouri

BRIDGE BUILDERS

At Mechanicsville Christian Center, we have an evangelistic team composed of 50 children, ages 6 through 18. Because we want to build bridges between God and those who don't know Him, we call our team Bridge Builders. Our main means of

outreach is worshiping God through contemporary songs set to interpretive movements. The children do not perform but minister in worship to God.

The goal of Bridge Builders is to disciple children to hear God's voice and obey Him. The desire of the children is to bring joy to God's heart through worship and to lead others to Christ.

The outreach consists of an hour of interpretive songs, testimonies, and prayer. The innocent heart of a child breaks down the barriers to the gospel. Children and adults are open to a child praying for them.

Bridge Builders has conducted 50 outreaches in shopping malls, housing projects, nursing homes, hospices, rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, city parks, churches, and even at the beach. When members of Bridge Builders minister in churches, their goal is to encourage and mobilize other children to share their faith.

We have a week-long training camp every summer to teach the children their songs, movements, how to share their faith, and how to give testimonies. Each day begins with worship, a quiet time, and teaching. The afternoons are devoted to rehearsal. After the training camp, the team does a major 2-week outreach ministering twice daily. Plus, they have bimonthly outreaches throughout the year.

Bridge Builders gives children evangelistic opportunities to share their faith. What greater purpose can we give them than to make Christ's name known?

—Peter Hohmann
Mechanicsville, Virginia

MINISTRY IDEAS WANTED

Enrichment will pay up to \$50 for each published account of a ministry idea. Send your ideas, along with a detailed description, to: Ministry Ideas That Work, *Enrichment* Journal, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to Enrichment@ag.org



THANKSGIVING

For his part in an attempt to overthrow Adolf Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran minister, was hanged on April 9, 1945, after 2 years imprisonment in a concentration camp. He wrote:

"We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary, small (and yet really not small) gifts. How can God entrust great things to one who will not thankfully receive from Him the little things?"

"If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is too paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ."

—Robert L. Neuman
Lansing, Illinois

THE GIRL WITH THE ROSE

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his Army uniform, and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station.

He looked for the girl whose heart he knew but whose face he didn't—the girl with the rose.

His interest in her had begun 13 months before in a Florida library. Taking a book off the shelf, he found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind. In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner's name: Miss Hollis Maynell.

With time and effort he located her address in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting her to correspond. The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II. During the next 13 months, the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart—a romance was budding. Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared,

it wouldn't matter what she looked like. When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting—7 p.m. at Grand Central Station. "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel."

So at 7 p.m., he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved but whose face he'd never seen. John Blanchard related:

"A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blond hair lay back in curls around her delicate face—her eyes blue as flowers. In her pastel green suit, she was like springtime come alive.

"I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. 'Going my way sailor?' she murmured. Almost uncontrollably I made one step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump; her thick, ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes. The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away. I felt as though I was split in two; so keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned me and upheld my own.

"And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible. Her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle. I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love—a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful.

"I squared my shoulders, saluted, and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment. 'I'm Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell. I am so glad you could meet me; may I take you to dinner?'

"The woman's face broadened into a tolerant smile. 'I don't know what this is about, son,' she answered, 'but the young

lady in the green suit who just went by begged me to wear this rose on my coat. She said if you asked me out to dinner, I should go with you and tell you that she is waiting for you in the restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test.' "

—Submitted by Pat Manzo,
North Providence, Rhode Island.
Adapted from "The People with the
Roses" by Max Lucado from *When the
Angels Were Silent (Sisters, Oreg.:
Multnomah Books, 1992).*

POWERFUL EVIDENCE UNREFUTED

When Robert Ingersoll, the notorious skeptic, was in his heyday, two college students went to hear him lecture. As they walked down the street afterward, one said to the other, "Well, I guess he knocked the props out from under Christianity, didn't he?" The other said, "No, I don't think he did. Ingersoll did not explain my mother's life. And until he can do that, I will stand by my mother's God."

—Selected

CRICKET

A Native American who lived on a reservation was visiting his cousin in a large city. As they were walking on the sidewalk alongside a busy city street, the man from the reservation suddenly said, "I hear a cricket." He looked around and finally stood up with the cricket in his hand. His city-born cousin was amazed that over the urban noise that surrounded them, his cousin had heard the tiny chirp of this insect. Seeing his cousin's amazement, the cousin from the reservation reached into his pocket, pulled out several coins, and dropped them. As soon as the coins hit the sidewalk, people stopped and looked toward the area where the two men were standing. The reservation-born cousin smiled and said, "People hear what is important to them."

Often things of eternal significance are overlooked because we are distracted by the din that surrounds us. Let us establish our priorities so we can hear the "still small voice" of the Lord.

—O. Daniel Stanley, Jr.
North Falmouth, Massachusetts



TIGER TRAINER

Several years ago, a well-known television circus show developed a tiger act performed “live” before a large audience. One evening the tiger trainer went into the cage for a routine performance with several tigers. The door was locked behind him; the spotlights highlighted the cage; the television cameras moved in close; and the audience watched in suspense as the trainer skillfully put the tigers through their paces. In the middle of the performance, the lights went out. For more than 20 seconds the trainer remained in darkness, locked in the cage with the tigers. The tigers could still see him, but he could not see the tigers. A whip and a small kitchen chair seemed meager protection under the circumstances. But he survived, and when the lights came on, he calmly finished the performance. In an interview afterward, he was asked how he felt knowing the tigers could see him, but he could not see the tigers. He said, “I just kept cracking my whip and talking to them until the lights came on. They never knew that I could not see them as well as they could see me.”

—Larry Trotter, *Laurel, Mississippi*

RESTORATION

Overlooking the California coast stands one man's monument to opulence. In the first half of this century, William Randolph Hearst, with the help of architect Julia Morgan, designed and built what has become known as Hearst Castle. The main house, called the Casa Grande, is over 73,000 square feet. Included on the property are 3 guest houses, the largest of which has 18 rooms. All of these homes are filled with priceless pieces of art. The oldest item is a 3,500-year-old statue of Sekhmet from Egypt. The rooms are filled with ancient tapestries, paintings, and vases from around the world. A 345,000-gallon pool, built at the cost of \$430,000 over 50 years ago, is but one of the pools at the base of the main house. The entire estate was opened as a state historical monument in 1958 after the death of Hearst.

What was originally intended to be a two-lane bowling alley is now an area of continual restoration. Priceless tapestries,



rugs, textiles, furniture, and marble pieces are stored there to await the restoration process.

How much more priceless the holy temple of God and His unique works of art. We are His workmanship and are in a continual process of being restored, especially those members who have been tarnished or ill-treated over time.

—Craig Froman, Springfield, Missouri

GOLIATH

At the end of a Sunday school lesson on David and Goliath, the teacher tested her class by asking: "How tall was Goliath?" Five-year-old Rebecca struggled for a moment to remember the right number, then raised her hand and confidently said, "I know—a little smaller than God." How right she was. If only we would remember when we face giants in our lives that God is bigger.

—Shelley Carl, missionary to Japan

THE MODERN GOOD SAMARITAN

A certain elderly woman went down from Atlanta to Birmingham and ran over a spike, which punctured her tire and left her stranded on the side of the interstate. After raising the hood of her car and tying a scarf to the door handle, she locked the doors and sat in the car, praying for the Lord to send help.

By chance there came by that way a limousine with a bumper sticker that read, "Smile, God Loves You." When the occupants saw the stranded woman, they

passed by in the far lane without smiling. Likewise, there came by a sports car with a CB radio. Its bumper sticker said, "Honk If You Love Jesus." The man who was driving passed by in the far lane without honking and without using his CB to tell the highway patrol about the woman's dilemma. But a certain workingman, as he traveled to his job, came to the spot where the woman was. When he saw her raised hood, her white scarf, and her flat tire, he had compassion on her. He stopped his truck—which had no bumper stickers—crossed the four-lane highway, and offered to change the tire.

When he had finished, the woman tried to pay him. He refused the money and said, "If my wife was stranded on the highway with a flat tire, I'd want some Good Samaritan to stop and help her."

Which, now, of these three was a neighbor to her that had a flat tire? Which of these three are you?

—The Pentecostal Ministry

FAITH MEANS LETTING GO

George decided to vacation in the mountains so he could explore and photograph their beauty. As he took pictures from the rim of a high mountain, he didn't realize how close he was to the edge. He slipped and fell down the mountainside. As he fell, he managed to grab onto a tree. He hung on for his life and began yelling for help. No one answered. He became exhausted and fearful that he would fall. He called out for help one more time and

waited anxiously for a response.

A voice spoke to him, "George do you trust Me?"

George answered, "Is that You, God?"

God said, "Yes, George. Do you trust Me?"

George replied excitedly, "Yes God, You know I trust You."

God said, "George, if you trust Me, let go."

George said, "What? Are You sure?"

God answered, "If you trust Me, let go of the tree."

George was silent for a few moments and then hollered, "Is anyone else up there?"

When our faith is tested, we must learn to *fall* into the capable and powerful hands of our loving God. That may mean letting go of earthly possessions, fame, or anything that provides false security.

—Jerry Newswander, Des Moines, Iowa

"CAN I SIT BY HARTLEY?"

Leave it to children in their innocence to interpret the deeper considerations of the Christian faith.

Hartley and Kristen are energetic 3-year-olds who were born days apart. Their parents are close friends, attending the same congregation.

One day Kristen asked her mother when they were going to heaven. Mom told her that when Jesus said it was time, "We will all go to heaven."

"Mom, are you and me going, too?" Kristen wanted to know.

"Yes, Mommy and Kristen will go, too," replied her mother.

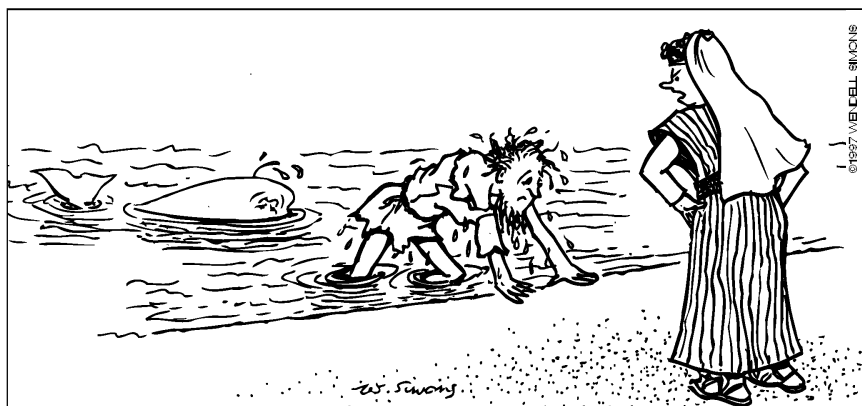
After a long silence, Kristen asked the most logical question a 3-year old could ask: "Can I sit by Hartley?"

In the small world of innocence, this child articulated what friendship, fellowship, and faith are all about. No theologian ever said it better.

—Larry E. Hatfield, Chickasha, Oklahoma

GOOD INTENTIONS

In the 1970s, a song entitled "Cat's in the Cradle" by Harry Chapin was a chart-topping hit. It told the story of a father who promised his son at various stages in the boy's life that they would spend time together and have a good time.



"Just where have you been for the last 3 days?"



Unfortunately, the father's good intentions never materialized. He was always too busy to give his son any attention. The son, though, still yearned to grow up and be just like his father.

The end of the song found the retired dad longing to spend time with his now grown-up son. But just like his dad years earlier, the son's busy schedule didn't allow him the opportunity to get together with the old man. The song ended with a reflective moment as the dad announced his realization that his son had grown up "just like me."

The words of this song were actually written by Harry Chapin's wife Sandy, out of her own experience of marriage to the immensely popular singer/songwriter. Even though Harry sang the song hundreds of times, its words ironically became a self-fulfilling prophecy of his own life. Recognizing this fact, he told his wife early in the summer of 1981 that he would slow down his torrid pace at the end of the summer concert schedule.*

Unfortunately, when Harry attempted to pull his disabled vehicle off of a Long Island roadway on a dark, rainy night in July that same year, a tractor/trailer hit his vehicle. He was killed instantly, leaving his family and good intentions behind at the age of 38.

Many people have good intentions about putting God first or spending more time with their family. Don't delay the fulfillment of your intentions or it may suddenly be too late.

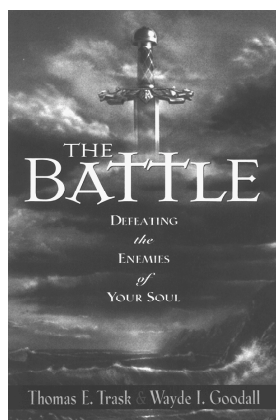
*Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 109.

—Chris Rainey
Fort Lee, New Jersey

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* Journal, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to Enrichment@ag.org



Thomas E. Trask and
Wayde I. Goodall
(Zondervan, 304 pp.,
paperback, \$12.95)



Kevin Graham Ford
(InterVarsity Press, 259
pp., paperback, \$12.99)

Only Believe! 180 Daily Devotions by Smith Wigglesworth

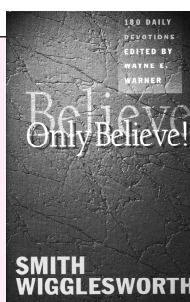
Compiled and edited by Wayne E. Warner (Servant Publications, 209 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

"Only believe; all things are possible," exclaim the words to one of Smith Wigglesworth's favorite songs. He lived those words with his whole life.

Only Believe is a collection of devotional excerpts from Smith Wigglesworth's sermons. It is the fruit of his daily search through prayer and Bible study to increase his faith so that he could help hurting people around him. His words have lost none of the power with the passage of time.

These invigorating spiritual teachings are presented in a daily devotional format.

—Staff review



The Battle: Defeating the Enemies of Your Soul

Thomas E. Trask and Wayde I. Goodall
(Zondervan, 304 pp., paperback, \$12.95)

Bizarre aspects of spiritual warfare have captured the imagination of charismatics and some Pentecostals. They claim that territorial spirits must be named and then defeated through public exorcism. Some suggest that demon spirits must be expelled before a congregation can begin worship. But finding a single instance in the Bible and then making it into a theological pattern is a misuse of Scripture.

The Battle is the most balanced Pentecostal treatment of spiritual warfare available today. It includes a survey of historical heresies that have been used by Satan to distract the Church from its primary mission. The power, the wiles, and the methods of Satan in the present dispensation are fully discussed. Contemporary demonic attacks on the institution of mar-

riage, on church unity, on God's Word, and on praying believers are considered in detail. Satan's attacks also come under the guise of intellectualism and/or religion: the occult, New Age and other non-Christian religions, 1-900 astrology phone lines, cult teachers and leaders, etc.

Actual reports of spiritual warfare are drawn mainly from Assemblies of God ministries (as reported in national publications) and can be readily validated. The book is full of testimonies of victory over demons in the ministry of the authors and others. Suggestions are provided on how to pray against Satan.

One chapter deals with the future role of the Antichrist and his empowerment by Satan. The final chapter asks the reader if he or she feels surrounded by satanic influences. By the help of the Holy Spirit, through prayer in line with the whole of Scripture, we can win the battle!

—Reviewed by Zenas J. Bicket, Ph.D.,
president of Berean University of the
Assemblies of God and chairman of the
Doctrinal Purity Commission,
Springfield, Missouri.

Jesus for a New Generation: Putting the Gospel in the Language of Xers

Kevin Graham Ford (InterVarsity Press, 259 pp., paperback, \$12.99)

Kevin Ford summarizes the worldview of the Xer generation, of which he is a member: "Our view of God is relative. Our view of religion is skeptical. Our view of commitment is wary. Our view of reality is survivalist. Our thinking is relational and feelings-oriented, not intellectual. We live in the now; we can't imagine eternity."

Generation X is identified as a peer group born between 1961-81. He laments: "Unlike previous generations, Generation X doesn't see itself as occupying a meaningful

place in creation under the guiding hand of a benevolent God. My generation seeks only to survive in a godless, mindless universe where there are no rules, no right, no wrong, no meaning, and no absolute truth."

Gen X is the first generation to be raised in a postmodern western world. As such their view of the world is far different than the common view of most leaders within the church. Ford proposes a new paradigm for evangelism to Generation X as *process evangelism*.

The medium for the gospel message must be an authentic, caring, and vulnerable messenger to Generation X, or the message will never have a chance to sink in. I would recommend without hesitation Ford's book to anyone wishing to make a bigger impact in reaching the twenty-somethings in America today.

—Reviewed by Harvey Herman, Jr.,
staff training representative,
Chi Alpha Campus Ministries,
Springfield, Missouri.

Evangelism That Works: How To Reach Changing Generations With the Gospel

George Barna (Regal Books, 180 pp., hardback, \$15.99)

Barna reaches his goal "to provide an empirical evaluation of what is and what is not happening in evangelism and church outreach in America today." As a layman, he shares his own journey to the awareness that every believer is called to be a witness and winner of souls.

A major benefit of the book is Barna's overview of various evangelistic strategies that are being used. He properly contends that success is not gaining decisions but producing growing converts firmly established in a body of believers.

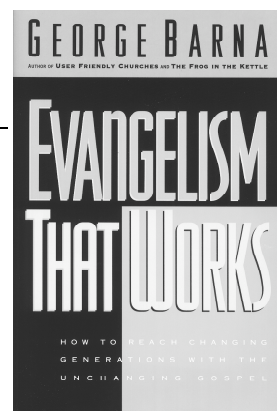
A strength of the book is Barna's understanding that different approaches must be

developed to reach different people groups in our society: "We must acknowledge the reality and devise strategies that will reach people where they are, not where we wish they were."

Barna feels major strategies in effectively communicating the grace of Jesus Christ to the Buster generation include: cell groups, social welfare-ministry opportunities, and lifestyle evangelism.

The book is of value to anyone, pastor or layperson, who wants to be challenged and assisted in developing an effective mix of outreach ministries for the local church.

—Reviewed by George Edgerly,
Springfield, Missouri.



George Barna (Regal Books, 180 pp., hardback, \$15.99)

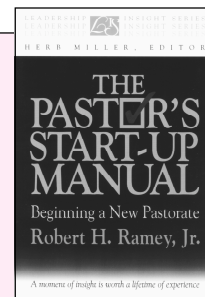
The Pastor's Start-Up Manual: Beginning a New Pastorate

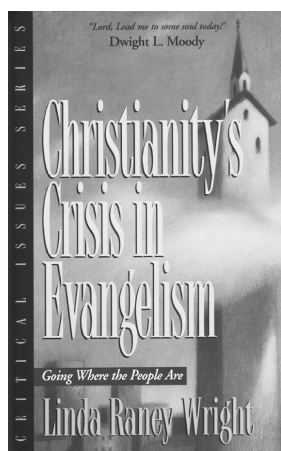
Robert H. Ramey, Jr., (Abingdon, 140 pp., paperback, \$11.95)

The vision and pace of ministry are established in the first months of any pastorate. Robert Ramey deals with some of the issues involved in moving to a new church. He answers: What are my priorities and what material should I include in the first few sermons? He addresses such topics as: learning the church's history, adding staff, and helping your family adjust to a new community.

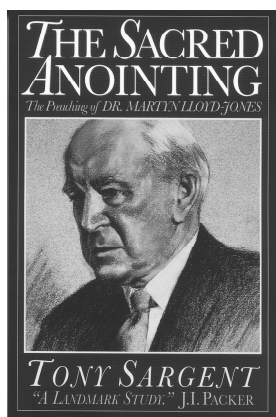
Although the book reflects the author's Presbyterian roots, many issues discussed transcend denominational settings and are worth reading for those who anticipate a pastoral move.

—Reviewed by John Lindell, pastor, James River Assembly of God,
Springfield, Missouri.





Linda R. Wright (*Vision House, 185 pp., hardback, \$14.99*)



Tony Sargent (*Crossway Books, 344 pp., paperback, \$13.99*)

Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

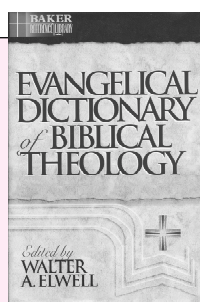
Edited by Walter A. Elwell (Baker Books, 933 pp., hardback, \$44.99)

This is the latest volume in the series entitled the Baker Reference Library. It presents "the theology of the Bible in the forms of expression chosen by the biblical writers themselves."

An effort is made to handle evenhandedly a variety of issues. Topics range from the theology of each of the books of the Bible to theological themes. The level of scholarship and clarity of style is notable.

Pentecostal readers will contest certain points. On the whole, however, the quality of this volume commends it. It would be a valuable addition to the minister's library.

—Reviewed by Robert A. Berg, associate professor of biblical studies, Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri.



Christianity's Crisis in Evangelism

Linda R. Wright (*Vision House, 185 pp., hardback, \$14.99*)

Linda Wright lands a hard-hitting blow to the holy-huddle mentality. This not-to-make-you-feel-good volume criticizes the narrow-minded church at large as being oblivious to the needs of a hurting world.

Nonbelievers are too frequently seen as villains in the current culture wars. Instead, they must be perceived as those for whom Christ died and must be sought out and targeted for relational evangelism.

Today's believers are distanced to sinners by intolerance, indifference, and narrow-mindedness. Rather than reaching out, the church is insulated and out of touch with nonbelievers.

Wright offers very practical suggestions to evangelize effectively. Chapter 8's focus on lowering the guard to "draw circles and not lines" is worth the price of the book. The

author insists upon self-scrutiny of attitudes—are believers inclusive or exclusive?

Her last paragraph summarizes the book:

"As we deliver the message, we should remember that many will respond if our prayers and lives are Spirit-powered and our message is loving, relevant, and convincing. If our listener is offended, let's continue to make sure that the true gospel is the only offense, not our life, our judgments, [etc.].... Together, let's clean house."

Those who are convinced that the Christian is to approximate the unlovely, harassed, and misguided, as Jesus did in His day, will be encouraged and helped by this book. If not the community of the believing, then who will communicate the only good news?

—Reviewed by Janie Boulware-Wead, coordinator, Hispanic Project 2000, Springfield, Missouri.

The Sacred Anointing: The Preaching of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Tony Sargent (*Crossway Books, 344 pp., paperback, \$13.99*)

This book is must reading for any minister serious about preaching. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones followed G. Campbell Morgan as the minister of Westminster Chapel in London in 1943. For the next 25 years the world was blessed by this man's anointed preaching.

When Lloyd-Jones talked about preaching, he constantly stressed the need for an anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the preacher. Both Lloyd-Jones' homiletics and hermeneutics were contingent on his pneumatology. His constant plea to preachers was that they be "borne along by the Holy Ghost." Unction—effusion of power—was the key, he maintained. Such unction would "lift the preacher out of himself and give him abilities which are not naturally his as he discourses."

Leigh Powell, one of Lloyd-Jones' contemporaries, observed: "At times, often toward the end of the sermon, he seemed to be hovering, waiting for something.... Sometimes the wind of the Spirit would come and sweep us and him aloft, and we would mount with wings like eagles into the awesome and felt presence of God."

Chapters 8 and 9 pursue the diagnostics of Lloyd-Jones' preaching. Simply put: How did he do what he did?

There are many good books about preaching; occasionally one is published that is great. This is such a book.

—Reviewed by Dan Betzer, senior pastor,
First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.

Inside the Soul of a New Generation: Insights and Strategies for Reaching Busters

Tim Celek and Dieter Zander with Patrick Kampert (Zondervan, 175 pp., paperback, \$9.99)

"Church is boring and irrelevant." Celek and Zander share their stories, insights, and strategies they have learned in ministering to Busters.

They suggest that this group of 46 million born between 1965–80 are pragmatists who want to connect with other people and experience community.

Busters are a spiritually hungry group looking for an ultimate purpose. They are hungry for a sense of fellowship with someone larger than themselves. However, they view the church as being judgmental and controlling. Busters are the first generation that has had very little exposure to any kind of church.

Celek and Zander say reaching out to Busters is like reaching out to a foreign culture. To truly communicate and gain their trust, your communication has to be real, rousing, and relational. Leaders must be vulnerable, transparent, and imperfect.

They strongly believe that with Busters we need to extend them fellowship whether or not they have experienced conversion. Busters need freedom to process.

They conclude with practical suggestions in working with Busters and ways to develop them as leaders.

The authors offer an accurate look at today's young people and explain strategies that are critical if the church is going to be relevant in communicating the gospel to this generation. Pastors 35 and older need to read this if they are serious about reaching and retaining young people in their congregations.

—Reviewed by Dennis Gaylor, secretary,
Chi Alpha Campus Ministries,
Springfield, Missouri.

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.

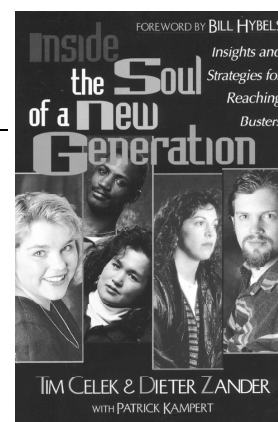
Signs and Wonders in Ministry Today

Benny Aker and Gary McGee (Gospel Publishing House, 128 pp., \$7.99)

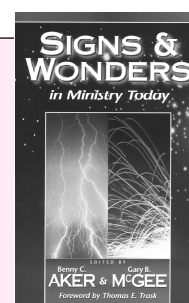
The Lord is refocusing the Church's attention upon supernatural deliverance ministry. An excellent study of signs and wonders in the Old and New Testaments is provided in this compilation by members of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary administration and faculty. It is followed by a historical overview of the miraculous in the Pentecostal movement with suggestions as to why there has been a decline. Also included are discussions concerning spiritual warfare and manifestations of the Spirit in the church.

The work concludes with practical advice to pastors and churches for dealing with the supernatural in their congregations.

—Reviewed by James K. Bridges, Assemblies of God general treasurer,
Springfield, Missouri.



Tim Celek and Dieter Zander with Patrick Kampert (Zondervan, 175 pp., paperback, \$9.99)



NEWS & RESOURCES



PHOTO: MEL SNYDER

Left to right: Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent; James K. Bridges, general treasurer; George O. Wood, general secretary; Sandra Clopine, coordinator, National Prayer Center; Charles T. Crabtree, assistant general superintendent.

NATIONAL PRAYER CENTER'S PERMANENT OFFICES DEDICATED

The permanent facilities for the Assemblies of God National Prayer Center were dedicated on Mar. 19, 1997, at the headquarters complex in Springfield, Mo. Present for the dedication service were Assemblies of God department and division leaders, Board of Administration, and executive presbyters.

Built under the direction of Larry Bull, headquarters buildings and properties administrator, the 1,375 square feet of space accommodates staff offices, a training room, and a phone room where 108 active phone volunteers pray with callers. Attached to the office facilities is an octagon-shaped prayer chapel. The chapel contains four recessed antique stained glass windows, offering a private, warm setting for intercessors and headquarters employees to gather to pray for the lists of needs phoned in.

General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask said the idea for the National Prayer Center "was really birthed in the early days of the Decade of Harvest" under the leadership of former General Superintendent G. Raymond Carlson. In his dedicatory prayer, Carlson thanked God "for the sacredness of this hour to set apart this portion of the headquarters building for prayer." Trask said, "I would rather dedicate this than any other facility I can think of, because there can be a continuation of revival if we continue to 'pray' the price."

Appointed coordinator of the National Prayer Center, Sandra Clopine said, "It's a

joy to know we have this prayer ministry not just here at headquarters, but with the satellite ministry, even the smallest churches can participate." She continued, "We are grateful for beautiful facilities, but they are nothing unless we have praying people—that's what it's all about. God has done this."

George O. Wood, Assemblies of God general treasurer, concluded the dedication ceremonies with this prayer: "Lord, we ask You to bless this place that lies at a corner in this building. May it always represent the way people turn a corner in their lives toward You. It lies on the first floor symbolically undergirding all the ministries that flow out of this headquarters. And throughout this Movement, may it remain, Lord, as the powerful resource foundation for all that You do in this church. We bless Your name."

The National Prayer Center received nationwide recognition in the Nov. 14, 1996, issue of *USA Today* for answering over 100,000 phone calls since its opening in Oct. 1994. Complimentary notice was given to the fact that the prayer center only asks for the first name of the caller and does not solicit donations.

A prayer room will be set up during the 47th General Council. The General Council Satellite Prayer Center needs volunteers to sign up to serve 1-hour segments on the phone lines. Times are available Wed. through Fri., Aug. 6-8, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

CONVOY OF HOPE

ChurchCare America's Convoy of Hope serves tens of thousands of people every

year with much needed groceries. More importantly, it plugs them into a local church where their spiritual needs are met from week to week.

A Convoy consists of an 18-wheel truck hauling 35,000 pounds of groceries into a poor neighborhood on a Saturday morning. A short gospel message is presented before Convoy workers and volunteers from the community distribute bags of groceries. Snacks are served to people waiting in line for groceries, and children are entertained in a play area that has a jumping gym, games, and pony rides. Groceries were given to over 96,000 people in 1996; nearly 24,000 responded to an altar call.

"The Convoy of Hope is about providing groceries and presenting the gospel to needy families," said Hal Donaldson, ChurchCare's founder and president. "It's thrilling to see Christians moving outside the walls of the church and rubbing shoulders with those who need hope."

Convoys are sponsored by local churches working with ChurchCare America to reach poverty-stricken communities. Seventy Convoys have been scheduled in 1997 in every region of the United States. Pastors who wish to host a Convoy are encouraged to call ChurchCare America at 417-869-8884.

The Convoy of Hope is an endorsed ministry of the Assemblies of God.

DIRECTOR FOR DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM NAMED BY AGTS

J. Melvyn Ming, D.Min., has been appointed director of the new doctor of ministry program and professor of church leadership at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. Pending approval from the accrediting bodies, the program will begin fall 1997.

Ming has served as senior pastor, Northwest District Christian education director, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary academic dean, and vice president for academic affairs at Northwest College of the Assemblies of God.

He received his master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and his doctorate from Drew University.

The doctor of ministry is the highest professional degree for those already successfully engaged in vocational ministry. The prerequisite for admission will be the master of divinity or equivalent and a minimum of 3 years of full-time ministry. Participants will have the opportunity to continue their education while remaining active in their local ministries.

Specific details concerning the D.Min. program will be available May 1, 1997. Applications will be available June 1, 1997.

THE COUNCIL TODAY BUNDLES PRESERVE MEMORIES

The General Council newspaper *The Council Today* is available in packaged sets for \$10 (postage and handling included) from the Office of Public Relations. Each set contains all six issues from the Indianapolis General Council.

These shrink-wrapped sets offer a means of saving a personal record of the 47th General Council without the pages yellowing in storage. Each issue contains news stories of events, seminars, and meetings as they occurred. District greetings and ministerial ads offer a broad historical glimpse of the Assemblies of God in 1997. To reserve your set(s), check rsc #13 and indicate quantity.

AGTS OFFERS MASTER OF DIVINITY EQUIVALENCY

To assist individuals without a master of divinity to prepare for admission into the doctor of ministry program, the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary is working with students to provide them with maximum credit for their experience and academic qualifications, also known as M.Div. equivalency.

An M.Div. or its equivalent and 3 years of ministry experience are required for admission into the D.Min. program. M.Div. equivalency is available to people who have accumulated some graduate hours. It is also available to those with a baccalaureate degree who want to pursue an academic track that will prepare them for admission to the D.Min.

"The M.Div. equivalency and course scheduling are flexible enough to make the program obtainable, despite busy

schedules. Each person receives a personalized evaluation in order to assess and maximize his or her academic background and experiential learning," said Dorothea Lotter, director of admissions and records. The in-service M.Div. program allows people to remain in full-time ministry while enrolled in the program.

There are other ways to complete an M.Div. equivalency. "Interested students can also take up to one-third of their M.Div. equivalency through independent studies or directed research," according to Gary Kellner, director of extension education.

"We will help you work on securing your equivalency without moving to Springfield or relocating to another seminary," Kellner said.

For a preliminary evaluation, submit a letter and copies of your transcripts to the admissions and records office.

AGTS GLOBAL MISSIONS TRACK COORDINATOR NAMED

Appointed missionary Barbara Cavaness has been named the first coordinator of the new Global Missions Track at AGTS.

Her duties include recruiting students into the program and coordinating the first ministry practicum slated for June 1997. "This is a tremendous opportunity for students headed for missions work. It gives them an opportunity to experience the mission field on a short-term basis while they are still in the learning process," Cavaness said.

Cavaness has been involved in missions since 1970, serving in West Africa, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore. She has been a visiting professor to the seminary since 1992.

She is currently working on her Ph.D. dissertation in intercultural studies and missions history at Fuller Theological Seminary. Other degrees include an M.Div. from Fuller, an M.A. from AGTS, and a B.A. from Central Bible College.

The Global Missions Track combines practical experience and international studies with an established, accredited master's degree. The GMT is composed of two phases and supplements any one of the programs offered at AGTS. The

practicum phase is much like an undergraduate internship where students live and work with Assemblies of God missionaries and receive course credit. The second phase involves study overseas in an approved institution.

AGTS INDEPENDENT STUDIES PROGRAM GUIDELINES UPDATED

The Association of Theological Schools has changed the guidelines pertaining to the number of hours that can be earned through independent studies. ATS has approved students to take one-third of their degree requirements through Independent Studies Program. Previously, students were allowed to take one-sixth of their course requirements at AGTS through the ISP.

The ATS requirements were relaxed to accommodate more nontraditional students. The new requirements will benefit those who need to take more classes by correspondence because of schedule problems that make it difficult to travel here or to another extension site," said Dennis Waldrop, independent studies program manager.

"This change will help our foreign missionaries who find it difficult to navigate degree programs because they are only in the country 1 year out of 5," said Gary Kellner, extension education director. "Now they can do more graduate work while living overseas."

AGTS ON-LINE ENROLLMENT

Since going on-line April 1996, the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary has worked to create an informative and functional site. The site now includes:

- Application for admission
- Extension Education Site Reservation form
- Extension Education First-Time Registrants form
- Extension Education Scholarship form
- Extension Education Tuition Discount form
- Information on financial aid, links to other sites, and the extension class schedule through 1997.
- Basic information about the Seminary, its faculty and administration,

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and the course catalog.

• Latest editions of *Liaison* and *RAP-PORT*.

The site is not just one-way communication. Leave E-mail for faculty, administration, or staff. Go to <http://www.agts.edu> to check us out.

BENEVOLENCES HARVEST FESTIVAL DATES SET FOR OCT.

Hillcrest Children's Home in Hot Springs, Ark., has scheduled its annual Harvest Festival Oct. 3,4. Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home in Kansas City, Mo., will hold its Harvest Festival Oct. 10,11.

Church groups and individuals are invited to attend these annual events. For directions or more information call Hillcrest at 501-262-1660 or Highlands at 816-924-6565.

Harvest Festival needs lists for both Homes are available by checking rsc #3 and indicating quantity.

AMA DAY IS NOV. 23

Nearly 500 retired or disabled Assemblies of God missionaries, pastors, and evangelists are receiving monthly financial assistance and/or help with medical bills from Aged Ministers Assistance.

Sunday, Nov. 23, is Aged Ministers Assistance Day. This is a time for congregations to express in a tangible way their appreciation to those who made the Assemblies of God what it is today.

Free AMA Thanksgiving Day bulletin inserts are available for your church. Check rsc #1 and indicate quantity.

COLLEGE COMMITMENT DAY MATERIALS AVAILABLE FREE

College Commitment Day is Sept. 14. Plan now to highlight the 17 endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary schools. Over 10,000 students enroll in Assemblies of God higher education each year.

Theme posters (22 by 28 inches), bulletin inserts, and prayer cards are available from the Christian Higher Education Department to assist churches in highlighting the 17 colleges, institutions, and seminaries Sept. 14 or any day throughout the year. The full-color posters and bulletin inserts are ideal for year-round

use. The attractively illustrated theme, "It's not just what they know...It's WHO they know," emphasizes the importance of Christ-centered education. The bulletin insert includes a statistical report on the number of Assemblies of God pastors, missionaries, and other leaders who attended Assemblies of God postsecondary schools. The prayer card encourages prayer and financial support of our schools. All three items are free. To order check rsc #8 for poster, #9 for bulletin insert, and #10 for prayer card; state quantity needed.

Also available free is the third edition of the *Assemblies of God College Guide*, a 32-page resource highlighting the 17 endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary schools.

The third edition includes the most current information from each school: tuition costs, application deadlines, an overview of the local community, job availability, and financial aid. A comprehensive majors chart lists the degrees offered. Handy business-reply postcards can be returned directly to the schools to request additional information. Request copies for your church library and youth group by checking rsc #7 and stating quantity.

RV VOLUNTEERS CONVENTION DATE SET

The Division of Home Missions MAPS Department has announced that the 11th annual National RV Volunteers Convention is scheduled for Oct. 5-10, 1997, at Lake Williamson Campground in Carlinville, Ill.

According to Joseph A. Filancia, DHM MAPS field representative, this year's theme will be "Laborers Together With God."

Among the special activities are an auction, a banquet, a field trip, nightly services, and workshops. Topics covered in the workshops include: construction, RV repair, evangelism, estate planning, first aid, and arts and crafts. Various projects will also be presented. Over 600 volunteers are expected to attend this year's convention.

More information is available from the DHM MAPS Department.

OCT. 26 IS BENEVOLENCES CHRISTMAS SUNDAY

Christmas is not a happy season for everyone. The national Benevolences Department helps older retired ministers, boys and girls at Hillcrest Children's Home, and young women at Highlands Maternity Home feel loved and remembered by giving them a Christmas gift.

Your church can have a part in brightening their holiday by sending a designated Christmas offering to the national Benevolences Department. Christmas needs lists for these ministries are available by checking rsc #2 and indicating quantity.

U.S. ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCHES OPEN IN 1996

According to the Assemblies of God Division of Home Missions New Church Evangelism Department, 244 Assemblies of God churches opened in the U.S. in 1996.

The top 10 district openings were: Pac. Lat. Am., 24; Span. East., 15; Gulf Lat. Am., 12; S. East. Span., 12; N. Calif.-Nev., 10; N.J., 9; N.C., 8; N. Tex., 8; Ohio, 8; Pen. Fla., 8; S. Calif., 8; Miss., 7; N. New Eng., 7; Ariz., 6; La., 6; Pa.-Del., 6; S. Tex., 6; S. Mo., 6; N.Y., 5; Potom., 5; Rocky Mtn., 5; Ala., 4; Cen. Lat. Am., 4; Ga., 4; Hawaii, 4; Ind., 4; Iowa, 4; and S. New Eng., 4.

New Church Opened forms filed with the New Church Evangelism Department reported: 90 were opened by the pastor; 52 were started by a group of believers; 20 were planted by the pastor and members; 28 were opened by the district/section; 20 were birthed by the pastor and district/section; 7 were mothered; 1 came from independent status; and 1 was initiated by the Division of Home Missions Invasion 39 program. The remaining churches did not indicate their means of establishment.

New Church Evangelism Department reports showed that 183 churches closed with a net gain of 61 new churches for the Assemblies of God, making a total of 11,884 churches in the U.S.

FALL BRINGS LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST BANQUETS

Light-for-the-Lost fall banquets will

soon be under way. Held during the spring and fall seasons, the banquets are the primary method LFTL uses for raising funds for evangelistic literature. The banquets feature missionary speakers, opportunities to pledge and give to evangelism literature projects, and prayer for missionaries around the world. The family atmosphere generated at these gatherings provides an opportunity to involve your entire church in missions.

Districts scheduled to hold a banquet tour, and area LFTL representatives are:

Ala.	Billy Glover	334-279-7172;
	Jerry Perkins	334-937-8526
Alaska	Jeff Nelson	907-683-2302
App.	Joe Burnside	540-989-9764
Ariz.	Eugene White	520-775-5377
Ark.	Jerry Bell	501-568-2194
Ga.	Dennis Clanton	912-745-3903
Hawaii	Rod Highsmith	808-964-5888
Ind.	Joe Livesay	317-743-5587
Kans.	Steve Dow	913-234-5555
Ky.	Lee Williams	502-351-4655
	Dan Mattingly	502-877-5683
La.	Bill Courtney	504-926-0076
Mich.	Rob Burkhart	810-737-3800
Minn.	Dale Tollefson	612-332-2409
Miss.	PT Palmer	601-373-1943
Mont.	Len Ventling	406-259-9600
Nebr.	Ed Canfield	402-895-3932
N.J.	Peter Giordano	609-665-3215
N. Dak.	Mark Burke	701-222-3000
N. Tex.	Mel Surface	817-284-4856
N. Calif.-Nev.	Steve Brown	916-273-1497
	Richard Marriott	916-646-1753
N. Mo.	Mark Rittermeyer	816-736-5331

N. New Eng.

	Greg Randall	207-878-2777
N.W.	Bob Unruh	206-640-0222
	Delmer Westerfield	206-742-5593
Ohio	William Gross	330-823-6457
Okla.	Lindell Warren	405-478-1696
	Chuck Freeman	405-789-3892
Oreg.	Brian Mercer	541-459-2587
Pac. Lat. Am.	Louis Ortiz	818-968-5088
Pa.-Del.	Thomas Rees	717-795-5921
Rocky Mtn.	Loyd Hoskins	303-863-4402
	Don Terpinitz	970-241-3422
S. Dak.	Dwayne Pederson	605-372-4228
S. Idaho	Steve Issak	208-220-1248
Wis.-N.Mich.	Otto Wegner	414-783-8910

Free LFTL bulletin inserts are now available. The insert is a fund-raising piece that targets the effort to distribute Scripture portions in China. LFTL bulletin inserts are useful for banquets, LFTL emphasis services, mission conventions, or in any setting where missions work is promoted.

For more information call 1-800-988-0292.

SACRED ASSEMBLY II AND GENERAL COUNCIL AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES AVAILABLE

The Michael Cardone Media Center has audio and video tapes available from the Sacred Assembly II and General Council conferences.

Sacred Assembly II was hosted in Springfield, Mo., in Mar. 1997 by The

General Council of the Assemblies of God. The audio and video tapes include powerful messages from John Kilpatrick and Steve Hill from Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Fla.; Gary and Jimmy Grogan; Thomas Reid; and Thomas E. Trask. These services were filled with spiritual restoration, fasting, and prayer.

Tapes from the 1997 Indianapolis General Council are also available. Featured speakers for the Council were Janie Boulware-Wead, Paul Walker, Thomas E. Trask, Doug Clay, Samuel Rijfkoed, David Grant, and Charles Hackett.

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Check rsc #16 for an order form of tapes from the services and sessions for the 1997 Sacred Assembly II and rsc #17 for an order form for the 1997 General Council.

A PSALM IN YOUR HEART

A Psalm in Your Heart is a collection of George O. Wood's inspirational writings on the Psalms.

During a difficult time in his life, Wood found strength as he journeyed through the Psalms. He shares that inspiration with others through weekly columns in the *Pentecostal Evangel* and now through the pages of *A Psalm in Your Heart*. Volume 1 includes 75 devotions covering Psalms 1 through 75. Future volumes will include additional Psalms.

A Psalm in Your Heart, volume 1 (304 pp., paperback, \$12.99), is published and distributed by Gospel Publishing House, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Mo., 65802. To order, call 1-800-641-4310 and ask for item #02-0685.

NEW RELEASES FROM THE SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY SERIES

Radiant Life announces the release of two new titles in the Spiritual Discovery Series available for use in the fall 1997 quarter.

Letters From Prison by Lauren W. Orchard provides a systematic examination of the apostle Paul's letters to the churches of Ephesus, Colosse, and Philippi and his personal letter to Philemon. Orchard helps those who study this resource discover God's design for their personal relationships with God and with those whom they fellowship. He illuminates practical applications from the biblical text.

Journey to Integrity by Michael H. Clarendau proclaims the importance of character in the Christian's life. Clarendau challenges readers to determine areas of character weakness and to purpose, with God's help, to remedy these character deficiencies. He challenges readers to reflect Jesus in their lives. *Journey to Integrity* is a walking companion providing a plan for those who desire to embark on the journey toward a life of integrity.

Letters From Prison and *Journey to Integrity* join 16 titles already released in the Spiritual Discovery Series. Consult your Radiant Life curriculum order form for a full listing and prices.

VALLEY FORGE ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT

The Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Don Meyer, Ph.D., as the new president of Valley Forge Christian College (Phoenixville, Pa.). Meyer was ordained as an Assemblies of God minister in 1978. He and his wife Evie pastored Franklin Assembly of God in Franklin, Pa., from 1968-76. Meyer was a full-time faculty member at North Central Bible College (Minneapolis, Minn.) from 1976-79 and has served as vice president of academic affairs at North Central for 17 years. Wesley Smith resigned as president Aug. 15, 1996. Earl Baldwin, D.Min., served as interim president.

THE PENTECOSTAL PASTOR: MANDATE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Pentecostal Pastor: Mandate for the 21st Century, compiled and edited by Thomas E. Trask, Wayde I. Goodall, and Zenas J. Bicket, provides Pentecostal ministers with a practical guide to pastoral life.

Leading Pentecostal pastors deal with 84 topics including: priorities in the pastor's life, the pastoral marriage, building relationships in the church and community, expository preaching, the unique struggles of today's pastor, handling stress and burnout, preparing for revival, working with church boards, managing conflict, planning for church growth, Pentecostal preaching, and Spirit-anointed worship.

The Pentecostal Pastor: Mandate for the 21st Century (640 pp., hardcover, \$34.99) is published and distributed by Gospel Publishing House, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Mo., 65802. To order, call 1-800-641-4310 and ask for item #02-0686.

FRIENDSHIP BOOKLET AVAILABLE

The Office of Public Relations has released a newly designed version of *Friendship*, the Assemblies of God

visitation booklet. *Friendship* sports a fresh new style and includes all new testimonies, photographs, illustrations, and layouts. It is a colorful, contemporary single-issue magazine designed to promote the ministries and message of the Assemblies of God and your church.

The Office of Public Relations initially released *Friendship* in 1990 selling over a million copies. *Friendship* (item #739501) may be purchased through GPH by calling 1-800-641-4310.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL CONDUCT PAMPHLET AVAILABLE

The Office of Public Relations has completed a new *Perspectives* document in its Assemblies of God Information Series. *A/G Perspectives—Relationships and Sexual Conduct* covers topics such as: dating and marrying unbelievers, sexual relations, marriage, family, leadership in the home, abuse, divorce and remarriage, celibacy, homosexual relationships, counseling and psychology, thought life, friendships, infertility, and birth control.

A/G Perspectives—Relationships and Sexual Conduct (item #739194) can be ordered by calling 1-800-641-4310. Individual samples sell for \$1.

PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL WELCOMES NEW MANAGING EDITOR

The *Pentecostal Evangel* is pleased to welcome Ken Horn as its new managing editor. Horn is an Assemblies of God ordained minister. He is a skilled editor and administrator and brings to the *Pentecostal Evangel* years of ministry experience, having served as a college instructor and senior pastor. His last pastorate was in Ashland, Oreg.

PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL SPECIAL EDITIONS AVAILABLE

Copies of the *Pentecostal Evangel's* special Visitors Edition are still available. Introduce your congregation and visitors to the Assemblies of God by using this attractive, colorful edition. Articles include: "What We Believe"; "Who Is the Assemblies of God?"; "Why Be a Member of the Assemblies of God?"; "What the Assemblies of God Means to Me." Call

1-800-641-4310 and ask for issue 69-6639 (minimum order of 50, 20 cents each).

Pastors are encouraged to continue taking advantage of the evangelism editions (the first issue of each month). These full-color, 16-page gospel tracts are effective soul-winning tools, ideal for outreaches and discipleship. Call 1-800-641-4310 to subscribe or to order extra copies of any issue.

EXCITING FALL EVENTS FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRIES AND MISSIONETTES

Thanks to the financial help of Assemblies of God women, kitchen personnel at the Assemblies of God Retirement Home in Santiago, Dom. Rep., no longer spend 6 hours every day heating bath water for its residents. The home also has a new large-capacity refrigerator, 30 chairs, and needed repairs for 2 upright freezers.

Purchases such as these are made possible by the annual contributions of women, churches, and interested individuals on Etta Calhoun Day, Sept. 19. Named for the founder of Women's Ministries, the Etta Calhoun Missions Fund provides missionary medical kits and indoor furnishings and equipment for home and foreign missions and benevolent institutions owned by the Assemblies of God.

Coins for Kids, the Missionettes Etta Calhoun Missions Fund, benefits children around the world by providing furnishings and equipment for orphanages, camps, and schools. Missionettes can contribute to the Fund in conjunction with the annual Nationwide Missionettes Sleepover, Sept. 26, 27.

In 1996, Women's Ministries gave nearly \$62,000 to the Fund, and Missionettes gave more than \$68,000. Goals for 1997 are \$65,000 and \$75,000 respectively. The ultimate goal is to increase the Fund so that all needs can be met.

Theme and promotional materials for the Nationwide Missionettes Sleepover/Coins for Kids are sent to churches reporting on the Annual Church Ministries Report. *Woman's Touch* and *Club Connection* carry program and

fund-raising suggestions.

Check rsc #19 to receive a complimentary copy of the "National Women's Ministries Projects" brochure and other Etta Calhoun Missions Fund information. Check rsc #20 for more information on the Missionettes Nationwide Sleepover/Coins for Kids.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERS CONFERENCE

The national Youth Department will host the National Youth Leaders Conference Sept. 22-24 in Dallas, Tex. The theme of the conference will be "Absolutely!" Conference site is the Sheraton Grand Hotel at the DFW International Airport. Ministry guests include Monty Hipp, Doug Clay, Tom Greene, and Josh McDowell. All youth leaders are encouraged to attend. Registration fee is \$90 per person if paid before Aug. 15, and \$115 after. Housing costs are extra. Combine this conference with our first-ever interdenominational National Campus Ministries Conference for \$159 if paid by Aug. 15, and \$190 after. For more information and to obtain registration forms, contact the national Youth Department at 417-862-2781.

NATIONAL CAMPUS MINISTRIES CONFERENCE

Hundreds of youth pastors, parachurch ministry directors, lay leaders, and students from a variety of denominations will converge on Dallas, Tex., for the first-ever National Campus

Ministries Conference Sept. 24-27 cosponsored by Youth Alive and First Priority of America. The theme of the conference will be "Because Time Doesn't Wait," emphasizing the urgency of mobilizing student missionaries, local churches, parachurch ministries, and entire communities to reach every high school student for Christ. Conference site is the Sheraton Grand Hotel at the DFW International Airport. Ministry guests include Monty Hipp, Josh McDowell, Paul Fleishman, Benny Proffitt, and Barry St. Clair. Registration fee is \$90 per person if paid before Aug. 15, and \$115 after. Housing costs are extra. Combine this conference with our National Youth Leaders Conference for \$159 if paid by Aug. 15, and \$190 after. For more information contact the national Youth Department at 417-862-2781.

TEENS IN CRISIS WALLET CARD

Students from your church rub shoulders with hurting peers daily. The *Teens in Crisis* wallet card is a resource to assist them as they counsel friends who are grappling with issues such as depression, eating disorders, and pressure to become sexually involved. Shaped like a credit card, this handy list of toll-free telephone numbers points students to crisis counseling lines such as Highlands, Rapha, and a ministry for those who have been sexually abused. Five cards per sheet for \$1 each can be ordered by calling 1-800-641-4310, item #731-321.

With Christ

Spencer Ahpeahtone Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Clarence G. Collins Cottonwood, Arizona	Lucille Hathaway Kansas City, Kansas	Ralph C. Lutter Roseville, Minnesota	Hyman I. Specter Victorville, California
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In Closing

BY THOMAS E. TRASK

The church is growing at unprecedented rates. It's growing because of Spirit-led evangelism—an escalating hunger to reach the lost for Christ.

Jesus made a *declaration* when He said, “All power is given unto me” (Matthew 28:18). This *declaration* statement is recorded in the laws of heaven, and every demon in hell understands what it means. It is official, and there is no one greater than the One who announced this truth.

The One who has “all power” also stated, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (verse 20). He has *dominion* power, and His power goes with us wherever we minister in His name. Every nation on this planet is under His authority. He lifts up, and He brings down. He opens and shuts doors. Just as God brought down the ungodly communist walls of Eastern Europe in November 1989 where we now have missionaries preaching, teaching, and leading in these nations; He can do it again throughout the world. All power is in His hands. We can go into these once-closed countries knowing that He will go with us in might and in power.

His *domain* of power is heaven and earth. The Great Shepherd of the Church said that “all power” has been given Me over the domain of heaven and earth. Our Lord, our Leader, and our precious Savior who will never leave us or forsake us has provided for us everything we need to reach this domain called earth. We are His children—a part of His church. His domain is our domain. We can walk by faith knowing that every corner on this planet is His domain.

We must *do* it. What is the Lord saying to us? “Church, don't worry. I have all power.” What a responsibility and


privilege we have in going and *doing* His will. We go with the knowledge that He will accompany us. He will supply all the resources we need. He will tear down the strongholds, cause hell to flee, and cause the enemy to run.

There never has been a time like the present. The Assemblies of God does not lack the resources. It does not lack the personnel. It does not lack the message. It does not lack the power. All that we need, we have. Now, we must have the will to do the command. This lost world is waiting for someone to tell them about our wonderful Savior.

At the end of his last speech, General William Booth said: “While women weep, as they do now, I'll fight; while little children go hungry, I'll fight; while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now, I'll fight; while there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets, where there remains one dark soul without the light of God—I'll fight! I'll fight to the very end!”¹ This is the kind of tenacity we desire as we finish the task our Lord has given us.

Everyday I hear of another testimony of what God is doing in the U.S. and on the foreign field. Over the years in God's faithfulness, He has raised up numbers of those who believe what Jesus said in Matthew 28. These leaders are willing to pay any price and do whatever it takes to respond to the tremendous open door that we have today. With incredible passion they go, and they are in turn a catalyst for the cause of world evangelism. It seems that some are charging at those who are lost with reckless abandonment, by faith, believing that the King of kings will help them every step of the way. And God is honoring their faith

with tremendous results.

I believe with all of my heart that the job is doable. We have the technology, and God has given the Assemblies of God dynamic, gifted people. There is no question that the end of the age is near when that great harvest will be brought in. Let me say to this Fellowship: With God's help, we can win the world; we can finish the task; we can completely obey the command. 

ENDNOTE

1. George Sweeting, *Great Quotes and Illustrations* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Publishing, 1985) 107.



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