

# ENRICHMENT

SPRING 1998

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A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY





# M<sup>inistry</sup> Matters

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL

Corrie Ten Boom said, “Be united with other Christians. A wall with loose bricks is not good. The bricks must be cemented together.”<sup>1</sup>

In America, at least, it’s difficult to find time—or should I say take the time?—to meet with other Christians for fellowship. Oh, I know we love after-church informal meetings around some restaurant table. But getting together consistently for fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and encouragement is hard work.

There are lots of reasons why we don’t make time for others. We live in a fast-paced, fast-food, quick-cash society. We’re always in a hurry. Many of us do what we need to do as fast as we can and then move on to whatever is next. I’m not saying this is all wrong, but it certainly takes away from getting to know people, finding out what their needs might be, or being accountable to one another.

Many people think that if they slow down and get to know an individual or a small group of people, they will not accomplish as many “things.” They run on adrenaline; they live for stress. Listening to others is too difficult and time-consuming. May I submit that we need other people. Being part of a small group forces us to talk, listen, pray together, study our Bibles, and care for one another.

Ronald J. Sider said, “For the early Christians, *koinonia* was not the frilly ‘fellowship’ of church sponsored, biweekly bowling parties. It was not tea, cookies, and sophisticated small talk in the fellowship hall after the sermon. It was an almost unconditional sharing of their lives with other members of Christ’s body.”<sup>2</sup> When we have this kind

of fellowship, it is rich, healthy, and serves as the cement that holds friendships together.


Jesus did not choose the pace that many of us are acquainted with. Much of the time He worked with small groups. He sent out 72 disciples (Luke 10). He spent 3 years pouring His life into the Twelve. When He wasn’t with the Twelve, He was often with only three (Peter, James, and John). There is no question that Jesus could have covered more territory and preached to more people, but as the Son of God, He accomplished far more by pouring His life into a few—those first Christians who acted like Him and did what He did. The Creator knew this small band of disciples needed fellowship, mentoring, and time. That’s the way we are put together.

May I encourage you to find a way to start a small group ministry in your church. Find godly people who will lead small groups and will pour their lives into those who choose to attend. Work personally with leaders. Develop a strategy to create a small group ministry in various locations around your community.

This type of program will be a way for visitors or new converts to become acquainted with people in your church. It will become a haven for some, a place of learning for others, and a place where people can make safe friendships in an increasingly dangerous society. It will help you close the backdoor to so many who come to church just a few times. People need relationships, and they can find wholesome ones at your church.

The church leaders who have written articles or been interviewed for this issue have seen small group ministry

succeed over the decades. If you had the opportunity to speak to them, they would say every church should have small group ministry. They are passionate about the subject.

Whatever you call these groups—whether choir, Sunday school, youth group, or Bible study—fellowship must happen. “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27, NIV). 

## ENDNOTES

1. Edythe Draper, *Draper’s Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1992), 217.
2. Ibid.

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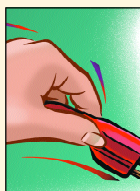
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INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

# I Ask the Superintendent



**T**he landscape in which the church chooses to carry out its mission in the world should be characterized by three key elements: (1) The church is to be a nurturing agency where believers grow in their relationship to Jesus Christ. (2) It should provide avenues of ministry where unbelievers are invited to come into the presence of the living Savior. (3) It is characterized by a system that develops and reproduces new leaders.

*The concept of small group ministry is as old as the day of creation. A small group approach to ministry provides the church with the basic pattern it needs for the spiritual formation of its members, the winning of lost souls to Christ, and the development of new leadership.*

*In this quarterly interview, General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask reflects on his years of pastoring and the important place small groups had in the life of the church.*

## WHY SHOULD PASTORS CONSIDER DEVELOPING A SMALL GROUP MINISTRY IN THEIR CHURCH?

I want to speak from the perspective of a pastor, not the general superintendent. When I was pastoring, we had a care group ministry in our church, and it was a valuable tool.

Through small group ministry, pastors can multiply their abilities by training the leadership of the care groups to become an extension of the pastor. Small group ministry is an excellent way to disciple people, particularly new converts and those who are new to the congregation.

One of the major difficulties in any church is for people to feel a part of the Body, particularly if they have a tendency to be somewhat reserved or withdrawn. All those who attend church need fellowship and a sense of belonging. The small group setting provides that opportunity. It is a marvelous tool for pastors, and they need not be afraid of small group ministry if it is conducted and handled properly. I recommend that our pastors consider this avenue of ministry in their churches.

## HOW DID YOU CHOOSE SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP?

I selected leaders who were faithful to the church. You can't have somebody leading a care group who is not faithful to church services. You can't have somebody who is not in submission to the pastor. You can't have somebody who is not supportive of the pastoral staff and the church's vision. It is incumbent that lay leadership be accountable to the pastor.

## HOW DID YOU BEGIN YOUR CARE GROUP MINISTRY? WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

I began by looking for people with leadership qualities and the qualities I just mentioned. Then I formed a pastor's group with lay leaders where I could pour myself into them. I directed their training as to what would be permitted in the small group setting. After the training period, they in turn started new groups.

Our care groups were guided by material I furnished. Leaders usually taught from outlines



***Through small group ministry, pastors can multiply their abilities by training the leadership of the care groups to become an extension of the pastor.***

taken from the previous Sunday's messages so they could review and discuss how the messages were applicable to the group members' lives.

These new group leaders were under pastoral leadership and trained directly by the pastor. I not only spent time with our care group leaders training and mentoring them, but we had gatherings just for fellowship and affirmation.

**IN VIEW OF THE VARIOUS SIZES OF CHURCHES, DO YOU THINK PASTORS NEED TO SET UP A FORMAL SMALL GROUP MINISTRY OR JUST ASSIMILATE EXISTING GROUPS?**

Both methods should work. Every church can make that determination. What really needs to happen as the church grows is for pastors to continually break the congregation down into groups so that everyone is cared for—whether it's choir members, ushers, prayer intercessors, or Sunday school workers.

The No. 1 goal in the local congregation is that everyone is given opportunity for ministry. God gives gifts and ministry to every member of the body of Christ, not just to leadership. So we must help individuals find their place of ministry. In their ministry setting, they are with others of similar interests, and natural fellowship is the outgrowth.

Churches in large metropolitan areas need to also consider having neighborhood small groups. Even though they may commute to church, people should be able to meet in their neighborhoods or in a neighboring community for fellowship, prayer, Bible study, and testimony.

**HAVE SMALL GROUPS CREATED PROBLEMS IN THE PAST FOR CHURCHES?**

Years ago we used to have home prayer meetings. Many pastors had unwholesome experiences as a result of those group meetings. The reason for this is that many times someone would come to those home prayer meetings and take over. There wasn't any designated leadership. There wasn't any structure. There wasn't anybody in charge. Consequently, some things might have been said

or some things took place that were not in order. People and leadership were soured on home prayer meetings. That's unfortunate.

We've learned from those experiences so that today we can have a prayer meeting; we can have a Bible study; we can have a time of testimony; we can have a fellowship group. The key is that the group is in a controlled setting, not in an uncontrolled setting.

**DON'T MANY PASTORS FEAR THAT SMALL GROUP MINISTRY WILL SPLIT THEIR CHURCHES?**


It's true that pastors are afraid some leader will take control and divide the church, cause a church split, or at least take some members away from the church.

That's why the pastor needs to choose carefully the leadership for small groups.

**HOW DO SMALL GROUPS CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH AND STABILITY OF A CHURCH?**

We have to close the "backdoor" and keep people from leaving the church. Church growth experts emphasize the necessity of assimilating converts and visitors into the church. One way is to get people involved in a small group. Then they will be "plugged" into the local church body.

People must have a sense of belonging. Accountability brings that about. Let me explain. When care group leaders are given the names of new converts or visitors, it becomes their responsibility to follow up on them, before another Sunday rolls by, and invite them to become part of a care group. The assimilation begins taking place immediately. The group leaders and members demonstrate their responsibility to love, care for, and disciple new converts and those new to the congregation. That's most meaningful to people as they become part of the Body.

Small group ministry is a New Testament principle. If it is structured and organized properly and the pastoral staff is careful, I believe small group ministry can be a tremendous blessing to the church and the pastor. It was to me. 

***I not only spent time with our care group leaders training and mentoring them, but we had gatherings just for fellowship and affirmation.***









# Making the Small Group Transition

*For 30 years I've watched churches experience the miracle of dramatic life change that occurs when the Holy Spirit works through outreach-minded, caring small groups.*

BY DALE GALLOWAY

**C**hristianity Today calls it "The Great Small Group Takeover." Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow describes it as a "quiet revolution" happening across North America. Experts on church renewal usually link some form of small group vitality to the revivals and breakthrough churches they study.

Today's small group movement has already impacted many churches in your community. Congregations old and young, large and small have vibrant small groups. Their widespread influence has been documented in everything from Gallup polls to sales trends at local Christian bookstores.

For 30 years I've watched churches experience the miracle of dramatic life change that occurs when the Holy Spirit works



through outreach-minded, caring small groups. I've seen Portland, Oregon, touched for Jesus Christ, where an eventual network of 500 trained lay pastors at New Hope Community Church provided effective, ongoing pastoral care to more than 5,000 people.

This return to New Testament community has shown up with many different faces—from Serendipity Groups to generic follow-on small groups that start spontaneously after Promise Keepers rallies. It doesn't matter what you call "social kinship units," as Peter Wagner describes them, but it does matter whether your church is experiencing their many benefits. Do you know how to help your church take part in what God is doing? Is your church experiencing the positive transformation that can happen as one-another ministry ripples through the body of Jesus Christ?

***I recommend 1 model group for every 100 people in worship.... Go public only after you have entered a second generation of group life.***

Small group ministry is not an option if people are to be cared for, nurtured, and equipped for ministry. If you follow the listed positive transitions in your church, you will be amazed at what God will do. These 14 principles have been tested and proven—often with exciting results—in hundreds of charismatic and Pentecostal churches.

## **1. SHARE YOUR VISION WITH KEY LEADERS.**

Why do you want to lead your people into a strong small group environment? What do you hope God will do? What needs in your church and community can be met through regular gatherings of 6 to 10 people?

How do you cast your vision for small groups? By spending time with your leaders. Expose them to your dreams by the stories you tell in the pulpit, the books you cite, the seminars you suggest for them to attend, the topics you select for board retreats, and one-on-one conversations.

By sharing your vision, you will help bring your main influencers on-line. They will become, as church consultant Lyle Schaller says, "your allies for introducing planned change."

## **2. HONOR YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORY AND TRADITIONS.**

What role have small groups played in shaping the congregation you presently serve? You might discover cottage prayer meetings or some other form of small group that played a significant role in the past. If so, emphasize the then-and-now parallels. You can lead into the future by building on the past.

More likely, you'll need to follow the pattern of how trees grow. The growth rings on a tree indicate that the newest growth always occurs near the outside bark.

I learned this principle while pastoring a more traditional church in Kansas. I was initially unable to get the membership interested in small groups because they were schooled on the midweek prayer meeting model. So I went into town and started an evangelistic Bible study with some businessmen.

A handful came to faith in Christ, and some of them began attending our church. The next group of church leaders came out of those newcomers. Their contact networks opened the door to even more new growth—a neighborhood group, a ladies group, a married couples group, and other groups targeted at specific needs and life stages. In the process, I left the traditional church members in place while I wrapped the new growth around them, just like the growth pattern of a tree.

To bring new people into church, follow the analogy of tree growth: Start at the edges. These people are the most disconnected anyway. Involving them doesn't require you to change much, just to do something more, such as adding a new track.

## **3. TAKE AN INVENTORY OF THE GROUPS, RESOURCES, AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU ALREADY HAVE.**

Does your church have a cluster of women who meet regularly for prayer? A team of youth sponsors who gather for fellowship and planning? A long-standing care circle? A home Bible study? Try to improve these groups or start new groups out of them.

Be careful to start new groups only when you have a leader ready. Lots of people may not be strong teachers, but they might be strong facilitators. Build leaders, and they will build ministries.

***I taught all our staff to work through groups. Consequently, the care and evangelism continued to expand and multiply.***

Don't aim for classroom teaching settings, which center around the task of information transfer. Small groups must be relationally focused to have maximum effectiveness.

#### 4. WORK WITH YOUR PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE.

People congregate in small groups by common ground, common interests, or common needs. Effective pastors know how to find and promote those connection points.

I spoke recently with a pastor who knew his people well enough to design different kinds of groups for them. His

*To bring new people into church, follow the analogy of tree growth: Start at the edges.... Involving them doesn't require you to change much.*

young adults needed relational groups, but his older people were afraid of being forced to "share." He patiently took his widowed members by the hand and said simply, "Go find a friend." Now that the widows have bonded, their group is the most important hour of their week.

#### 5. PLAN WHERE YOU WANT THE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY TO BE 5 YEARS FROM NOW.

What percentage of the church will be involved in a group? How many newcomers from the community will your small group network draw in each year? How many leaders will you need in the next 6 months? How many apprentice leaders? What level of impact will you have on the unchurched?

Prayerfully set faith-stretching goals that can be met only with God's clear intervention.

#### 6. BREAK YOUR MASTER PLAN INTO MANAGEABLE STEPS.

The more clearly you can see how to get from here to there, the better you'll be able to lead your people.

At New Hope Community Church, we continually spoke of reaching Portland's unchurched thousands for Christ. Our vision was inspiring, but it wasn't specific enough for people to say, "I can do that." You'll be amazed how much your church can accomplish through a number of manageable, incremental steps.

#### 7. WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO IN THE NEXT 3 MONTHS.

Be specific. What steps can you take to go to the next level of small groups in your church?

Try any of these possibilities:

- Preach on the one-another commands of the New Testament.
- Lead your main boards in a study of Christian community.
- Take some of your key influencers to a conference on small groups.
- Feature testimonies in your church newsletter of lives that have been touched through a small group.

#### 8. EXPAND WITHOUT THREATENING.

Don't plan to do away with anything. Instead, add more options. Avoid the phrase, "We are going to cancel...." It's better to say, "We are going to offer an additional track."

*Don't aim for classroom teaching...*

*Small groups must be relationally focused to have maximum effectiveness.*

After attending one of my 20/20 Vision seminars, a pastor from California decided to go home and start a new track of Tender Loving Care groups. In the meantime, he supported and encouraged the existing track of closed Bible studies. He invited people in the Bible study groups to switch to

### *Nine Keys to Healthy Small Groups*

Small groups need a solid foundation and basis for measuring the potential and success of their life together. These nine characteristics are crucial to the growing health of long-term Christian groups. Short-term groups may flourish with just a few of these guidelines. But to build consistent and extended-life groups, you must pay attention to all of these dimensions. A healthy group has:

1. *A clear purpose/covenant.* Each group must have a focused reason to exist.
2. *A good beginning.* If a group does not have a positive beginning, it will probably not last long.
3. *A helpful leader.* Healthy groups are led by helpful, caring leaders.
4. *Improved communication patterns.* Good human communication does not come naturally.
5. *Worthwhile biblical faith content.* Studying the Bible is a primary curriculum for small groups.
6. *Growing trust and care.* A noncaring, nontrusting group soon dies.
7. *Centeredness in Jesus Christ.* Christian groups must center in the study, model, life, patterns, purpose, and character of Jesus Christ.
8. *A task, ministry, or mission.* Long-term groups need a Christian mission beyond themselves.
9. *Positive decision making.* Healthy groups go beyond being governed by directive leaders who make all the decisions. Rather, they make joint decisions.

—Garth Icenogle. Adapted from *Ministry Advantage* (May/June 1996), 1; published by Fuller Theological Seminary, Division of Continuing and Extended Education, 135 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91182. 626-584-5290. Copyright 1996. Used by permission.

the Tender Loving Care groups, and about half did. The others were free to choose.

He projected it would take several years for the existing track to discontinue. He later told me that the fade-out was complete in 3 years.

## 9. BEGIN WITH A MODEL GROUP OR GROUPS.

This is perhaps the most important of the 14 transition principles. I've helped hundreds of churches of all sizes launch a small group ministry by beginning with a model group. I recommend 1 model group for every 100 people in worship. In 4 or 5 months, move the model group members into second-generation groups. Go public only after you have entered a second generation of group life.

A pastor from Canada whose church had 20 people in attendance asked me, "Can I do small groups?" I challenged him to start two groups himself and begin to train small group leaders. In 15 months he reported having 6 groups with 60 people total.

## 10. TAKE TIME TO MAKE CHANGES GRADUALLY.

I heard of a pastor who during his first months of ministry in a church in Alaska

moved the piano to the organ side of the sanctuary. Members pointed out that the plaque on the piano to Grandpa Moses, who seemed to be related to everyone in the church, was not showing. They asked him to move the piano back, and he refused. Friction escalated, and he moved to another church.

Five years later he went back to conduct a wedding. He noticed the piano was next to the organ. "How did you get the people to move it?" he asked.

"They didn't," replied the current minister. "Every week for 5 years, I moved it 1 inch at a time."

This leader understood how to bring about change. Do what you can with what you have where you are.

## 11. BUILD FLEXIBILITY INTO YOUR SMALL GROUP SYSTEM.

The principle of flexibility represents the main difference between the U.S. and Eastern and African countries. If you will encourage variety—in the kinds of groups offered, meeting times, locations, and even child-care options—you'll have many more groups.

## 12. LOVE PEOPLE INTO THE GROUP LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

One of my favorite stories involves a handicapped boy who knocked over a rack of shoes at a department store. The store manager yelled at him, demanding that he pick up his mess. The boy didn't move. Then his older sister crawled down on the floor and started putting

# Questions To Ask When Forming a Small Group

1. Why do we want to have a small group?
2. What do we personally want to get out of this group?
3. What goals do we want to adopt as a small group?
4. What day will we meet? How many times a month?
5. What time will we meet?
6. What will be our commitment to start and close on time?
7. Will we meet at the same place?
8. What ingredients do we want included in our group? What ingredients does the church desire?
9. What will make this group successful and worth the time involved?
10. How will relationships among the members be built?
11. How will the group use the Bible in their life together?
12. What part will prayer occupy in the group?
13. What level of commitment and work will we have? How hard do we want to work?
14. What pattern of leadership will we use? What pattern is the church asking us to use?
15. Who should take responsibility to help the group achieve its goals?

—Bob Stone is senior pastor of Hillcrest Chapel, Bellingham, Washington.



Jeremy's technique for evangelism wasn't particularly effective until a friend from his small group clued him in to the "Binaca Factor."

*People congregate in small groups by common ground, common interests, or common needs. Effective pastors know how to find and promote those connection points.*

the shoes away. The boy soon joined her. When all the shoes were back in place, she looked at the manager and said, “Mister, you gotta love him into it.”

By comparison, don’t assign people to groups. Instead, help them connect. Suggest that they try a group. Model your own joy at being part of a group.

### **13. BUILD A STAFF COMMITTED TO SMALL GROUP MINISTRY.**

Work toward the goal of having all your pastoral staff focus on leadership development. Over time, gradually build your staff into people who will build their ministries by using small groups.

In 1984, New Hope Community Church had 50 groups. I almost made a big mistake. I began looking for a pastor to lead

our groups. Had I brought in such a person, our group life would have become just another ministry. Instead, I taught all our staff to work through groups. Consequently, the care and evangelism continued to expand and multiply.

### **14. GIVE PRIORITY TO PRAYER AND THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

According to Ralph Neighbour, 19 of the 20 largest churches in the world have small group systems—whether home based or Sunday school based—with a strong emphasis on prayer and the Holy Spirit.

The church’s success in Korea is not by accident. It’s far more than an organizational system; it involves an intentional dependence on the Holy Spirit and a priority of prayer.


### **SUMMARY**

I once heard missionary E. Stanley Jones say: “In a small group, everyone becomes a teacher, and everyone is taught.” I would dare to add that today’s maxim for healthy groups is even more empowering: In a

small group, everyone becomes a caregiver, and everyone is cared for.

Even smaller churches can move beyond a single group identity by starting multiple groups. Larger churches can greatly increase their care level by starting a small group system.

Small groups help any church break out of confinement created by time and space limitations. What hour can you get everyone together? You can’t. With small groups, your church can transition to expanded ministry, greater evangelism, and deeper discipleship.

The priesthood of believers best becomes a reality in a small group. 

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*For more information on his 20/20 Vision seminars and resources call 800-420-2048.*







INTERVIEW WITH ROBERTA HESTENES, RON MCMANUS, OMAR BEILER, UWAIFO EGBE, AND LARRY MANUEL

# Community Building Through the Small Group Model

Omar Beiler



Uwaifo Egbe



Ron McManus



Roberta Hestenes



Larry Manuel

*People who sit passively in the worship service have the opportunity to discover and use their ministry gifts in a small group context.*

—Hestenes

*A* culture in transition will always challenge its institutions and organizations to creatively redesign or repurpose themselves to meet the rising tide of change. The effects on the human condition from an ever-changing society is forcing the church to rethink the real meaning of community.

*One of the most effective strategies for building community in the body of Christ is through small groups. The ministry of small groups is providing the avenue where believers and non-believers are able to build dynamic, transforming relationships.*

*Enrichment editors visited with several*

*small group facilitators. Their years of experience in the small group arena will provide readers with practical insights on how to build community through the small group model.*

## HOW CAN THE CHURCH BENEFIT BY HAVING A SMALL GROUP MINISTRY?

**MCMANUS:** All churches have small groups whether they know it or not. People relate and develop relationships with people like themselves. I've talked to pastors who say, "Well, in our church there are 100 people, and we don't have small groups." My answer is, "Yes, you do. You just don't have them organized." People link



their lives with other believers or they won't stay in your church.

Two benefits of small group ministry are: (1) People develop relationships with others in the Body. (2) They discover their spiritual gifts and how they can use their God-given talents to minister within the Body and through the church to touch the world.

If we can get people on track in those two areas within 6 months of their attendance, they'll usually have long-term involvement with the church.

**HESTENES:** I see several benefits to having a small group ministry. Small group ministry:

- *Helps the church be the church*—a community of committed, caring Christians learning how to love each other so the world will recognize Christ as the Messiah.

- *Helps people discover and use their ministry gifts.* People who sit passively in the worship service have the opportunity to discover and use their ministry gifts in a small group context. Then the group often encourages members to use their gifts in a larger context.

- *Equips leadership for the congregation.* In a relatively safe environment, the small group setting is a natural center for leadership development for the whole congregation.

- *Makes faith personal.* In a small group nominal Christians are drawn by the Spirit to come alive in faith.

- *Provides the ideal setting for members to learn to trust and minister to each other.* Members are more likely to witness outside the group if they have expressed their faith inside the group.

- *Is the best way to assimilate new members.* Small groups can be wonderful ministry groups. I even encourage our committees to function as caring communities while they do their tasks.

**MANUEL:** At Vienna Christian Center, the major benefit is *growth*. After only 1 year, our cell group ministry doubled.

**BEILER:** A second benefit is *leaders are trained*. We concentrate on how many leaders we are training and developing, not on how many people are in our church. We find that as we train leaders and start new groups, our groups multiply. People will always come as they follow their leaders to church.

**EGBE:** A third benefit is *relationships develop* based on the love of God. This is so important to those who are from other countries. Cell groups strengthen our relationships with each other and with God.

**BEILER:** A fourth benefit of cell group ministry is the *opportunity for people to be involved*. It's really exciting to see people find their place of ministry. Some of our groups have two interns, a group leader, a worship leader, and a host and hostess. In a group of 15 people, we have 5 or 6 people who are actively involved in ministry.

#### WHAT MIGHT BE SOME CONCERNS OF PASTORS THAT WOULD KEEP THEM FROM DEVELOPING SMALL GROUPS IN THEIR CHURCH?

**HESTENES:** I've identified five concerns listed from least important to most important.

1. *Time pressure.* Small groups only thrive when you take time to prayerfully recruit, develop, train, and encourage leaders. This is multiplication ministry, so it seems very time demanding at the beginning. What most pastors do not realize is that in the long run they have equipped lay leadership to assume significant ministry in the congregation. With so much to do and too little time, many pastors feel small group ministry is nice but optional.

2. *How to start.* Pastors are uncertain about how to get started, how to structure groups, and what kind of materials to use. They may not be trained in small group ministry and are not sure what to do and how to pull it off.

3. *Lone Ranger ministry.* For whatever reason, the excessive individualism in our culture and the pedestal-syndrome that some pastors have make them feel that small groups or intensive Christian community are good for other people but not something they themselves either need or can make the time for.

4. *Power and control.* Pastors are afraid that if laypeople connect meaningfully with each other, without the pastor present, they will somehow lose their authority and control of their churches. Pastors are nervous about bad teaching and negative influences. Since they can't directly control the sessions, they often distrust lay leadership.

My favorite story on this is about a pastor who sent me a proposal for small group ministry in his

*People link their lives with other believers or they won't stay in your church.*

—McManus

church. He proposed 2 small groups a year for his church of 1,000 members. I contacted him and asked, "Why do you have only two small groups a year?"

He answered, "Because that's all I can go to." His distrust of laity in a sense said, "If I'm not directly involved, it shouldn't happen."

Of course, that attitude inhibits growth, inhibits the use of spiritual gifts, and restricts laity ministry. Our task as pastors is to equip the saints for the work of ministry, not to do all the ministry ourselves (cf. Ephesians 4).

### *In a small group nominal Christians are drawn by the Spirit to come alive in faith.*

—Hestenes

5. *Biblical view of community lacking.* Scripture requires depth of relationship among Christians—a community of mutual love, of confessing sins to one another, of forgiveness, and of bearing one another's burdens. Most churches above 200 members need healthy small groups as a way to realize biblical community. Acts 2:42–47 shows the biblical balance between the temple's large gathering for worship, praise, and teaching and home meetings

for fellowship, prayer, the breaking of bread, and taking care of needs.

### **HOW DO SMALL GROUPS STRENGTHEN A CHURCH?**

**MCMANUS:** In 16 years we went from 288 to 3,000 people in attendance at First Assembly in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. During those years, I tried to implement the Ephesians 4 model of ministry—to release the Body to function as God intended. When that happened, growth and strength were the result.

The breakdown in home and family is forcing the church to become the family unit for many people. Small groups function as extended families.

There are three types of people that are a part of any given church: (1) task-oriented people; (2) cause-oriented people; and (3) community-oriented people. Pastors should know what percentage of each type they have in their congregations.

A majority of people are community oriented. They are relational, and the church must provide the relationships they are seeking.

**BEILER:** When I came to Vienna, I looked back over the church's history and the vision of its founder Wayde Goodall. His

vision was for every district to have a cell group.

I really didn't understand much about cell ministry. Because of all the different cultures and groups from all over the world, I recognized immediately my inability to adapt and communicate with each of these cultures. The real strength of our church comes from finding key leaders from our main cultural groups and working with them and training them to be able to minister in small groups to their own people.

### **WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A HEALTHY SMALL GROUP?**

**HESTENES:** Let me give you my list. Healthy small groups have:

- *Committed, trained leaders.* You need at least two committed, trained leaders (or couples) per group who share the responsibilities—one hosts and one leads the discussion.

- *A clear purpose and commitment.* You need a clear sense of why the group exists. The group should have specific goals and know how to accomplish its purpose depending on the kind of group—whether a Bible study, discussion, prayer, ministry, or mission group.

I encourage relatively short first commitments—8 weeks is typical. People should have the freedom to get out of a group without ruining friendships or feeling guilty. At the end of 8 weeks, determine if God wants the group to stay together, add new members, or split into two groups.

### *If we develop a church structure that is made to protect against failure, we also insulate ourselves against possible success.*

—Beiler

- *Interactive communication skills.* People need to learn how to listen and how to share. Leaders should be trained to facilitate group discussion for maximized participation.

- *Some kind of content or ministry focus that is outside the experience of the group*







*members.* This helps avoid the group becoming self-centered and feelings oriented. Groups need faith content. Many groups use the pastor's sermon or Christian materials as a basis for discussion.

- *A Christ centeredness.* Healthy groups give adequate time for prayer, nourishment of spiritual disciplines, worship, and praise. There must be time for seeking the Lord.

**BEILER:** Since our church includes many congregations and cell groups, we insist on the same vision and the same goals. Within that context we try to release people to do ministry. For our cell groups to remain healthy, we have three essential components: *prayer, discipleship, and evangelism.*

If we develop a church structure that protects against failure, we also insulate ourselves against possible success. We recognize the challenges and problems. Many pastors are afraid someone will teach false doctrine or cause division. But if we train people and keep our goals in front of us, we can run together with small group ministry.

**MCMANUS:** Healthy groups must be caring groups. The small group dynamic provides people opportunity to open their lives to one another.

Two things are important: (1) Group members must maintain confidentiality—commitment to one another. (2) Group members must continually reach out to others to avoid becoming ingrown. We urge our leaders to continually invite people into

their small group knowing that as the group grows new groups will start. There has to be an evangelistic flavor that continues to permeate small group programs if they are to remain vital and healthy.

#### HOW HAVE YOU USED THE SMALL GROUP MODEL TO DEVELOP DIFFERENT KINDS OF GROUPS OTHER THAN BIBLE STUDIES?

**MCMANUS:** We established ongoing Life groups and short-term groups—turning point groups, homes of honor groups, and various groupings that bring people together for specific reasons (marriage enrichment, single-parent support, substance abuse recovery, etc.). We probably had 20 to 25 short-term groups going at any given time. Longer-term groups often spun off the short-term groups and became ongoing Life groups.

Our congregational groups were made up of people who did not want to move into a small group but were committed to the choir, their Sunday school class, or a ministry group such as Royal Rangers or Missionettes. Their relational needs were satisfied through belonging to a ministry group.

Rather than trying to force people into small groups, our goal was to have them use their ministry gifts and be established in a support relationship system with other people.

#### HOW CAN PASTORS GO ABOUT STARTING SMALL GROUP MINISTRY?

**HESTENES:** Pastors of churches 200 or less in attendance need to start with

leadership training and begin two or three covenant groups—groups that have personal sharing, interactive Bible study, prayer, and worship. They should not expect everyone in the church to suddenly want to join small groups. Pastors can also enrich existing task-oriented groups to become more relational.

When a church breaks the 200 barrier and is growing, newly planted, or looking for renewal, then small group ministry is crucial. The small group structure enables a church to accommodate thousands.

Pastors of small, stable, long-time congregations will probably find it difficult to reorient people. But small groups will be a great outreach strategy to help their church grow.

*Small groups provide opportunity for people to live out their faith as well as express it.*

—McManus

Instead of just rearranging members, pastors need to recruit and train leaders to invite unchurched people to participate in their church's small group program. Reach out; don't just reshuffle the membership.

The basic stages of small group ministry development are:

- *Pray.* Pray that God will provide the leadership. I have sometimes prayed as long as 6 months for God to put together the right training group—ideally 8 to 14 people. If you are conducting larger training seminars, be sure to subgroup for part of the training.

- *Prayerfully recruit.* I ask potential leaders: "Would you be willing to consider leadership in a small group? It would involve participation in training and then assisting or leading a small group for at least a year depending on the kind of group." It's really a 2-year commitment recruiting invitation.

*We work through a process of starting Bible studies in targeted districts so that we can reach the Filipino community in Vienna by the end of 2000.*  
—Manuel

Your invitation needs to be prayerful and personal—not a bulletin announcement. Personal recruitment is crucial for choosing those for the training group.

- *Train.* My preferred model is to have a training group in which the trainer, who can be a gifted layperson, pastor, or associate pastor, has had group experience of

some kind. During training, prospective leaders should practice leading sample group sessions.

- *Invite people.* New group leaders are responsible for inviting people to participate in their small group. The pastor supports the small group leaders through church publicity and recruiting efforts.

The ideal group size depends on the type of group but normally ranges from 8 to 14. You might think a group of 20 is doing well, but usually only 4 people are participating with the other 16 just sitting there.

- *Work in teams.* If you have 14 people in a particular training group, then 5 small groups will usually be started as a result. (Sometimes those in training are not quite sure they are ready to lead a group.)

- *Don't ask for firm leadership commitments up front.* Don't promise potential group leaders a group until you know their giftedness.

**MCMANUS:** Start simple:

- Share the vision for small group

ministry with leaders of the church.

- Spend time equipping leaders for small group leadership.

- Start with the new people coming into the church.

- Start small with just a couple of groups.

- Use short-term small group materials.

**WHAT WAS YOUR PROGRAM FOR LEADING GROUP MEMBERS INTO MINISTRY? HOW DID YOU TRAIN LAITY FOR LEADERSHIP?**

**MCMANUS:** We designed an entry program for people to find their place of ministry. We taught a 13-week class on Sunday mornings, which was a requirement for church membership. Out of the membership class, we formed an 8-week spiritual gifts program of small groups. Our goal was to link new members with other people in the church and help them discover and use their ministry gifts.

Then at the end of the 8 weeks, the group could spin off and become a



long-term small group. Some people stayed with the small group program; others moved into congregational groups. Our goal was to get them connected.

We also developed our own training materials for leaders of our Life groups. Each leader mentored an assistant leader providing potential leadership for additional groups as the ministry grew.

***Cell groups strengthen our relationships with each other and with God.***

***—Egbe***

**BEILER:** In Austria, we have followed through on the model started by our church's founder. Our leaders attend an annual retreat in the mountains to focus on the goals of our ministry and specific aspects of leadership. Then we have monthly VHS (Vision, Huddle, and Skilled training) meetings. A big part of what we do is require all our cell leaders to select an approved intern to work alongside the leader. New leaders then receive on-the-job training through a mentoring approach.

**EGBE:** Let me share an example of our method of leadership development. A Muslim colleague of mine in OPEC received Christ about 2 years ago. For a year I led a little group in his house every Sunday morning teaching him and his family members how to pray and study God's Word. He finally came to our church for worship services and later joined a cell group. After a year we asked him to lead a cell group. His group grew from 4 people to over 15 people in 4 months.

**HOW DOES VIENNA CHRISTIAN CENTER ORGANIZE ITS SMALL GROUP MINISTRY?**

**BEILER:** We feel people can most effectively reach people who are similar to themselves—speak their language, eat the same food, think as they do. This is not to exclude but to target people. Anybody can go to any cell group at anytime. But since

we are a multicongregation church with separate Filipino, African, Ethiopian, French-speaking, and German-speaking services, we need a cell ministry that targets different people groups.

Our cells are organized ethnocentrically. Each of these groups set their own goals, but we all work together. We describe ourselves as one church with numbers of congregations and many cells.

**MANUEL:** For example, our Filipino congregation has 12 groups, and we are

praying for 10 more cell groups by the end of the year.

We work through a process of starting Bible studies in targeted districts so that we can reach the Filipino community in Vienna by the end of year 2000. Besides our present target group leaders, we have 15 leaders in training.

**EGBE:** We are doing basically the same thing with Vienna's African community. We have 8 cell groups at the moment and should have 12 by the end of the year. Our

vision is to reach Vienna's Africans and bring them into the body of Christ.


**BEILER:** We include four elements in every cell group session: welcome, worship, Word, works.

#### DO YOU SEE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AS AN EXTENSION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL OR ITS EVENTUAL SUCCESSOR?

**HESTENES:** We need both, but the younger generation is much more needy relationally and is more likely to respond to the small group structure as their primary faith structure, in addition to the worship service.

This means Sunday school needs to be more relational, and small group ministry needs to have more content. If the Sunday school doesn't have some kind of interpersonal community building and honest sharing, it becomes too abstract, theoretical, and polite—not deep caring. And if the small group doesn't have content, over time it becomes self-absorbed and doesn't really lead people deeper in their walk with Christ.

**MCMANUS:** Small groups provide opportunity for people to live out their faith as well as express it. Many people who think they need pastoral counseling, for

example, just need someone to listen to them and talk to them. We minister the life of Jesus to one another. In the dynamic of small group ministry, God can bring healing and wholeness into people's lives out of the relational setting. Small group ministry is the laboratory in which sanctification is being worked out. 

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*Omar Beiler is an Assemblies of God foreign missionary and pastor of Vienna Christian Center, Austria.*

*Uwaijo Egbe is a Nigerian who works as a mechanical engineer for OPEC and is an elder and zone leader for Vienna Christian Center, Austria.*

*Larry Manuel is a member of the pastoral staff, an elder, and leader of the Filipino congregation at Vienna Christian Center, Austria.*













# SMALL GROUPS: LOYALTY BUILDERS OR

**THERE IS A BROAD  
UNDERSTANDING  
THAT THE GIFTS OF  
THE SPIRIT MUST BE  
ACCOMPANIED BY  
THE FRUIT OF THE  
SPIRIT.**

BY CARL F. GEORGE

**A**ssemblies of God churches tend to be where the action is. From Phoenix to Brooklyn, their congregations have gained widespread admiration for finding innovative ways to advance God's kingdom. Whether church planting or conversion growth, quite often an Assemblies of God church is setting the standard.

For example, the world's most prominent small group advocate is an Assemblies of God Korean pastor and chairman of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, Dr. David Yonggi Cho. Also, many high-visibility Assemblies of God churches in the United States have had significant success with small groups.

Yet there are identifiable reasons why the advantages Dr. Cho pioneered have been slow to take root in U.S. and Canadian Pentecostal churches. I've observed a five-stage adoption process of small group ministry among Pentecostal churches in North America.

## STAGE 1: SMALL GROUP NECESSITY

Dr. Cho's ideas for forming small groups arose out of being physically unable to carry the normal pastoral responsibilities of a church that was growing at an incredible rate. He provided guidance to his volunteers and staff and realized that if he could pray, teach the Word, and create a structure that empowered laypeople, then his organization

would be encouraged and helped. Indeed, during this time, Yoido Full Gospel Church's pastoral care units kept the congregation together between Sundays.<sup>1</sup>

As the ministry grew, Dr. Cho was careful to provide supervision to the lay workers. He trained staff members to spend most of their time in the field working among the cell leaders, each resourcing several dozen groups. Their task was to assure the health of the cells through the vitality of the lay leaders.

Over the years he initiated a variety of leader-training strategies. The constants were that he never withdrew empowerment from his group leaders, and he vested enough professional staff to keep them supported and encouraged. Dr. Cho's model offers a remarkable example of trusting lay leaders and providing them with sufficient resources and materials.

He recognized that John Wesley's lay-led class meetings were an 18th-century parallel to what he was trying to do. Both Cho and Wesley suggested that these small communities of faith imitated the house church pattern of New Testament times.

Wesley's class meetings displayed a wide range of spiritual-gift practice that many would identify as charismatic or Pentecostal. Historical descriptions include the phenomenon of glossolalia and swooning (known today as being slain in the Spirit), presumably under the influence of the Holy Spirit.









# LOYALTY BUSTERS?

## **STAGE 2: ATTEMPTED CORRECTIONS**

By 1979, as Dr. Cho was passing the 100,000 mark for average weekly worship attendance, numerous Pentecostals in Korea shunned him.

He worked with U.S. Southern Baptists, who respected his congregation's evangelism and size, and a limited number of American Pentecostals. He shared his cell-system concept on several U.S. tours. Planeloads of Assemblies of God leaders and other Pentecostal pastors flew to Korea to see what he was doing.

Unfortunately, the implementation of Dr.

### **SMALL GROUPS MUST ASSURE EACH INDIVIDUAL'S ENJOYMENT AND CONNECTION WITH THE LARGER CONGREGATION.**

Cho's ideas was not as simple as organizing a training time for group leaders and hiring staff to supervise them. A deeper problem existed that needed to be solved.

Newly converted enthusiasts sometimes failed to use wisely the fruit of the Spirit with the gifts of the Spirit, not knowing that the prophetic gift depends on discernment by the greater Body for authentication. They usually needed to go through a season of maturing where they learned how Body life works.

Consequently, pastors took an element of risk when lay leaders were allowed to display more zeal than wisdom, when they were

encouraged to hear directly from God, and when they were empowered to take a group of people into their living room for fellowship and spiritual nurture.

In situations such as these, immature group leaders relished having their desires for authority endorsed by what they considered Holy Spirit revelation. The notion of using gifts within a context of submission to one another and under proper discernment was not one they readily applied to themselves. The net result was numbers of well-intentioned pastors who launched small group systems faced disharmony and division in the name of God.

Yet the widespread acceptance among denominations of the need to experience God and embrace a wider range of spiritual gifts shows the overall success of the Pentecostal movement in influencing the Kingdom.

## **STAGE 3: NEW ERA OF MATURITY AND RESPONSIBLE LOYALTY**

Within the Pentecostal and charismatic family today, there is a broad understanding that the gifts of the Spirit must be accompanied by the fruit of the Spirit. Growing Christians see the benefit of voluntary, self-submission to a group for discernment to avoid "the prophet's own interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20, NIV). In a properly administered small group system, division and disharmony are not the threat they have been in the past.

**THE INCREASING PATTERN TODAY IS TO DEFINE THE ROLE OF GROUP LEADERS AND MAKE THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR RECRUITING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THEIR GROUPS.**





Pentecostal and charismatic churches are at a new place of wanting to prevent loss and dropout due to schism. Pastors are experiencing excellent results by positive loyalty formation. They are properly training group leaders in their roles as resource personnel in ministry partnership with the church staff. The usual result is loyalty.

The bigger issue today is preventing backdoor losses. Studies show that a major source of dropout comes from not having a care system in place. A church loses far more people through the cracks of inattention and neglect than through a small group leader taking his or her group away to join the church down the street or to start a new church.

**GROUP MEMBERS GO FROM THE  
WORSHIPING CONGREGATION BACK INTO  
THE SMALL GROUP AS A SAFE PLACE TO  
DISCUSS THEIR PERSONAL CHALLENGES  
AND VICTORIES, TO PROVIDE  
LOVE AND CARE, AND TO  
USE THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

A small group leader may genuinely sense a call to launch a new work and seeks the blessing of the church's pastoral leaders before doing so. Others might cloak their rebellious spirit under the banner of an apostolic call. In such cases, congregations might do well to let them go.

The increasing pattern today is to define the role of group leaders and make them responsible for recruiting the membership of their groups. If a division occurs, the losses to the church are not as hurtful as if it had handed these leaders a ready-made class.<sup>2</sup>

Small groups must assure each individual's enjoyment and connection

with the larger congregation. Group members go from the worshiping congregation back into the small group as a safe place to discuss their personal challenges and victories, to provide love and care, and to use their spiritual gifts. This cell-celebration rhythm leads to maximum church health.

## METACHURCH AND SMALL GROUPS

As I study churches, one of my goals is to find what God is blessing and then stand close to it. After more than a decade of interviewing church leaders and testing various observations, I began using the term *metachurch* to describe an intensive way of focusing on what is most critical in the body of Christ, much like an x-ray machine enables new perceptions of the human body.

Metachurch is fundamentally a set of perceptual tools. It enables a church to see what it's working with, especially the kinds of groups it has and the ways group leaders connect. It provides lenses that help a church staff give greater attention to leadership development through small groups. It speaks to pastoral priorities as well as church structure. Consequently, metachurch is not a thing ("We're a metachurch") so much as a process ("We're using metachurch thinking to increase our conversion growth and our pastoral care in small groups").

Metachurch perspectives take a church toward greater obedience to the great commandment and the Great Commission. They result in an increased level of discipleship and evangelization, moving people from outside a church's fellowship to becoming fully devoted disciples of Christ.

Metachurch doesn't dictate a particular worship style or liturgy. Rather it addresses how you structure your teams to produce the worship service and enables you to add new services. It doesn't speak to which curriculum you should use or how to label your groups so much as to the need for care and outreach through subunits of the congregation.

*Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Revell, 1991) was the first major explanation in print of metachurch. It provides big-picture windows on how a congregation can be both large enough to celebrate and small enough to care. Other authors present different angles on metachurch concepts. My latest book *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership* (Kingdom, 1997), fully supports the metachurch construct but avoids all reference to the word *metachurch* or the field of church growth. Written to lay leaders, it presents a vision for how lay leaders can best leverage their role for maximum multiplication results.

According to a Fuller Theological Seminary doctoral dissertation, thousands of churches claim an intentional use of metachurch perspectives to train new lay leaders for ministry, usually through small groups. From the very first metachurch training events held in 1988, Pentecostal and charismatic churches have been in the mainstream of successfully applying this new paradigm of ministry.

—Carl F. George

### STAGE 4: EVEN BROADER IMPACT BEYOND THE HOME MEETING

When many pastors think of small groups, they imagine a living-room care circle or a before-work fellowship breakfast at a restaurant. This mental picture can miss about half the action





that occurs in the typical church. It limits small groups to those that focus only on nurture.

If pastors examine their churches for *any* people units that convene for any purpose in Jesus' name, then they will probably make some important discoveries. They might notice a task group that feeds the poor, one that works the clothes closet, and another that handles the church parking lots.

The term *ministry team* is the most popular generic description for these

**A CHURCH LOSES FAR MORE PEOPLE  
THROUGH THE CRACKS OF INATTENTION  
AND NEGLECT THAN THROUGH A SMALL  
GROUP LEADER TAKING HIS OR HER  
GROUP AWAY TO JOIN THE CHURCH  
DOWN THE STREET....**

task-focused subunits of the church. Ministry teams show up under names such as Greeters/Ushers, Hospitality, Cassette Ministry, Choir/Orchestra, or Bus Ministry. Loyalty develops in these teams as people receive visibility and appreciation for their ministry.

Such teams often focus so much on empowering people to serve in a specialized fashion that they overlook their community and caring aspects. Too often, the preferred ministry profile for team leaders looks more as if Martha wrote it than her sister Mary (cf. Luke 10:38–42). Little attention is given to “sitting at Jesus’ feet” other than requiring attendance at church worship services.

Each ministry team has an internal life that can be nurturing to the people involved. The external service may be Martha-like, but the internal chemistry can be Mary-like.


Task groups must be careful not to miss opportunities for nurture. An evening of cherry pie together can do wonders toward building a spirit of devotion and enthusiasm among an usher team. A time of recreation and prayer for the drama group will result in emotional team building. Conversely, care and support groups will be more healthy if they do occasional service to others outside their meetings, both individually and as a group.

Healthy groups cycle through service activities as well as nurturing-of-the-team activities. If pastors broadly define all subunits of the church as small groups, they will view team leaders in a new light. They will see such leaders as having a pastoral capability toward their team, in addition to whatever task hat the group wears (such as Bible study, handbell choir, benevolence committee, etc.).

As a result, pastors and lay leaders encourage a sense of community. Everyone develops a deeper understanding of what spiritual community is all about. Loyalty to the church deepens.

**STAGE 5: OVERALL INCREASES  
IN LOYALTY**

Are small groups loyalty builders or loyalty busters? Loyalty develops best when leaders receive help in resolving their ministry problems. Properly resourced lay leaders can assure quality care, facilitate relational evangelism, and guide serious discipleship on a far more personal scale than can be achieved through even the most skilled sermon delivery. In the vast majority of cases, the partnership of lay leadership with ordained leadership dramatically increases people's loyalty to their church.

Small groups are not a new discovery by Dr. Cho or even by John Wesley. Leadership development through small groups started with the Twelve and with the church of the New Testament era. Small groups are the best possible context “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:11,12, NRSV). 

**ENDNOTES**

1. For further information about Yoido Full Gospel Church, see Karen Hurston, *Growing the World's Largest Church* (Springfield, Mo.: Chrism, 1994).
2. The role description for a small group leader that best helps the pastoral staff build loyalty through groups can be seen in my latest book *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*. Key 1 emphasizes the need for a partnership relationship between group leaders and church staff. This supportive relationship is primarily sustained through skilled coaching interviews. Key 6 teaches the importance of bringing the group to the worship service. Key 7 discusses the responsibility of the group to serve the church and others. Key 8 deals with evangelism that includes the *congregationalizing* of the new convert. Key 9 stresses the importance of listening to and obeying God. My training videos entitled *Nine Facets of the Effective Small Group Leader* have the same objectives.

*Carl F. George, internationally recognized author and consultant to many of North America's largest and fastest-growing churches, is director of Consulting for Growth, Diamond Bar, California.*









# Christians Grow in Groups



New people find  
cell groups as  
another way of  
“plugging in”  
to the church.

BY BILLIE DAVIS

*Jesus called them one by one—  
Peter, Andrew, James, and John.*

**M**y Sunday school teacher used these lines in a memory device to help us learn the names of the twelve apostles. Then she said, “You are special. Jesus loves you. Each person is precious to Him. He calls us one by one.” No truth is more important. God loves us personally, and we come to Him through Christ as individual souls.



**No punishment is as fearsome  
as being rejected and abandoned;  
therefore, social control is a  
powerful force.**

For church leaders, however, the calling of the Twelve has an even greater significance. The story illustrates how the Church began as an interacting group. As Jesus called people to salvation and discipleship His prayer was “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.... I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one.... May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:21–23).<sup>1</sup> Discipleship is not only a matter of individual growth, but Christians grow together to form the Body and reach out to others “who will believe in me through their message” (verse 20).

No better description of group dynamics exists than the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry. Yet scholars, who write commentaries and textbooks with their systems of classification, tend to limit other viewpoints. An example of this is the way Jesus’ ministry is often described as “preaching, teaching, and healing” (Matthew 4:23). Commentators give almost no attention to the distinct quality and style of His interaction with the disciples. This interaction encompasses more than what usually is understood by the terms *preaching* and *teaching*. It is a ministry of developing individuals and, at the same time, forming group identity.

The Gospel of Matthew could be described as a report of the interpersonal relationships and interactions of a group. The apostles were directly involved in whatever Jesus was doing, usually as active observers and participants rather than passive hearers. This process was as essential to the establishment of the Church as were ministry methods and theological explanations.

### **“WHERE TWO OR THREE COME TOGETHER IN MY NAME”**

Textbooks give Boston physician Joseph Pratt credit for starting the helping group movement with a group therapy project in 1907. About two decades ago the term *support system* was coined by the mental health profession. Small group methods, though, have existed for

educational and healing purposes throughout recorded history.

Jesus dealt with people in groups: “Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20) is one among several references that associate small group work with the Early Church.

Religious healers have always relied on group support. When the medical profession was young, it tried to depreciate group methods to distinguish itself as a true science in contrast to folk practices. Then, as the helping professions became more established, practitioners acknowledged that most ills and problems are related to human relationships. Soon it became generally accepted that helping people means helping them to make changes in values and attitudes. And the possibility of bringing about such changes is greatly strengthened through group participation.

### **A GROUP IS FOR BELONGING**

The literature on church growth and development now stresses the importance of small groups. The *group factor* dominates Barna’s characteristics of user-friendly churches<sup>2</sup> and Chandler’s descriptions of innovative ways to handle the future’s challenges.<sup>3</sup>

*Cells, affinity, sharing, participation, specific target groups, empowering, belonging, teams, support, cooperation* are the driving words and concepts, urging the use of group processes to maintain church vitality in changing postmodern times.

This recent popular interest in small group discipling causes many church leaders to perceive a paradigm shift related to 21st-century needs. Actually, people’s basic needs and natures have not changed. What experts are saying is that small groups may be more important than ever because more people are torn apart—from one another and from stable meanings in life. People are uncertain what to believe as customs, institutions, and values change. Our best hope for making converts and guiding Christians into positions of maturity and service is to understand people’s need to belong.

### **NOT TO BELONG IS TO BE LOST**

Have you had the experience of walking into a room where everyone else seemed to be at home, and you knew no one? Did you feel isolated and lost? Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of modern sociology, explained the importance of groups: “Not to belong is to be lost.”

Our best hope for making converts and guiding Christians into positions of maturity and service is to understand people's need to belong.

Christians use the same terms to explain salvation. Not to belong in the body of Christ is to be a lost soul. We come to a greater understanding of group work when we realize it is not a new idea imposed by culture. People are created as social beings to fellowship with God. They have a basic need to belong, socially and spiritually, rooted in their ultimate need not to be lost.

### A GROUP IS PEOPLE SHARING

A *group* is a collection of persons who share conditions that make them interdependent to some significant degree and who interact with one another in such a manner that each individual influences and is influenced by the others so that both individual and collective needs are met and goals are attained.

This definition distinguishes the group from random collections of persons. We understand more precisely the group concept when we compare it with some other terms used to designate collections of persons.

**Groupings.** This term refers to all persons in a category such as college students, singles, or retirees. Placing individuals in a class with others in the same category does not necessarily form a group.

**Audience.** An audience is a temporary collection of people whose purpose in being together is to observe, enjoy, or learn from what is done by others but not to participate to any significant degree. What is typically called audience participation is carefully structured and controlled by the leader. Discussion in some Sunday school classes really is audience participation rather than group interaction.

**Congregation.** A congregation is an audience whose purpose in being together includes corporate activity, such as worship, that is significant to the individual, with or without any true interaction with other persons. A congregation may become a true group as the individuals influence each other. When leaders require response and encourage interaction, such as handshaking, they are trying to bring the congregation into a group condition and attitude.

In summary, a collection of persons is a group when it possesses these qualities: definable membership; group consciousness; a sense of shared purpose; interdependence or feeling of need for one another; interaction, including communication and influence; and the ability to act in a unified way.

### ACCEPTANCE, CARING, AND LEARNING OCCUR BEST IN SMALL GROUPS

The term *group dynamics* comes from the writings of Kurt Lewin, who helped establish a research center for the study of group behavior at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the mid-1940s. He used this expression to describe what happens in groups. It does not refer to what groups ought to be like nor to techniques for getting people to participate. As a scholar, Lewin's interest was in making observations and writing about the pattern he saw. Group dynamics is not a set of rules on how to organize or manipulate people. It is the study of processes by which a collection of individuals become a group, how people working together with shared values and goals influence each other and accomplish purposes.

Lewin introduced the idea that an assembly of persons exists in a *field of forces* that affect the behavior and attitudes of the individuals. He described four main forces:

1. *The group provides a context for comparisons and thus facilitates learning.* A group can function to help people gain insights they might never develop alone. For example, John is angry and frustrated because of some experience. Then, in the group discussion, he begins to perceive that Harold has had a similar experience, but he interpreted it differently and is not frustrated and angry.

As the members compare experiences and their interpretations, a completely new interpretation may emerge, different from that originally held by any one member. This function makes group activity in the context of scriptural teaching and Christian testimony a tremendous power for discipling. Without preaching, scolding, or any manipulating, the leader who has biblical knowledge, is caring, and is in tune with the guidance of the Holy Spirit can facilitate the operation of this group force.

2. *The group can foster cohesiveness.* Groups combat today's erosion of loyalty and the reluctance of people to make commitments. A small group, especially when it meets regularly as a Sunday school class, is the best soil for development of community. Special warm relationships grow so trust and complete acceptance are possible. In this setting people tend to feel they are liked, and they may be encouraged to risk revealing needs and requesting prayer. People in a cohesive group are likely to be loyal



to the church and regular in attendance. This is a positive outcome for the church as well as for the person who is thereby exposed to further opportunities for learning and growth.

3. *The group imposes standards and influences behaviors.* In spite of the prevalent idea that people want to do their own thing, for most individuals nothing is more rewarding than pleasant human relationships. No punishment is as fearsome as being rejected and abandoned; therefore, social control is a powerful force. Persons want to abide by group standards. They do not wish to violate group

**Unwholesome emotions of self-pity, anger, anxiety, and rebellion can be reduced or eliminated by this group force and replaced by feelings of hope, forgiveness, peace, and repentance.**

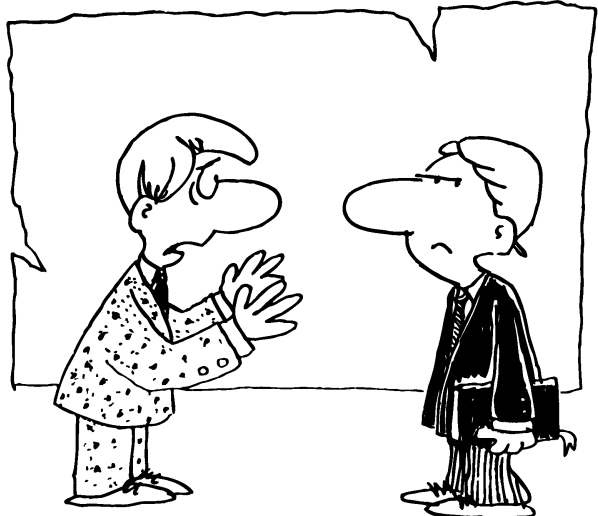
expectations. If they are members of a true group (not an assembly of persons being coerced by an authority figure), they feel protective of group customs and standards.

A group has power to control not only the

behavior of its members but also their emotions and eventually their attitudes. Social psychologists have made many studies of crowd and mob behavior, which are extreme examples of social control. People are carried away and behave in ways uncharacteristic of them when they are alone. This group potential to affect emotions can be seen in the positive outcomes of corporate worship, evangelistic meetings, and the urge to express care and love when the suggestion is made in a cohesive group. Unwholesome emotions of self-pity, anger, anxiety, and rebellion can be reduced or eliminated by this group force and replaced by feelings of hope, forgiveness, peace, and repentance.

4. *The group can define reality for its members.* Some lines from classic poetry are a prayer for the ability to see ourselves as others see us. Behavioral scientists say that people see themselves according to the treatment they receive from others. The function of the group is not to raise self-esteem but to help people, as the poet prayed, to see themselves in realistic ways. People tend to be unrealistic, to see themselves either better or worse than they are. Self-concept should be neither low nor high but accurate. Failure to grow spiritually often results from people's inability to

**No better description of group dynamics exists than the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry.**



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**"Pastor Marv, we can't revive our church by implementing small groups—we are a small group!"**

### People in a cohesive group are likely to be loyal to the church and regular in attendance.

understand their own needs and feelings, to recognize their own weaknesses and strengths. Group participation helps people test reality. It gives them opportunities to accept themselves and relate to others in honest, healthy ways.

The Christian group gives its members the added advantage of testing their perceptions in the light of Scripture. Also, it provides a picture of God's grace, which is essentially acceptance on the basis of Christ's worth—not our own. The need people have in this combative, competitive world to justify self cannot exist in a true group of Christians. Instead, the group offers opportunities for self-discovery and self-development. A realistic self-concept brings positive feelings about oneself without the need to be above or better than another, and the result is that positive feelings toward others increase as well.

Sometimes Christians hesitate to admit the importance of group forces because the idea sounds humanistic. The leader of a worship service may say, "Now forget about everyone around you and keep your mind on the Lord." Leaders who understand group dynamics

know this kind of near-apology for group influence is not necessary. The Bible encourages God's people to assemble for good reasons. While wise leaders depend primarily on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they know that group processes have unique value. Worship, learning, loving, serving gain new strength and meaning as modern disciples embody the answer to Jesus' prayer. Not for them alone but for those who will believe in Him through their message. 

*Billie Davis, Ed.D., is professor emerita of behavioral sciences, Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri.*



### ENDNOTES

1. Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.
2. George Barna, *User-Friendly Churches* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1991).
3. Russell Chandler, *Racing Toward 2001* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992).



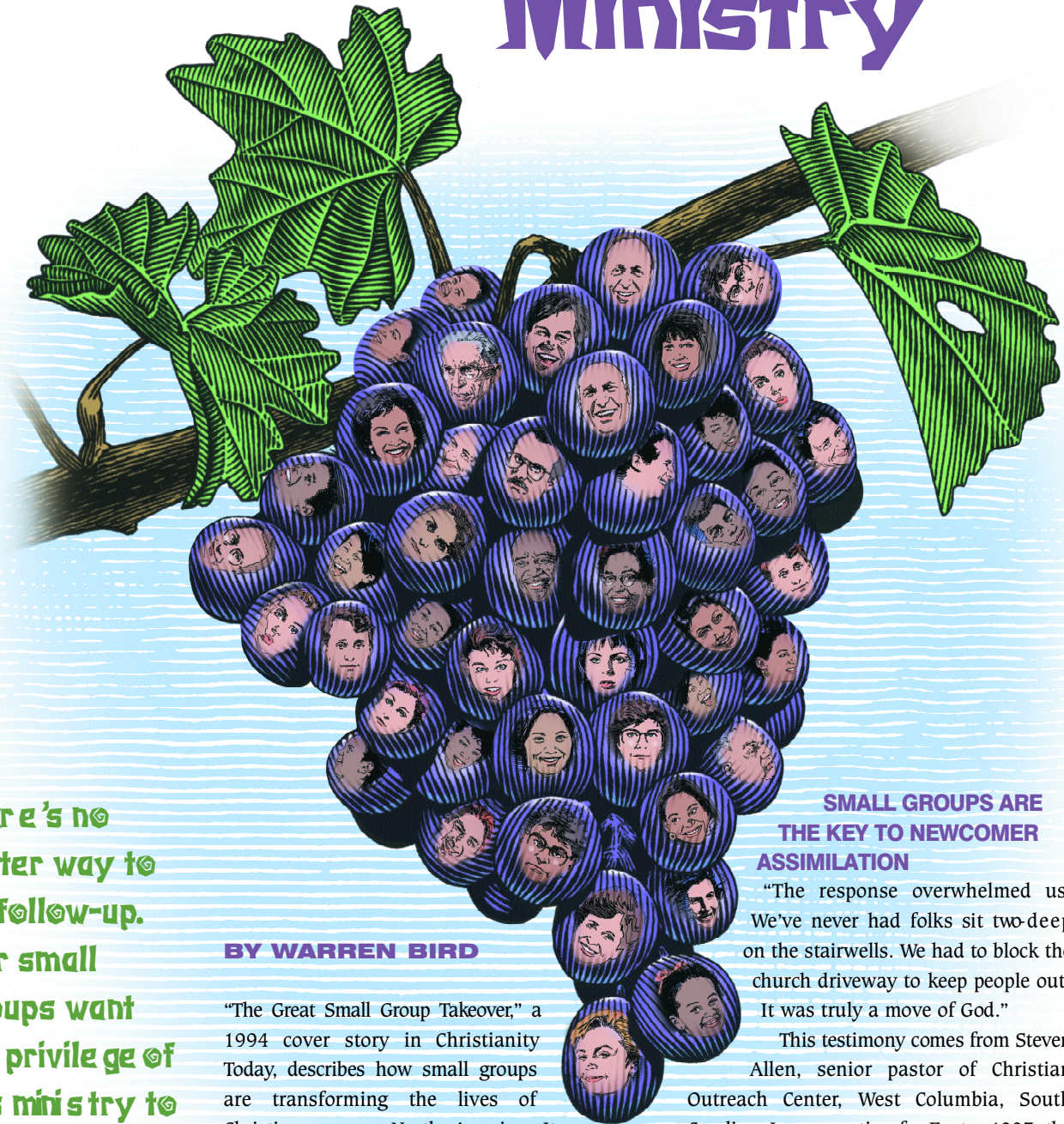








# Frontline Report on Small Group Ministry



There's no better way to do follow-up. Our small groups want the privilege of this ministry to assimilate as many people as possible.  
—Pastor Allen

BY WARREN BIRD

"The Great Small Group Takeover," a 1994 cover story in *Christianity Today*, describes how small groups are transforming the lives of Christians across North America. It points out the many ways small groups undergird a broad range of church ministry, from evangelism to leadership development.

What impact are small groups having in U.S. Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada churches? Here are profiles of five churches, each highlighting one significant contribution that small groups are making.

## SMALL GROUPS ARE THE KEY TO NEWCOMER ASSIMILATION

"The response overwhelmed us. We've never had folks sit two-deep on the stairwells. We had to block the church driveway to keep people out! It was truly a move of God."

This testimony comes from Steven Allen, senior pastor of Christian Outreach Center, West Columbia, South Carolina. In preparation for Easter 1997, the church offered weekend presentations of *The Rapture*, a drama about readiness for Christ's second coming. Interest was so strong that the church kept extending the performance dates. The final presentation was 10 weeks after Easter, with the total 3-month attendance exceeding 18,000. Approximately 2,700 people indicated some form of faith confession.



An event such as a revival, concert, or drama creates a new “fishing pond” for new people. In the case of the drama, hundreds of guests had no church home. How would Pastor Allen follow up on all these visitors? He didn’t. Neither did the pastoral staff.

Instead, the church’s small groups did. “There’s no better way to do follow-up. Our small groups want the privilege of this ministry to assimilate as many people as possible,” says Pastor Allen.

**Through our cells, we’ve  
gone to every home on the  
island of Maui.**

**—Pastor Anne Fujii**

“Our visitor pool is much easier to handle because of our groups,” adds Dave Phillips, a staff pastor who serves as Christian education director and TLC (Taking the Land for Christ) coordinator. “It would be impossible for our pastors to meaningfully handle newcomer assimilation beyond a personal letter, a phone call, or a one-time meet-the-pastors gathering. As a church we’re both program and group oriented. Without good group leaders we couldn’t help newcomers feel connected.”

Christian Outreach Center has a worship attendance between 600 and 700, and over 60 percent of its people are involved in small groups. Groups are classed either by geographic districts, special needs, age ranges, or a combination of these three.

TLC groups focus on care, nurture, and evangelism. These groups not only help to hold newcomers but are also an entrance point into the church. Discipleship groups “demand more, require more, and push for more” says Pastor Allen. “Our discipleship groups have added a much stronger commitment level. Sometimes we have a waiting list to get in!” The church also sponsors a number of support- and recovery-oriented small groups such as its divorce-recovery and weight-loss groups.

How are enough leaders trained and enough visibility given to keep the small group momentum going forward? During the worship service on most Sunday mornings, a “Lift Up” moment publicizes what God is doing through the groups. In addition, certain Sunday school classes train group leaders.

Twice a month a 1-hour training session is conducted prior to the evening service for those in leadership and those preparing for leadership. Sunday services contain TLC testimonies. Several times a year, the church also sponsors a seminar approach to training. Most important, two-thirds of the groups have assistants—apprentices who are learning how to lead a group in the future.

How do newcomers, such as those who attended *The Rapture* drama, find their way into a group? “I teach a newcomer class, and we talk about groups,” explains Pastor Allen. “Then the first group we try to get them into is a Tuesday night on-premises group, with emphasis on fellowship and getting connected. Next we assimilate them into one of the geographic groups.

“When people learn about Christian Outreach Center, they learn about our small groups!” summarizes Pastor Allen. “We would not be where we are without small groups. They do the one-on-one follow-up and care. They even visit people in the hospital and provide meals when a family member dies. New converts are attracted to these caring small groups. A group of 8 to 12 can take care of someone far better than the overall church can. Every week people share in confidence with their group and minister to each other and beyond their group in ways they might not otherwise do.”

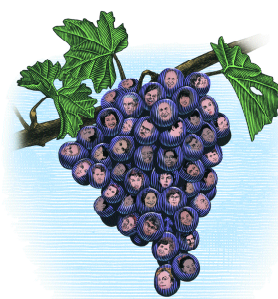
Pastor Allen concludes, “Small groups are the rally point for our church. They are the key to newcomer assimilation. It’s fantastic what the Lord is doing.”

## **SMALL GROUPS ARE THE KEY TO EVANGELISM**

First Assembly of God, Kahalui, Hawaii, is so serious about small group community that the majority of its pastoral staff focuses on small groups. This church on the island of Maui runs around 4,000 in attendance and has 200 cell groups in operation.

“Our groups have a threefold purpose: pastoral care, discipleship, and evangelism,” says Senior Associate Pastor Anne Fujii. She oversees seven district pastors who help in building cells, encouraging the multiplication of cells, and managing the small group system.

The church’s leadership encourages a broad variety of cell types. Life groups use the pastor’s materials that are provided via audiotape.



**We’re moving  
toward becoming a  
church of cells,  
rather than a  
church with cells.  
—Senior Pastor  
Jim Morocco**

Small group leaders, serving as facilitators, can walk the group through the questions provided on the tape or teach the material themselves.

Specialized groups range from age-groups to language groups (Filipino, Japanese, Samoan, Hawaiian), from businessmen's groups to public school teachers' groups. "Everything takes place in small groups—birthday celebrations, baby showers, and food provision for bereaved family members," says Pastor Fujii.

Much of the church's evangelism outreach happens through cells. "Through our cells, we've gone to every home on the island of Maui," says Pastor Fujii.

How is adequate leadership raised up? Most cells offer multiple roles: leaders, assistants, hosts and hostesses. "Everyone in a cell is a potential leader," says Pastor Fujii. "We're constantly training future leaders."

**We're convinced that the life of the church is in the cells.**

**—Pastor Scott Kliever**

"The cell ministry is our church; it's our hope," says Senior Pastor Jim Marocco, who has been on the board of David Yonggi Cho's Church Growth International for 14 years. "We're moving toward becoming a church *of* cells, rather than a church *with* cells."

### **SMALL GROUPS ARE THE KEY TO CLOSENESS BETWEEN PEOPLE**

At Bible Assembly of God, in the South Gate section of Los Angeles, California, the entire Spanish department is run by cells according to Senior Pastor Henry Perez. The parent church, led by Pastor Perez, has about 400 in worship attendance. The Spanish-language congregation had 100 in attendance by its 6-month anniversary.

Pastor Scott Kliever was in charge of the entire church's small group ministries and now oversees the Spanish-department church launch. "Cells provide intimacy, with an emphasis on evangelism," says Pastor Kliever. "They are the most intimate place of the church."

**Small groups have helped us become friendlier, more relationship focused.**

**—Senior Pastor Raduano**

There is only one worship service each week for the Spanish church so most of its cells meet twice a week. One gathering is for cell members only, where people pray, share concerns, and hold each other accountable for the individuals they're reaching out to. The other meeting is seeker sensitive and meets for a brief lesson and fellowship time.

"You can't grow any faster than your leadership," says Pastor Kliever. So on

Mondays he and the group leaders get together to pray, review statistics, and delegate visitation of Sunday's newcomers. "If you don't have a regular meeting with cell group leaders, the ministry will fall apart," he says.

Both Pastor Perez and Pastor Kliever place a high value on outreach and conversion growth. "We're convinced," affirms Pastor Kliever, "that the life of the church is in the cells."

### **SMALL GROUPS ARE THE KEY TO RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDLINESS**

"This is the friendliest large church I've ever been to," said a new member at

## **Frontline Report from Other Denominations**

"If you could start over again, what would you do differently?" Bill Hybels, senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois, recently answered this question. He said, "I would have gone to the small group approach from the beginning. It is the healthiest infrastructure through which to deliver ministry, care, and leadership development."

Small group involvement at Willow Creek is now positioned as one of the five distinguishing marks of someone who is devoted to Christ and is a participating member of His church—grace, growth, *group*, gifts, and good stewardship. To become a member at this church, a person must be part of 1 of the more than 1,600 small groups.

This church is not alone in its emphasis on small groups. Asbury Theological Seminary's George G. Hunter III researched nine culturally relevant, high-visibility, evangelistically effective churches and devoted 20 percent of his analysis to the role small groups play in these congregations.<sup>1</sup> "Apostolic congregations labor to involve everyone—believers and seekers—in small groups," he concludes.

The same is true in Canada. John Baergen, executive director of the International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, based in Winfield, British Columbia, has interviewed the pastor of almost every large, fast-growing church in his country. "Churches that are seeing dramatic life change are inevitably ones that are very intentional about developing an effective small group system," he says.

Well-known Pentecostal churches on both sides of the border are key players in achieving excellent results through small group ministry. From Atlanta's Mt. Paran Church of God to Seattle's Eastside Foursquare Church to Calgary's First Assembly of God, small groups are a permanent part of North America's landscape.

### **ENDNOTE**

1. Churches and pastors (at the time of the conducted research) include: Willow Creek (Bill Hybels), Saddleback (Rick Warren), Frazer Memorial (John Ed Mathison), New Hope Community Church (Dale Galloway), Community Church of Joy (Walt Kallestad), Church on Brady (Tom Wolf), New Song Church (Dieter Zander), Ginghamburg (Michael Slaughter), and Vineyard Community Church (Steve Sjogren). See George G. Hunter III, *Church for the Unchurched* (Abingdon, 1996), for his analysis.

**—Warren Bird, Suffern, New York**



Trinity Assembly of God, in the Baltimore suburb of Lutherville, Maryland. Senior Pastor George W. Raduano knew why, even before the man confirmed it. “Thank you for small groups,” the newcomer continued, “and for the relationships that form through them.”

The pastoral staff at this church of 1,000 adults and 200 to 300 children purposed to help the congregation get to know each other through small group contexts. “This past New Year’s Eve we had open homes in various geographic regions of the church,” Pastor Raduano says. “Many people came who had been at Trinity 15–20 years but didn’t know each other. That’s changing as we strengthen our small group ministry.”

In department after department, care networks are forming. These include the choir, men’s ministries, and women’s ministries. Also, Sunday evenings have been reconfigured so that each month we offer a leadership summit week, a large community outreach service, and two nights designed for small fellowship groups.

Scott Batchelder, a staff pastor who works with the small groups, has been commissioned to start as many new groups as possible. “Small groups have had a profound impact on many of our people—on who they are and how they live. Small groups can and need to be the inner life of the church,” he says.

Adds Pastor Raduano: “Small groups have helped us become friendlier, more relationship focused.”

## SMALL GROUPS ARE THE KEY TO CONVERSION GROWTH

“Four years ago a consultant asked us a painful question: ‘Do you want to grow by transfer growth or by conversions?’” recalls Evon Horton, senior pastor of Mississauga Gospel Temple (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada), Mississauga, Ontario, a growing church of 1,400 in weekend worship attendance.

“Conversion growth for a larger church is an anomaly,” continues

Pastor Horton. “But we began to ask what the cost would be and decided that it wouldn’t happen unless we moved to an entirely new level of pastoral care. Starting with our board and pastoral staff, we got down on our knees in prayer. Revival broke through as people confessed one to another: ‘I need to ask your forgiveness. I haven’t had you in my home. I haven’t cared for you the way I should.’ ”


**The exciting part is that our growth has shifted to primarily conversion growth.**  
—Senior Pastor Evon Horton

For the next year it seemed that every sermon or announcement addressed the need for people to develop caring relationships. “Our program-based approach to church was unable to give people the level of pastoral care they deserve,” says Pastor Horton. “Our watchwords were *caring relationships*.” The goal was to birth care ministries from the pew.

“We realized that the only way we could handle conversion growth is through small group ministry,” says Pastor Horton. Over time, Sunday nights were organized into leadership development settings. Existing ministries were

retooled to be more supportive of a small group component. “We didn’t try to add small groups to existing ministries, and we didn’t ax current programs,” he says.

Then new relational groups were launched. Mississauga Gospel Temple has developed over 70 small groups with 100 people involved in leadership training.

“The exciting part is that our growth has shifted to primarily conversion growth,” says Pastor Horton. “The congregation’s transition to caring relationships through small groups is the most significant ministry change ever at this fellowship. It has made a difference in my life personally, in the life of this church, and in the lives of those who have come to know Christ as Savior. We could not ask for more.” 

*Warren Bird, adjunct professor at Alliance Theological Seminary and staff pastor at Princeton (New Jersey) Alliance Church, has*

*authored or edited several major published reports on small groups. He lives in Suffern, New York.*







To Cell or Not to Cell





# *Cells help us maintain a family spirit in spite of the tight Sunday schedule where people do not have much time to fellowship.*

BY DAVID LIM

**W**e have all heard of the great Korean churches that are based on the cell system. Yet many churches wrestle with whether or not to move to cell group ministry. Some wonder if it is the biblical answer to church growth. Others say that since Paul used the analogy of the body, naturally healthy cells will grow a church. My position is that cell group ministry is a biblical method that can *help* a church grow, but the method alone is simply a tool.

Grace Assembly of God has grown rapidly the past 7 years, and we could not have been effective without cell groups. Cells help us develop ministries in the home context. People meet in small groups to discuss practical life application of the Sunday sermon, thus enabling us to lead the congregation in specific directions.

The pastoral staff cannot keep up with the new people coming to our church. So each

***Cell group ministry is a biblical method that can help a church grow, but the method alone is simply a tool.***

pastor focuses on specific groups rather than trying to know everybody. In the context of small groups, people find their need for fellowship met. Cells help us maintain a family spirit in spite of the tight Sunday schedule where people do not have much time to fellowship. Not counting Sunday school or various special ministries, 50 percent of our congregation identifies with a cell group. (Some have bonded so closely they even take holidays together as families.)

We call our cells Agape Groups. New people find cell groups as another way of “plugging

in” to the church. Most of our groups are geographically based depending on where people live in Singapore. Some are special-interest or ministry related; some cater to special language needs; and others are natural friendship groups.


Studies have shown that most Singaporean churches have grown from strong leadership and evangelism among family and job networks. Cell groups have been instrumental in uniting members within the larger church body.

## **AREAS OF CELL GROUP EFFECTIVENESS**

We see cells as useful for fellowship, ministries and gifts (teaching, hospitality, evangelism, and other spiritual gifts), growth, and direction. Is your church already strong in these areas? Will your present approach continue to be effective as your church grows? If you answered yes, then you may not need a cell ministry at present. If your church is not effective in these areas, are you willing to pay the price to strengthen them?

**Fellowship.** The need for small group relationships is evident in the Bible. Even Jesus’ twelve disciples were naturally divided into three groups. Churches met in houses, so informality, interaction, and practical application were possible. Paul had special people around him at all times for acceptability, encouragement, and ministry.

Strong fellowship is crucial for a strong church. The church is where members interact with other members. Life is shared. People feel valued and grow in the context of a healing, interacting community. In small groups Christians find themselves accountable to each other in terms of ministry, care, and discipleship. Newcomers immediately get to know



***Many churches cannot grow beyond 100 in attendance because the structure will not sustain more growth.***





**When  
people care  
for others,  
motivation  
increases  
and ministries  
take root.**

other people who then introduce them to other friends in the church. New believers can be assimilated and cared for by the congregation.

Fellowship is powerful. From genuine *koinonia*, believers derive strength to face their problems, serve God, and move with His vision for their lives. Their dependence on the pastor is alleviated because genuine ministry and fellowship are taking place within their group.

**Ministries and Gifts.** When people care for others, motivation increases and ministries take root. The gifts of the Spirit can easily be exercised in small, personal, informal settings.

If pastors have trained their leaders to be sensitive to the Spirit, group leaders can encourage gifts to be exercised in the small group context. Individual believers feel important and are accountable in the exercise of their gifts. They cannot make off-based statements or wild prophecies that are never fulfilled because they know those present in the group see each other regularly.

Some hosts exercise the gift of hospitality. Others learn how to teach and lead discussion groups. Informal interaction and the ministry of the gifts of the Spirit are powerful in a non-threatening small group setting.

Are gifts of evangelism already being exercised in your church? As pastor, are you attracting people to God through your ministry? Cell groups do not become evangelistic unless they are in a context of an evangelistic church. Simply dividing into cells does not automatically build fellowship, direction, or evangelism.

**Growth.** Church organization is one of the

greatest hindrances to church growth. Its structure often does not allow pastors to pray, envision, or make crucial contacts to empower key leaders and impart the vision.

Because of our church's cell group structure, I am free, as the senior pastor, to take a leadership role rather than merely maintenance or management roles because much of the care giving is taking place in the cells. In some churches laypeople feel neglected because the pastor doesn't have enough time for every member. Is your church structured so the senior pastor is able to delegate leadership to laypersons who can then disciple others?

As a church grows larger than 75, it becomes difficult for one pastor to multiply the ministries if he or she is the one in charge of all the ministries. A church can only grow to the

**Many churches only have a general vision—to reach everybody.**

extent that the giftings of the congregation are put to use. The church will need to multiply staff or lay leaders who can assume the load. Many churches cannot grow beyond 100 in attendance because the structure will not sustain more growth. If a church is to grow, your pastoral skills must grow; other leaders must be trained; the worship service must be strengthened; the preaching quality must rise; and the organization must elevate from a small family operation to a more efficient structure.

**Direction.** What is the mission of your church? Why has God called you as pastor?

## **10 Ways Small Groups are Beneficial**

1. *Discovery of spiritual gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit.* Acts 19:1–7.
2. *Developing leadership.* Acts 18:1–8, 18, 19, 24–26; 1 Corinthians 16:19.
3. *Effective congregational care.* Acts 2:46, 47; 20:20.
4. *Handling special needs.* Matthew 26:36–46.
5. *Thanksgiving, praise, worship, and prayer.* Acts 2:46, 47; 12:12.
6. *Evangelism.* Acts 2:47; 18:7, 8.
7. *Spiritual growth.* Acts 19:4–11; 20:17–35.
8. *Numerical growth and fewer dropouts.* Acts 5:13, 14; 6:7.
9. *Obedience to Scripture's "one another" passages.* Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; James 5:16; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 John 4:11.
10. *Promotes fellowship and deepens relationships.* Acts 4:32; 20:36–38.

—Adapted from *The Big Book on Small Groups* by Jeffrey Arnold. Submitted by Bob Stone, senior pastor of Hillcrest Chapel, Bellingham, Washington. Used by permission.

Churches without a God-given vision for their communities will have dead cells. Many churches only have a general vision—to reach everybody. They believe they are faithful to God and hope all will come to hear the Word.

Get alone with your leaders and wait on God. Hear from Him before you carry on with your programs. Cell group ministry is a tool that must fit into the church's overall vision, not just a new tool that might work. Do not have cells just for the sake of cells. Fully understand why you're choosing to go with a cell program. If you are a senior pastor, are you prepared to invest time and energy to promote the cells as integral to the overall approach of your church? If not, cell groups will be ineffective.

Once you decide to start cell group ministry, you must then decide whether your use of cells is primarily for fellowship, for Bible study, or for moving the church in a specific direction. Maintaining effective cell group ministry requires energy and commitment.

A church must value what cells can accomplish. Some pastors see cells as useful for discipling new Christians or as therapy groups for former addicts, divorcees, etc. Grace Assembly of God uses cells to follow up Sunday sermons—to lead the congregation in the direction of applying God's truth practically.

**Pace.** Be prepared to pay the price for cell group ministry. Cells require commitment and maintenance. They will usually require another night of the week for the already busy people in your congregation.

If you go with cells, an immediate tension

will be felt between a family-oriented program and small group ministry. That is why churches feel you cannot be both a cell group church and a program-oriented church. Because of the complex nature of our church, we continue both.

Where do you find sufficient leaders and workers? Presently our worker to worship attendance ratio is about 1 to 3. We are careful not to add every new idea to our program. We don't want to overload our people. We choose programs that are important and effective. We are convinced that cell groups are necessary for our church, and we will pay the price to carry on this crucial ministry.

### CONCLUSION

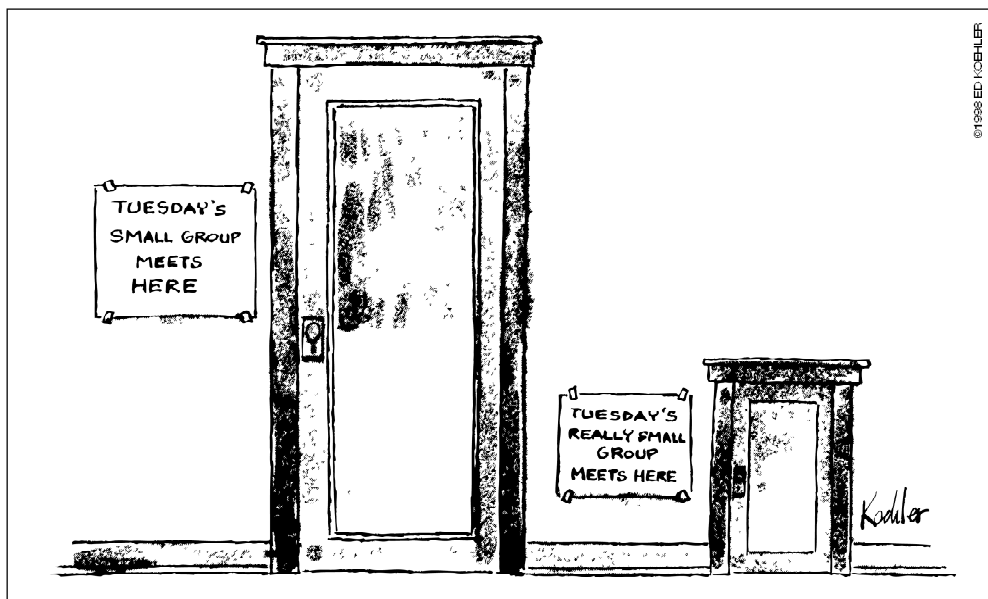
Whether you choose cells or not, you have no choice when it comes to developing genuine fellowship, worship, ministry in the Spirit, and restructuring your church to touch lives for Christ. Done properly, small group ministry is a great tool that fits the biblical analogy and meets the biblical imperatives discussed in this article. Cells can free your church to face the future.

The real questions are: How effective is your church at fulfilling the biblical imperatives? Does your present organizational structure offer the potential to fulfill your church's vision? If not, what are you doing about it? **E**

*David Lim, D.Min, is senior pastor of Grace Assembly of God, Singapore.*



**Cell group ministry is a tool that must fit into the church's overall vision, not just a new tool that might work.**

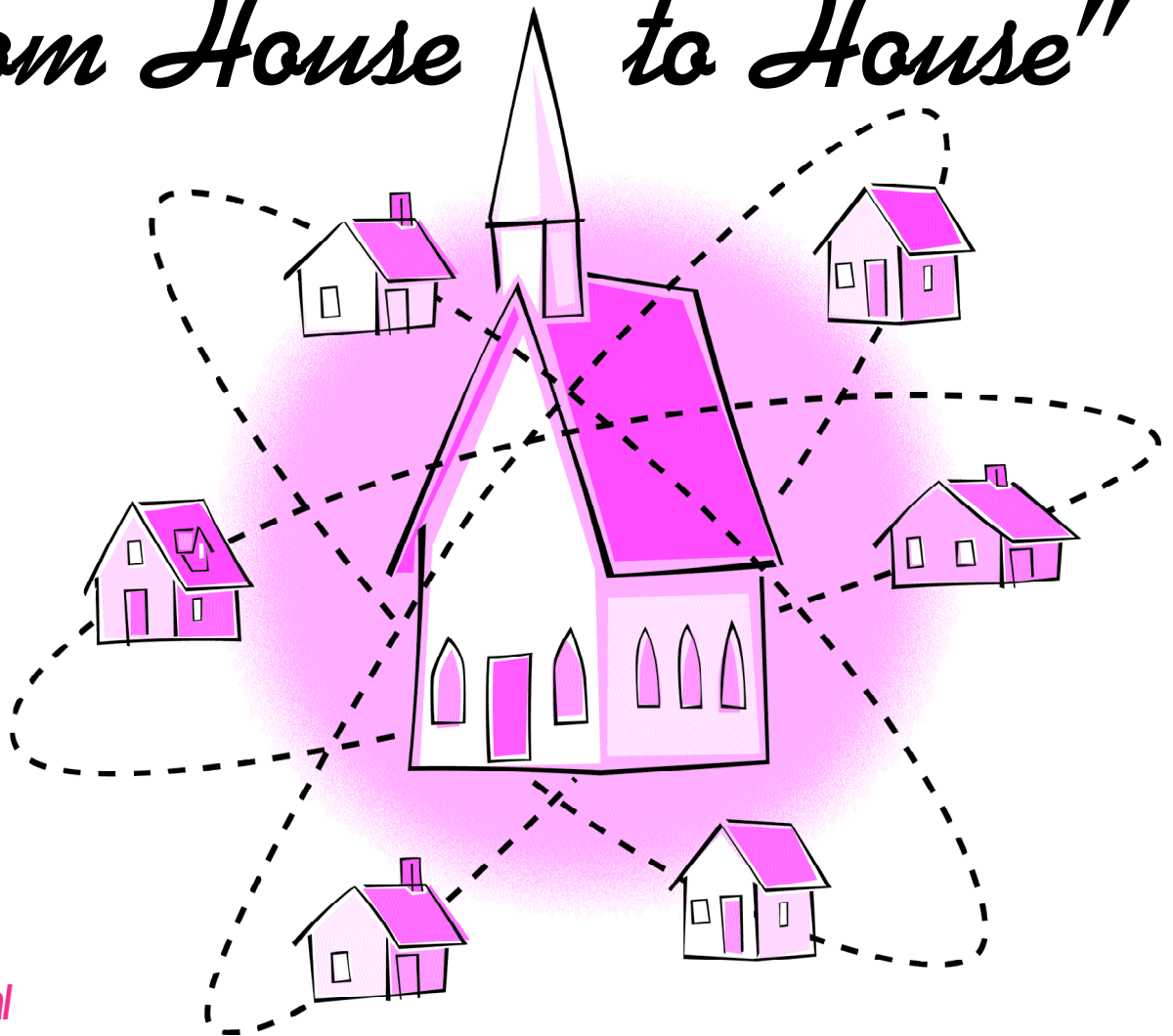








# Teaching "Publicly and From House to House"



*In a large,  
growing church,  
small groups  
become essential  
for people to  
develop the  
relationships  
they need to  
grow in  
Christ.*

BY G. HENRY WELLS

From time to time people ask me, "How do you account for the success and growth of your church?"

My answer is: "We preach Christ; we believe the Bible is God's authoritative Word; and we started small group ministry years before it became the thing to do."

## EARLY CHURCH MODEL

The Book of Acts gives the biblical model for the church: "I...taught you publicly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20; cf. Acts 2:45; 5:42).

Members of the Early Church met together for worship and exhortation in the temple but also met in houses to continue sharing the

gospel and fellowship. This is what small groups are all about.

The model of the Early Church includes large and small group activity. In a large, growing church, small groups become essential for people to develop the relationships they need to grow in Christ. We need to remember that small groups are only a part of the church. They do not replace corporate worship. In small groups, however, people can ask questions, study Scripture in a friendly, comfortable setting, and help each other put God's Word into action. Truth becomes more meaningful as Christians meet together and search God's Word to discover through the power of God's Spirit its application to their lives. In this way the church

functions every day, not just on Sunday.

We find participants develop a sense of community with others in the church, especially when biblical instruction is shared in a relational context. The emphasis is on practical daily living of Christian principles. Small groups link together sharing and caring through prayer and support. Paul encourages us to fulfill the law of Christ by carrying “each other’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2, NIV). As trust and friendships develop, people begin to express their real feelings. Once that happens, others can more easily bear their burdens with them. Hearts are strengthened, and lives are changed as attenders find support and encouragement in their ongoing growth in Christ.

### MARINERS

During the 1950s our church’s founding pastor Eugene Nelson began a program for married couples called Mariners. Using nautical terms, up to 12 couples joined *ships* that met in different homes each month. Each ship had a sponsor couple and a newly elected “skipper” each year. The rest of the couples took different positions of leadership in the ship. The ships combined to make a flotilla, and out of these officers were elected to a fleet board for leadership. These ships became extended families for those involved. The oldest ship in our Mariner fleet celebrated its 43rd anniversary this year. As couples come and go, new couples “tie on” to fill open slots, and each year at least one new ship is formed around a new sponsor. Today, we have 34 active ships involved in the life of the church. All ships have Christ as their pilot and carry cargo—a commitment of service to the church.

### PARISH COVENANT GROUPS

Parish Life groups began in our church in 1980 when once more Pastor Nelson saw the need in our growing church for members to retain their personal ties to one another. He divided the Sacramento area into districts or parishes, each with 15-member units (homes). Church members in each parish were invited to attend semimonthly parish home meetings under the direction of trained parish leaders.

When Parish Life began, besides faith in Christ and church membership, the neighborhood was the unifying factor that drew people together. The premise was that people would

look beyond differences in age or marital status and come together in a home, preferably within walking distance of one another. Beyond the scriptural admonition to reach our “Jerusalem” first (Acts 1:8), the energy crisis of the early 1980s provided incentive for the neighborhood concept.

In 1992 the program was renamed Parish Covenant Groups, and a greater emphasis was placed on developing a sense of covenant community in each group. We paid special attention to forming outreach groups of people with things in common. We also made a decision to change from the neighborhood concept to developing ministries created to meet the needs of specific groups of people, such as divorcees, young adults, retirees, and addicts. The result? People in these groups have shown impressive growth in their faith. In addition, they have demonstrated that they will leave their neighborhoods and drive to join groups that meet their particular needs.

### A PROGRESSION OF CHURCH PROGRAMS

To understand where our church programs are today, let’s look at where we have been. Since 1970 U.S. churches have progressed through at least six major church programs.

1. *Koinonia*. During the early 70s, you heard the word *koinonia* used in almost every church. People got together, sung along to strumming guitars, and felt good. Serendipity erupted all over churches.

2. *Personal evangelism*. Churches then moved their emphasis to personal evangelism. Bill Bright led the charge with “Here’s Life America” and “I Found It” campaigns. Evangelism Explosion techniques and the Four Spiritual Laws were adopted as churches launched witnessing crusades.

3. *Bus ministry*. Next churches aggressively started busing kids to church. Having a fleet of buses was proof of your commitment to the Great Commission.

4. *Preaching*. After bus ministry, the church embraced preaching. Laypeople were listening to the great radio and television preachers. They expected their pastors to preach as well as those they heard during the week. It put pressure on pastors across the country to become better preachers.

5. *Small groups*. The next phase centered on

*As trust and friendships develop, people begin to express their real feelings. Once that happens, others can more easily bear their burdens with them.*



small groups. Korean pastors built gigantic churches using the small group model. Small group ministry became an essential part of the church. People met in homes to help each other put God's Word into action.

6. *People-friendly churches.* We are now in the people-friendly phase. Praise, music, drama, and real-life application of Scripture challenges the traditional setting of hymn singing and biblical exposition.

### WHAT CHURCH PROGRAM IS BEST?


The problem with some churches and pastors is they will never make a switch. They will never use new ideas because they have always "done it that way." They are still trying to fill up buses, and the "routes" have changed.

Does that mean we do what everybody else is doing? No. Churches must evaluate who they are and what kind of ministry works best for them and then check their ministry against Scripture. Each program that has swept through the church has had value.

Our church recently partnered with Western Seminary to offer a free seminar called Creating a Healthy Family. Those who attended were invited to join

### Small groups link together sharing and caring....

a small group for a 13-week study of the book *Search for Significance* by Robert McGee. More than half who attended joined 1 of 15 different small groups.

Hurting people, both Christian and non-Christian, turn to the church to find answers to their problems and healing for their hurts. As a church, we have grown closer using small group ministry. 

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is pastor of Fair  
Oaks Presbyterian  
Church, Fair Oaks,  
California.



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"Maybe you need to test your faith under torment and persecution. Have you ever volunteered for the nursery?"

## FOUR GOALS OF A SMALL GROUP

The four goals of our small group ministry spell the acrostic CALM.

### COMMUNITY

"All the believers were together and had everything in common" (Acts 2:44\*). In a Christian small group, people develop relationships that can withstand crises and differences of opinion.

Community involves:

- **Belonging.** Knowing you matter, and everyone knows your name.
- **Honesty.** Being vulnerable, and bringing your deepest needs to the group's awareness.
- **Trust.** Knowing you will not be judged and confidentiality will be maintained.
- **Accountability.** Being cared about, loved, and at times confronted.
- **Responsibility.** Knowing you are needed because you can meet other's needs.

### ADORATION

"Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people" (Acts 2:47). To study God's Word and not to respond with worship is to treat the Bible as a stale textbook. We actively participate in small groups because worship helps the group maintain perspective and experience the presence of God.

### LEARNING

"They devoted themselves to the apos-

ties' teaching" (Acts 2:42). God gave the church teachers and enabled them to effectively understand and communicate God's Word. Within small groups, teachers can help believers implement God's principles into daily living.

### MISSION

"Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). God plans for those in small groups to impact their community, their places of work, their homes, maybe another people group on another continent. That's big thinking, but that's exactly what happened with Jesus' small group of Twelve.

Small groups may stress one area over the others. For example, a ministry team spends more time with *mission*. A Bible study group spends more time on *learning*. A couples group spends more time in *community*. But Christian small groups will be at their best when they include some element of all four types of activity.

\*Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

—Adapted from the Small Group Leaders Manual by David Weidlich, associate pastor for Adult Ministries, The Presbyterian Church of Fair Oaks, Fair Oaks, California.



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# I

## INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK, Brownsville:

*Thomas E. Trask and  
Wayde I. Goodall recently  
interviewed John Kilpatrick  
and Steve Hill concerning  
the Brownsville revival. They  
offer pastors rich insights  
into the workings of revival  
and encourage them to seek  
God's outpouring in their  
own churches.*

**YOU'VE BEEN IN REVIVAL SINCE FATHER'S DAY 1995. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT REVIVAL?**

**KILPATRICK:** Revival is powerful. To see the power of God in action is awesome. At the same time, it is fragile. Revival has to be pastored because of the human factors involved. If you don't keep a strong hand on it, little things can get out of hand. You have to ask God for constant wisdom.

**HILL:** We're in our third year, and crowds continue to swarm this place. We have learned that revival is very hard work.

Anyone praying for revival needs to be prepared. I compare it to war. It's like training for battle, and when battle breaks out, there's absolutely no rest.





JOHN KILPATRICK, STEVE HILL, AND WAYDE I. GOODALL

# Paying the Price of Revival

People ask us all the time, “How are you doing?” We’re doing fine—as well as anybody can be doing after almost 3 years of revival. It’s grueling hard work.

God never puts revival on the sale table. It’ll cost you everything.

**TRASK:** I’m afraid many of our ministers are not aware of the personal price—the price that has to be paid in prayer prior to revival and then the discipline that has to be exercised during and after revival.

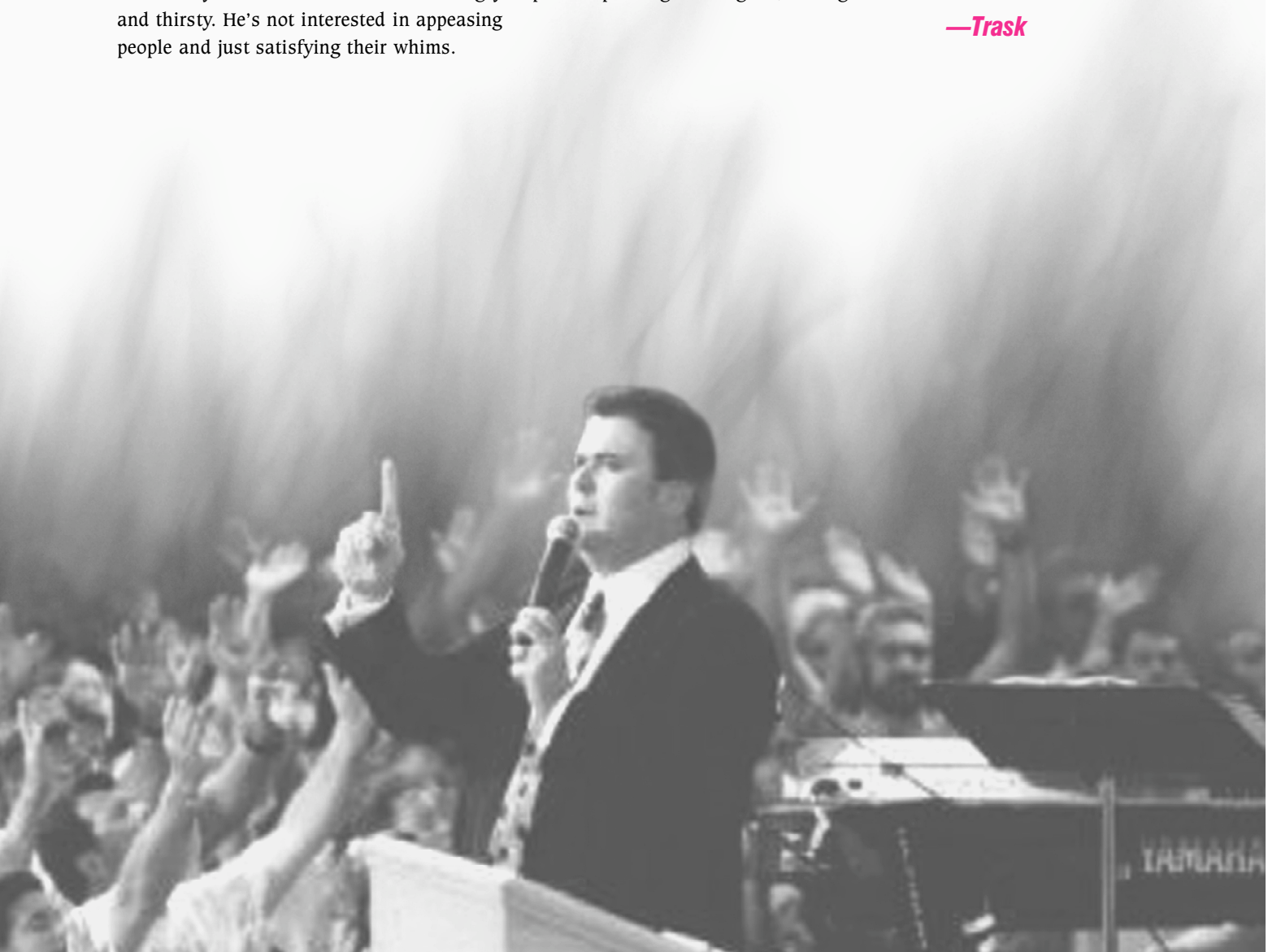
God only comes to those who are hungry and thirsty. He’s not interested in appeasing people and just satisfying their whims.

**WHAT CAUTIONS WOULD YOU GIVE TO PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WHO SAY: “WE’VE LOST GOOD PEOPLE AS A RESULT OF THE MOVE OF GOD IN OUR CHURCH”?**

**KILPATRICK:** There are a lot of reasons why people leave a church. If you have denominational people in your church, non-Pentecostals, when revival breaks out, some of them may not be ready for a Holy Ghost revival.

Others may leave because of change. They may not like some of the things that take place: speaking in tongues, falling on the

*When pastors do the work of the evangelist, people will be saved, and people will be filled with the Spirit.*  
—Trask



floor, shaking under the power of God, crying out by those who have come in demon possessed.

Many in the congregation will be in doubt when revival breaks out in the church. Congregational doubt can be pastored when people have confidence in the pastor.

A lot of people have seen the power of God but have made a decision of unbelief. You have to reach out and retain as many as you can.

***The same hunger that is  
in America for a move of God  
is also in the world.***

***—Kilpatrick***

**HOW WOULD YOU ADVISE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WHO HAVE BEEN TO BROWNSVILLE AND HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY THE POWER OF GOD AND WANT THEIR CHURCH TO EXPERIENCE WHAT THEY'VE EXPERIENCED?**

**KILPATRICK:** Brownsville was in prayer for 2 1/2 years before revival broke out. So I had time to prepare the church before the revival came.

When revival comes, it is not business as usual. The Holy Spirit moves, and sinners begin to show up.

If I had started making radical changes and demands on my congregation without preparing them, it would have been chaotic and caused a split. Instead, I talked revival, preached revival, preached holiness, and preached the importance of the Word of God and the ways of God.

We were at an advantage. We were hungry and expectant. So when revival broke forth, it was a combination reward and confirmation that here was what we had been praying for. We said, "This is it. Here we go!"

**HILL:** Pastors need to be patient with their people when they return to their home church after visiting places where revival is stirring. One thing in

their favor is that God wants revival. God's timing is everything.

I've seen pastors and evangelists try to push revival, and that's not how it works. It may start with just the pastor and a small prayer meeting.

Down here, God is moving every day. This is something God is doing.

**TRASK:** It's critical for leadership to remember that people are sheep that must be led. They are not driven cattle. We can't minister to church members if we drive them away. We have to give God time to work.

**HILL:** People don't realize how spiritually hungry and thirsty they are. They need a little encouragement. The pastor should go back and talk about revival and prepare the people for what can really happen—just a fresh cool drop of water on their tongue, and it can make them want more.

**SHOULD PASTORS EXPECT A DUPLICATION OF BROWNSVILLE TO HAPPEN WHERE THEY ARE?**

**KILPATRICK:** Every church has its own personality. A method that works in Pensacola may not work in other churches.

It wouldn't be wise for someone to come to Brownsville and then go home and copy what they've seen and experienced. Churches need to have a time of humbling themselves, praying, and preparing for revival.

If God touches people when they come here, they will go home with a burden to win sinners to Christ. But if they go home with a fighting spirit, they will only cause division.

**HILL:** There is one thing that can be duplicated. Prayer is fundamental for revival. And prayer teams help. Every pastor should have a group of people who help and pray for folks because the pastor and evangelist can't do it alone.

You can't clone this. A lot of characteristics are unique to Brownsville. In

the South, people are accustomed to camp meeting-style services.

We are praying for God to do something so unique and special in other churches that it would dwarf anything we have ever seen at Brownsville.

As D.L. Moody said, "If God be your partner, make your plans large." It could be that even as we are speaking God is planning to move and shake our whole nation. Brownsville is doing its part, but pastors need to remain open to what the Lord wants to do in their part of the country.

**HOW SHOULD PASTORS REACT TO THEIR LAITY MAKING PILGRIMAGES TO REVIVALS?**

**KILPATRICK:** Some pastors are turned off by pilgrimages to revival because some of their people come to a place like Brownsville and return home wanting to bring people here and try different things to get their church on fire. These same people may have previously caused church problems or were not supporting the church, but now they are asserting leadership in the church. That could sour a pastor.

From the beginning we have admonished those visiting in two ways. First, we said, "God's touch is wonderful, but go home and come under your pastor. Don't make your pastor feel any kind of pressure to conform to what happens here. God will help your church and your pastor in God's time. Stay where you are, love your pastor, and let God produce fruit in your life."

Second, "Don't put your tithes in the Brownsville offering. Give them in your home church where they belong."

**HILL:** I believe in pilgrimages, but I don't believe that's the only way to receive from God.

**TRASK:** I've admonished our ministers: "If you bring your people to God, they won't have to go to Brownsville. They won't have to go to Grand Rapids

or Cedar Rapids. God will do it in the local church.”

When pastors do the work of the evangelist, people will be saved, and people will be filled with the Spirit.

#### **WHAT HAS BEEN THE MAIN THEME OF YOUR MESSAGES DURING THIS REVIVAL?**

**HILL:** After people come to Brownsville, they write to us commenting on our strong holiness message.

We preach a strong holiness message for people to get the sin out of their lives. When they get the sin out, revival is right at their heels.

If a holiness message was being preached all over the country, then we would also see revival break out. Maybe one of the reasons God is using us as a pilgrimage is for people to hear the holiness message.

This present generation is waiting for somebody to stand up and say, “You can’t live like that any more.” When we preach that way, teenagers come by the hundreds running to the altar.

**KILPATRICK:** I need to add a caution. When Steve gets up and preaches against sin, there’s glory in his voice. He stands up for holiness with a broken heart. If someone tries to repeat this message without a broken heart for the lost, it can actually repel people.

**HILL:** People can tell whether or not you are real. It’s not something you can turn on or off. Compassion is something that wells up. The lost can feel us

***God never puts revival on the sale table. It’ll cost you everything.***

**—Hill**

suffering with them. John and I are with the people at the end of the service. We hug them. We pray for them. They know we care about them. That is a major prelude of revival. When people start visiting your church, you must love and care for them.

**TRASK:** That’s where the heart of Christ is. If we’re going to be His representatives, we have to do as He would do, not just say what He would say.

#### **SPEAK ABOUT THE UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP THE PASTOR AND EVANGELIST CAN HAVE?**

**HILL:** From an evangelist’s point of view, I believe God is putting the evangelist and pastor back together again. I would encourage pastors to not do everything on their own. There’s only one central headship of the church, and that’s the pastor. But there is a place for evangelists in the local church.

John Kilpatrick is my friend. We’ve known each other for 14 years and sit up on the platform as buddies. If I’m giving the altar call, he’s right there with me. We do altar calls together.

It’s so healthy. I would encourage pastors to consider having evangelists come and work with them.

**KILPATRICK:** A pastor/evangelist relationship can’t be forced. On Father’s Day 1995, I didn’t look around for an evangelist to start a revival. None of this was planned. It’s been said that Steve and I planned this. Nothing could be further from the truth. All this was totally spontaneous.

I respect and love Steve. It’s just like the Jonathan and David situation. We have a unique relationship. But God is not necessarily going to put a pastor and an evangelist together in every situation.

**HILL:** Neither the pastor nor the evangelist can predict when or where revival is going to break out. Once the meetings begin, both the pastor and the evangelist will know whether or not they are going forward. If new people are not coming in and people are not being changed, then the evangelist and pastor must have the fortitude to turn to one another and say, “This is not working.” Then, again, it may work. That’s the mystery of it.

#### **WHAT IF THE PASTOR IS NO LONGER LED TO CONTINUE REVIVAL MEETINGS BUT IS PRESSURED BY THE EVANGELIST TO CONTINUE? ADDRESS THIS ISSUE FROM THE EVANGELIST’S STANDPOINT.**

**HILL:** There’s nothing to address. It’s closed. If a pastor does not want to continue, then I would yield to the pastor, and I would not be divisive. The pastor is in charge.

#### **WHAT “PRICE” DO YOU EACH PAY FOR ONGOING REVIVAL?**

**KILPATRICK:** I deal with things that nobody else can deal with—the hard cases of people that are rebellious or want to cause problems. With a revival this size, I have to deal with problems almost every night.

People also do not understand the magnitude of the Satanic attack. Because we are under such severe attack, there have been many times when we’ve had to hold each other and pray intensely for one another before we could go out and start the service. When pastors begin to pray for revival, they need to take all this into consideration.

You ask, “Is it worth it?” Thank God, it’s worth it. But nothing comes without a price. Revival is not easy sailing. Pastors need to understand that.

**TRASK:** I’ve heard you say it again and again that the ministry is hard work. One pastor recently told me, “I feel the problem with many of our pastors is one word, L-A-Z-Y. I watch them. They don’t want to put in their time. They don’t want the responsibility. But you can’t have the benefits without the responsibilities.”

**HILL:** John and I are up early every morning and work a full day. Revival raises many questions. We have to deal with thousands of people—letters and phone calls dealing with all kinds of crises.

What do you do, for example, when a young drug addict comes to your church and gets saved? You need a



plan when dealing with situations like that. Multiply that by a hundred.

If somebody is not into work, they sure don't need to be into revival.

**TRASK:** I would trust and pray that our pastors and evangelists are willing to not only pray the price but to pay the price—to work hard because the gospel of Jesus Christ is deserving of our very best.

It's an unparalleled day. There is more hunger, more desire, more excitement. People are being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. I've been in this thing 42 years, and I've never seen anything like this.

**KILPATRICK:** What makes this unparalleled is that we're seeing the nations of the world show up.

Sometimes we'll have 40 or 50 nations represented in just one particular week. Every Wednesday night we have a "Pray to Nations" night. Everybody from outside the U.S. stands and files by telling their names and where they are from. They will often start to cry and say, "I'm so hun-

gry for God. Our nation is so hungry for God. Oh God, send revival."

The same hunger that is in America for a move of God is also in the world. It looks like the Lord may set the whole earth ablaze with His glory. I believe, like many of our old-time preachers, that when the Lord comes back, He's coming back for a glorious church on fire—ready for Him.

**TRASK:** God grant it. I'd like to have you both pray for the Lord to use this interview to encourage pastors and their leadership for these days to which God has called the Church.

**KILPATRICK:** *Jesus, I know there is such hunger. Lord, it's tough for pastors. Many of them are stressed out, burned out, and worn out. Dear God, I pray that You'll touch their hearts. Revive them. Resuscitate them. Father, I pray You will bless pastors with wisdom, with hearts of compassion, and eyes of understanding to see their congregations as their friends. Give them a fresh touch of God like they've never had before. In Jesus' name, amen.*

**HILL:** *Jesus, as pastors and evangelists read this, I can see their tears dripping on these pages. Lord God, where there seems to be no hope, You give hope. God, where there is emptiness, suddenly You fill the void. Where there is no longer faith—only discouragement—suddenly You renew faith and provide encouragement. As ministers read these pages, I can hear them say: "Maybe, just maybe, God, You're going to do something powerful in me and my home church." Lord, anoint this interview. Bless the Enrichment Journal and use it for Your glory. Amen. ■*

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*Inspire confidence in your spiritual integrity by identifying the Word of God with the real concerns of the congregation.*

BY T. RAY RACHELS

**Y**ou can make a case for turning people on, not off, by removing distractions that keep them from finding the real message of your church.

The gospel is not only a confrontational message but a healing and winsome message. It is too important to be hindered by thoughtless or careless ways of taking it to our communities. It is unwise to complicate a person's search for the kingdom of God by obscuring it with language, behavior, or methods that cloud the real message. For example, a child gave this confusing explanation of the game of baseball to his grandmother:

"You have two sides, one out in the field and one in. Each man that's on the side that's in goes out, and when he's out he comes in, and the next man goes in until he's out. When three men are out, the side that's out comes in, and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out. When both sides have been in and out nine times, that's the end of the game."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge said, "Advice is like snow; the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon and the deeper it sinks into the mind."

I have eight suggestions for helping church leaders make their Christ-centered messages more people centered and attractive. May they be like soft-falling snow.

#### **1. MODESTY IS MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN HYPE.**

Getting and keeping a balance on appropriate dress, speech, and behavior should not be difficult for people in ministry. Laypeople have an honest appreciation for it. Following an era of religious glitz and glamour, the climate is right for a more culturally modest presentation of the church and its ministry to our communities. The great message of our Lord is most pleasingly told by humble, self-effacing voices. To take from the gospel's wholeness by inappropriate excess creates an unnecessary distraction for an already cynical world—a world that often wants and is willing to believe but is



turned off by lifestyles that strut an unbiblical discord with Jesus' expectation for His church.

## **2. BREVITY IS MORE MEMORABLE THAN OVERSTATEMENT.**

If "brevity is the soul of wit," then surely it's worth our notice. The hardest single hurdle for public speakers to clear is to present their message in a few words. Those who do, however, become favorites.

Don't overdose on announcements. People probably already know what's scheduled anyway. Precious minutes fly by, and you haven't preached yet.

When I have a great point to make in my sermon, I usually want to camp there and build three tabernacles. Give them a break. Don't spoil your goodwill with people by a total insensitivity to time. Most people are spiritually smart enough to know when the Spirit is moving, and then time becomes unimportant. They also know when it's time to close.

If you know you've prepared a long message and must have extra preaching time, cut back on something else to allow the time you need. Regularly rambling past appropriate stopping places will end up short-circuiting your effectiveness.

## **3. INSPIRATION STIRS THE SOUL MORE THAN COLD RITUAL.**

Inspire people to acknowledge God's presence in their lives. Do it wisely. Be careful about unthoughtfully asking guests to remain standing for lengthy times while regular members sing choruses and songs.

The richest power flows through the Scriptures. The Word takes on life as the Holy Spirit anoints it, and the servant conveys its quality. Music heightens it to the soul. Exhortation drives it home. Testimonies amplify it. Congregations embrace it. And when the preacher's heart is on fire with it, the fellow who just walked in for a look around will leave with a "woe is me" response to it. Bring holy life to cold ritual. Awaken people to the Living Word.

Most people come to church from the secular workplace where they face a godless mind-set daily. Sometimes preachers live a cocooned life. They talk to Christians about other Christians and too often ignore the basic issues that affect most people. Don't get

trapped into talking only about your pet peeves or ideas that miss the mark. Inspire confidence in your spiritual integrity by identifying the Word of God with the real concerns of the congregation.

P.T. Forsyth said: "It is into the Bible world of the eternal redemption that the preacher must bring his people...to every age it is equally near, and it is equally authoritative for every age, however modern. The only preaching which is up to date for every time is the preaching of this eternity, which is opened up to us in the Bible alone—the eternal of holy love, grace, and redemption, the eternal and immutable morality of saving grace for our indelible sin."

## **4. FRIENDLINESS IS BETTER THAN A COLD SHOULDER.**

Most smiles are started by another smile. Don't let anyone get in and out of your church without being warmly received and embraced in a friendly way. Anytime people are greeted joyfully by those who seem genuinely glad to see them, even if other things are less than best, they'll likely leave wanting to come again.

At my daughter's grade school open house I saw a poster in the main hall that read: "Be nice today. You have nothing to lose except the miserable fun of being a grump." Keep your spirit in tune with your calling as a motivator of Christ-filled living.

Be available after you preach. People want to touch you, hear your encouragement to them personally, and feel your spirit. Love them enough to help them overcome a moment—possibly that very moment—of discouragement by your affirmation and encouragement. Don't hide in your office when they've been waiting all week to see you. That's why you're there. Be a spirit lifter.

## **5. PREPARATION IS BETTER THAN WINGING IT.**

Pascal said, "The last thing one knows is what to put first." Think about your preaching and get it in order before you stand up. It will not kill the inspiration. People come for your message. Don't disappoint them. Many come from a week filled with society's predisposition against the church. Turn that perception around by your preaching readiness. Always have a word from the Lord.

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Don't  
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**Getting and keeping balance  
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You can get away with poor preparation occasionally but not regularly. No pain is like the pulpit pain of a pastor whose brain shuts down in midsermon because it was not fed during the previous week.

On the other hand, high spiritual drama and great preaching come from one whose mind and heart have been searching, reading, writing, thinking, praying, and getting ready for the pulpit moment. You are full, overflowing, ready. What a fortunate congregation.

Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is like the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." Careful preparation through the week gives you the chance to find the right words and strike with real lightning.

Be known as a Bible-centered preacher. Always refer people to the Living Word. Quote it. Tell its stories. Interpret it. Read it. Tell its truth. Show how it relates to the person on the street. People will come to hear you again. Those inquisitive Athenians told Paul, "We will hear thee again on this matter" (Acts 17:32).

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**What Effective Apostolic  
Congregations Know**

They know:

1. People who aren't disciples are lost.
2. Lost people matter to God.
3. Church is primarily a mission to lost people, not primarily a gathering of the faithful.
4. The importance of high expectations for their people.
5. What to change and what to preserve.
6. The importance of understanding, loving, and liking secular people.
7. The importance of accepting unchurched people.
8. The importance of using music that secular people understand.
9. The importance of starting new congregations.

*Adapted from George G. Hunter III, How To Reach Secular People (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1992) 144-53. Used by permission.*

"If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything you look at looks like a nail." It takes a full toolbox to build a house or fix a car. The same is true with a sermon. Paul urged Titus:



## Strategies for Reaching Secular People

1. Provide ministries of instruction.
2. Invite people to dedicate their lives to serving God.
3. Help secular people find meaning to life.
4. Engage secular people in dialogue.
5. Address secular people's doubts and questions.
6. Provide opportunities to meet credible Christians.
7. Provide opportunities for people to overcome alienation.
8. Engage in ministries of affirmation.
9. Help people discover their dignity and self-worth.
10. Offer people hope in the kingdom of God.
11. Provide support groups for people with addictions.
12. Identify and reach receptive people.
13. Reach across social networks.
14. Offer culturally appropriate forms of ministry.
15. Multiply new groups in the church.
16. Offer ministries that meet needs.
17. Engage secular people on their turf.

*Adapted from George G. Hunter III, How To Reach Secular People (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press) 55–72. Used by permission.*

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching [and preaching] show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.... In every way...make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (2:7–10, NIV).

### 6. A CONCRETE EXAMPLE IS MORE ILLUMINATING THAN ABSTRACT THOUGHTS.

A good story has great power and will drive home your point. Windows let in light. Have you noticed the quickened attention when you tell a good story—even a simple insight like the one I heard recently of a pastor illustrating the subject of personal holiness? He gave a brief history of India's Gandhi, then quoted a reporter's question during Gandhi's

imprisonment: "What is your message, Mr. Gandhi?"

"My life is my message!" said the reformer. You could hardly miss the point.

Jesus' most profound teachings were centered in His stories. When He wanted to show what the kingdom of heaven was like, He said it was "like a man who sowed good seed in his field...", "like a mustard seed...", "like a treasure hidden in a field...", "like a merchant looking for fine pearls...", "like yeast that a woman took and mixed it into a large amount of flour...", "like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish..."

In an attempt at deep truth, don't forget to open the windows. Jesus did.

### 7. KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE TASK, NOT ON YOURSELF.

Management guru Peter Drucker told a business audience, "Keep your eye on the task, not on yourself. The task matters, and you are a servant."

The greatest question confronting us all centers on reaching the lost. Are you fulfilling your evangelistic mission? How many souls do you want to see won to our Lord this year—by you personally? by your church?

We must build a church atmosphere where it is safe to bring the unsaved—a place where members can count on their church to be friendly and their pastor to deliver a bold, thoughtful, well-prepared message from God's Word.

A layperson reported that he had been working and witnessing to his friend and finally got him to church. At altar time, he went to the pastor and said, "I've brought my friend to church and believe he's ready to accept Christ. Would you come over and pray for him?"

The pastor flushed, began to stutter, then pointed to a man on the other side of the church. "Go over and get [him]; he's good at that sort of thing."

It is a desperate moment for the church—we must revive our passion for reaching and winning lost people. Is our greatest weakness today a timidity in evangelism? Do we feed sheep more to fatten their seminar-seeking souls and appease their appetites to be blessed than to create in them a disciplined and lean spirit to assume the burden to bear other sheep?

Get outside yourself and into the nerve center of God's call.

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Jesus did.*



## 8. POSITIVE ATTITUDES REWARD BETTER THAN NEGATIVE ONES.

A member of my congregation once gave me a poster that read, "When life hands you lemons, make lemonade!" Don't allow troubles, failure, and criticism to steal your future.

One pastor, upon reviewing his first 2 weeks at the church and having found financial and spiritual devastation, said to me, "It's going to be all right. We had 27 people in church Sunday and have no way to go but up. It's the acorn from which the mighty oak grows."

Methodist Bishop Richard Wilkie (in his book *And Are We Yet Alive?*) tells a story about Chaplain C.C. McCabe who developed a dynamic strategy of planting Methodist Episcopal churches across the country between 1868–84. One day he noticed a newspaper article about Robert Ingersoll, orator and agnostic, who had proclaimed that "the churches are dying out all over the land; they are struck with death." McCabe leaped off the train at the next station and fired off a telegram to Ingersoll: "Dear Robert: All hail the power of Jesus' name.... We are building more than one Methodist church for every day


***The hardest single hurdle for public speakers to clear is to present their message in a few words.... Don't spoil your goodwill with people by a total insensitivity to time.***

in the year and propose to make it two a day!"

Take your choice of attitudes: the 10 spies who brought a fearful, negative report about Canaan or the 2 who said, "Let us go up at once and possess it...for we are well able to conquer it!" (Numbers 13:26–14:9, *Living Bible*).

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 107:2).

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"

(Philippians 4:13). 

*T. Ray Rachels is superintendent of the Southern California District of the Assemblies of God.*





# SPIRITUAL

**When individuals are enveloped in God's love and motivated**

# MANIFESTATIONS

**by love for God and love for humanity, both reaction and**

# AND HUMAN

**manifestation attain a grace and beauty of perfection....**

# REACTIONS



**A**n electric fan was placed on the concrete floor of the missions house in Penang, Malaysia, to circulate and freshen the air. The fan was whirring smoothly but was missing its mark. The missionary stepped barefoot across the floor to adjust the fan. As he touched the controls, he was met by a tremendous shock. He became the ground for the electrical current, and 220 volts at 50 cycles per second sent him reeling, leaving him dazed and with a numb arm.

This incident illustrates the distinction between manifestation and reaction. Because the fan was constructed properly and in essentially good operating order, electrical energy was manifested through the machine in a purposeful way. A human organism out of harmony with the same electrical force was shocked and reacted by jerking back, crying out, and contorting physically.

Both activities are normal. Fan blades turn and circulate air in response to electrical current.

### **Habits of reaction can distract from a true spirit of worship and disturb others as well.**

And anyone receiving a shock in a similar circumstance would react as this man did.

The Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 was characterized by divine manifestations and physical reactions. The baptism in the Holy Spirit brought the sound of wind, visible tongues of fire, and human articulation of the words of the Spirit. Undoubtedly, there were other physical reactions to this spiritual experience that may have given rise to the suggestion of drunkenness on the part of the disciples.

Later, in similar settings, the house shook; there was great joy; and a healed man leaped and praised God. The only consistent abiding human response, however, was speaking with tongues. Speaking with tongues became the continuing recognizable physical response to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The

baptism in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a physical experience, producing the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through human agency.

### **HUMAN REACTIONS**

Consider other normal human reactions to spiritual force. An incident in Jacob's life provides a prime example (Genesis 32). A life and death struggle developed between Jacob and the heavenly visitor. Jacob was out of touch with God and the impact of spiritual force produced by the encounter brought a violent physical reaction. The "wrestling" continued through the night. As morning broke, Jacob was brought into harmony with divine power through confessing his real identity followed by the transforming power of the touch upon his life and body.

Saul is another example. He was out of touch and harmony with God. His first revelation of Jesus Christ sent him crashing to the earth leaving him blinded for several days (Acts 9). There is a difference in being smitten to the ground as Saul of Tarsus and in bowing humbly at the feet of Jesus as many do in contrition and worship.

Elijah is another illustration in a slightly different vein. After his victory at Mount Carmel over the priests of Baal and his superhuman dash ahead of Ahab's chariot (1 Kings 18), he was suddenly overtaken by emotional and physical exhaustion. He became fearful, totally discouraged, wishing to die. The strength from angel's food brought Elijah to Mt. Horeb where he underwent a spiritual confrontation with God (1 Kings 19:9-18).

After the natural reactions subsided, Elijah heard a still small voice to which he responded. Thus a manifestation of the Spirit was experienced after reaction had gained his attention.

### **DESIRABLE BIBLICAL REACTIONS**

Many human reactions to spiritual influences are biblical. David, in an hour of great exuberance and thanksgiving, "danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Samuel 6:14). Daniel fell on his face as a dead man before the angelic presence (Daniel 10:9). The man healed of lameness leaped (Acts 3:8). We are exhorted to clap our hands (Psalm 47:1) and to stand in awe of His presence (Psalm 33:8). We are told to glorify God with timbrel, song, and

**There is an excellent way the pure manifestations of the Holy Spirit may be harmonized with human nature and vice versa. This is the way of love.**

dance (Psalm 149:3), and with a loud voice (2 Chronicles 20:19). These are all human responses or reactions to divine stimulation.

I received the Spirit's fullness literally beneath the altar. Afterwards, it seemed to me that spiritual blessing was directly related to falling on the floor! When a spiritual move occurred, I would immediately prostrate myself. I was instructed that what was of great significance at one point in my spiritual life need not become a habitual reaction.

### **HABITS OF REACTION**

Habits of reaction to the Holy Spirit's presence are easily formed, especially in times of revival when people are coming into meaningful spiritual experience for the first time. But sometimes these habits of reaction can distract from a true spirit of worship and disturb others as well.

The purpose of Paul's first writing to the Corinthian church was in part to help those spiritual enthusiasts understand that all human response to the manifest presence of God must be made to edify the church and glorify God. Any reaction that distracts from the true purpose of the Holy Spirit's work, exalts human nature or ability, brings confusion and contradiction, or is done habitually is to be subdued in public services. If it is a legitimate reaction in keeping with biblical patterns, then it may be enjoyed in private worship or in a personal way during corporate worship without distracting others.

### **HUMAN REACTION DISTINCT FROM MANIFESTATION**

First Corinthians 12 to 14 deals with both human reaction to spiritual stimulation and spiritual manifestation. But the basic concern of these verses has to do with enabling the Holy Spirit to manifest himself meaningfully through human agency.

The manifestations of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 are identified as spiritual gifts: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and

interpretation of tongues. These are recognized categories of Holy Spirit manifestation and should never be confused with mere human reaction to the Spirit.

The aim of Paul's instruction was to develop within the Corinthians a sense of discrimination between human reaction to the Spirit and pure manifestation of the Holy Spirit through human agency. The degree to which human reaction is controlled in a spiritual atmosphere may determine the effectiveness of the pure manifestation of the Spirit.

### **HARMONIZING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The degree to which spiritually minded people bring their lives into harmony with God's purposes, His manner of working, and the power of the Holy Spirit will determine the effectiveness of the Spirit's manifestation. It is marvelous to observe these manifestations when the human agency is in full harmony with the Spirit's working.

We have heard messages in tongues and interpretations similar in content

but vastly different in the manner given. A message of love from the Holy Spirit may be given in a violent manner that completely nullifies the impact of the message. A discernment of unprofitable spiritual activity can be made in such a human way as to hurt deeply the individual involved or destroy the effectiveness of the service, when quiet instruction and guidance is what is needed.

Even healings and miracles can be so enveloped by humanisms that their significance is lost in the fanfare of human reaction. How many times in an altar service, when souls were hanging in the balance and a heavy spirit of conviction gripped a congregation, has a human reaction to the Spirit

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or even an unharmonized manifestation distorted the atmosphere, kept souls from a decision, and grieved the Holy Spirit because His primary purpose was usurped?

Paul suggests to the Corinthian church that there is an excellent way the pure manifestations of the Holy Spirit may be harmonized with human nature and vice versa. This is the way of love (1 Corinthians 13). When individuals are enveloped in God's love and motivated by love for God and love for humanity, both reaction and manifestation attain a grace

and beauty of perfection that nothing else can give.

### CONCLUSION

The spiritually sensitive child of God can have a degree of harmony with the Holy Spirit's working that will make possible the most beautiful and powerful biblical manifestations. How wonderfully lives are blessed, the church is edified, souls are saved, and the name of Christ is magnified when a life is so totally integrated with divine purpose, power, and love as to

allow the untarnished manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is a goal worthy of dedicated study and application. 

*Adapted from Paraclete 4, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 26–30.*

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# Running the Race of Life

**PART 8****TEXT: Hebrews 12:1–3, NIV**

BY RICHARD L.  
DRESSELHAUS

**Jesus is the lead runner. You and I are following close behind. And the fans in the stands are cheering, shouting, and declaring us the victors. What a moment!**

**Introduction**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,

**Establishing Your Priorities**

Let us

1. Throw off everything
  - a. that hinders and
  - b. the sin that so easily entangles,

**Securing Your Motivation**

And let us

2. Run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

**Setting Your Focus**

Let us

3. Fix our eyes on Jesus,
  - the author and [the] perfecter of our faith,

Who for the joy set before Him

- a. endured the cross (scorning its shame), and
- b. sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium was packed. It was the final game of a play-off series and a must-win game for the Padres.

They were down to the final inning. The game was in the balance. The fans were on their feet. Every eye was glued to the batter. Then the crack of a bat: “Back...back...way back.... It’s a home run!”

Change the time and place, and you have the very setting for the words of the text. It’s stadium language. It’s an out-at-the-old-ball-park

kind of feeling.

The author who wrote this incredible epistle to a group of new Jewish converts must have read the sports page with thoroughness—knowing well the world of games and competition.

So here it is. Jesus is the lead runner. You and I are following close behind. And the fans in the stands are cheering, shouting, and declaring us the victors. What a moment!

Speculations are difficult to suppress. Who comprises this “so great a cloud of witnesses”?

What is the membership of such a unique band of supportive enthusiasts? Who gathers to make sure we finish this race wearing the victor's crown?

Juxtapositioned against all of this is the broken, hurting, lonely person who sits before you in the front pew almost within arm's reach. Life is hard. The pain is great. The future seems both blighted and uncertain. Bare faith alone seems to hold the fragmented parts together.

Pastor, it is your privilege to proclaim the good news of this text to hurting brothers and sisters who are weary with the race of life. The task is not hard. Inspiration and blessing tumble out of these verses like a refreshing drink from a cool brook on a blistering hot day.

Remember, many people feel incredibly lonely—immersed in crowds of people, yet alone. People are at their elbows, but no one is in their hearts. Your worshipers come from a cold impersonal world. Affirmation is low. Criticism is high. They need the life-giving message of this text. Help them connect, and they will never be the same.

This text speaks with incredible power. Your altar invitation might take this form: "Have you laid aside the weight of sin? Have you set your mind to finish the race? Are your eyes firmly fixed upon Jesus Christ?" These three questions measure the success of life's race.

Look closely at the text. Note especially the power of the imperatives: "Throw off." "Run with perseverance." "Fix our eyes." Don't miss the movement, the unfolding drama, the color of the setting. This passage almost preaches itself. Your task is to facilitate the flow of life-giving power.

## ESTABLISHING YOUR PRIORITIES

What would you think of a sprinter who showed up wearing a backpack, hip boots, coverall, and a heavy army helmet? I can hear your challenge: "You can't run with all that stuff hanging on you. Strip it away or you won't stand a chance."

Yet that describes many runners in the race of life—little sense of priority, failure to sort out the essentials, lack of value clarification, and unnecessary trappings that only impede progress and frustrate forward movement.

What are these improprieties, digressions, hindrances, entanglements? The list is almost endless: bitterness, jealousy, dishonesty, fear, impurity, self-righteousness, judgmentalism, gossip, unbelief, greed, anger, resentment, laziness, pride, compromise. These sins cripple and hinder the runner and must be thrown off.

Confused priorities prescribe failure. A Christian runner who harbors sin, mixes with the world, buys into the world's value system, and participates in its amusements without discretion can never hope to finish well the race of life. It's an impossibility.

## SECURING YOUR MOTIVATION

One of the lessons I have learned while pastoring is: Perseverance and motivation are two sides of the same coin. Successful racing demands perseverance, and perseverance is impossible without motivation.

My goal is to run 3 miles three times a week. I never really feel like doing it. Runner's euphoria has never been my

***Successful racing demands perseverance, and perseverance is impossible without motivation.***

companion. There is a voice in my ear: "Why don't you stop. You are tired. Why make yourself uncomfortable." My only hope is to reach deep and find a level of motivation that will propel me through to the finish. No motivation? No perseverance? Then no completed race.

The same is true in the race of life. Some have called it *long obedience*, meaning that we must go for the goal regardless of hindrances. This race is marked out for us. It is a journey with destiny. It is effort with a goal—a race

with a finish.

What is the embedded source of motivation that must be tapped if the race is to be run with perseverance?

## SETTING YOUR FOCUS

Here is the source of motivation: Looking unto Jesus. This *race* is about Him, not us. The *goal* is about Him, not us. The *victory* is about Him, not us.

Look for motivation on any other level, and you set yourself up for failure. Only eyes fixed on Jesus will bring you successfully to the goal.

Consider the sheer depth of this unique motivation: Jesus is the Author, the Perfecter, the Personification of joy and the Chief Magistrate. Eyes fixed on Him stop weariness and loss of heart.


Interestingly, the runner must focus only on Jesus. Granted, the personalities in the stands are attractive. The patriarchs are present. The apostles are part of the crowd. The martyrs, reformers, and revivalists are there. But as tempting as it might be, to look their way would be folly. Our eyes must remain fixed on Jesus alone.

Remember, Jesus' captivating presence as the lead runner spurs us on. He has won every race. He has gone to the Cross. He has despised all shame. He has endured opposition. And He is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Every eye must be fixed on Him. This is the only focus that assures success. You will never lose if you follow Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is already calling. Weary runners are waiting to be called to prayer. Establish right priorities, secure proper motivation, and set the focus with clarity.

An Olympic runner was asked: "What is the key to your success?" She answered: "Routine with purpose!"

That is what this text is about: a daily, persistent, habitual, consistent, resolute focus on Jesus—the lead runner in the race of life. 

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# Spiritual Gifts in the Church Today

## PART 4: Gifts of Speech

The speech gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:10 are prophecy (*prophēteia*), evaluation of spirits (*diakriseis pneumatōn*), kinds of tongues (*genē glossōn*), and the interpretation of tongues (*hermeneia glossōn*).

### DEFINITION OF SPEECH GIFTS

The position of most Pentecostal/charismatic scholars is that revelation given through speech gifts in the contemporary church is not Scripture quality for the following reasons: (1) In the immediate context, Paul commanded the Corinthian church to evaluate prophecies seemingly for their accuracy and authority (14:29); something he would have never commanded with regard to Scripture. (2) Speaking in tongues is described as the human spirit praying at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, without any mention of Scripture-quality authority (14:14). (3) The stated purpose of the gifts is edification, not the production of Scripture (12:7; 14:3–5, 12, 19, 31).

### PROPHECY

New Testament usage of *prophēteia* indicates that prophecy was a spontaneous act of inspired speech—as opposed to a prepared study from the Scriptures—but not inspired in the same sense as the canon. The content of the utterances appears to have been predictive (e.g., Acts 11:28; 21:10, 11) in a manner that was at the same time hortatory in nature (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:20–26; 1 Peter 1:10–12). Prophetic ministry was significant enough in the New Testament that those who were appointed by the Lord as prophets were listed second only to apostles in Ephesians 4:11.

Prophecy both predicts future events (Acts 11:28; 21:10, 11) and reads the secrets of individual hearts (1 Corinthians 14:20–26) in order to provide corporate or personal exhortation.

### EVALUATION OF SPIRITS

The evaluation of spirits (*diakriseis pneumatōn*) is closely linked to the prophetic gifting and refers to the divinely imparted ability to determine which prophetic utterances are truly from God and which are not (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22). This is not necessarily a reflection on the prophet's motives, although false prophets do prey on the church and should be identified. Rather, the need for evaluation often simply reflects the fallible perception of the prophet. Sometimes, despite the prophets best efforts, the message might be misperceived.

***“Tongues” constitutes a type of prayer in which the human spirit prays in a manner that transcends the capacity of human reason. It is spirit-to-Spirit communication.***

Clearly implied in this gift is the subjective element in the prophetic gift. Prophecies need not be received uncritically as absolute or binding on the believer. They are to be “weighed” (the type of judgment implied by *diakriseis*; e.g., the Bereans in Acts 17:11).

### KINDS OF TONGUES

The clearest definitive statement regarding tongues (*genē glossōn*) is in 1 Corinthians 14:14: “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”\* According to this verse, “tongues” constitutes a type of prayer in which the human spirit prays in a manner that transcends the capacity of human reason. It is spirit-to-Spirit communication.

The context amplifies the content of tongues to include: prayer, singing, praise, and thanksgiving (verses 15–17). Evidence from the Book of Acts confirms the basic

***Prophecy both predicts future events and reads the secrets of individual hearts in order to provide corporate or personal exhortation.***



nature of tongues as praise and declaration of the wonders of God (e.g., Acts 2:11; 10:46; 19:6).

First Corinthians 14:2 is often used in this discussion to argue that tongues is exclusively speech from man to God: “For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.” This verse reinforces the human spirit-to-God content of utterances in tongues; however, it does not necessarily rule out messages in tongues that contain communication from God to man.

The person-to-God statement of 14:2 may be due to the absence of translation that is being discussed in the context (14:1–17). If someone speaks in a tongue during corporate worship and there is no translation, then the person will have spoken only to God, since the speech is incomprehensible to the congregation at that point.

## INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

The interpretation of tongues refers to the translation (*hermeneuo* and its cognates) of the utterance given in an unknown language. This translation puts the content of the message into the language of the congregation so that all may be edified. Unless the message makes sense to the hearers, there can be no edification (1 Corinthians 14:1–19).

***Prophecy given by the  
Holy Spirit will build up,  
never tear down.... It will never  
usurp the God-given authority  
of the pastor.***

With regard to tongues in worship, our traditional practice is that interpretations are almost always prophetic in content—the interpretations are virtually always from God to man. The

teaching of 1 Corinthians 14:1–5 indicates that prophecy is equivalent to tongues interpretation in terms of edification but neither states nor implies that the content will be identical. While there is no biblical warrant to argue that our traditional practice is wrong, there is ample evidence in 1 Corinthians and Acts to suggest that the content of tongues can also be speech from the human spirit to God.

Thus, at least some of the time, the content of the interpretation will be speech to God in the form of a prayer, a praise, a thanksgiving, or a song.

## CONTRIBUTION OF SPEECH GIFTS TO MINISTRY

The purpose of speech gifts is to edify the church. They edify specifically through the content of what is spoken. Prophecies may be uttered to groups or individuals in the form of exhortations or predictions. The group or individual should pray for the prophetic companion gift of discernment in order to evaluate what is spoken. Persons purporting to be prophets have at times abused the gift, especially in ministry to individuals.

Consistent application of biblical criteria for the use of prophecy will help keep balance in the church when this gift is manifested. When an individual is legitimately gifted with this ministry, it is a powerful source of encouragement and should never be despised (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22) but must be evaluated and pastored.


Prophecy given by the Holy Spirit will build up, never tear down. It will bless God’s people. It will confirm and renew but never create anxiety or fear. It will never usurp the God-given authority of the pastor. Furthermore, this gift lays bare the secrets of unbelievers’ hearts and leads them to repentance and worship (1 Corinthians 14:20–25). Finally, prophecy that is on target will reflect

the principles of love laid down in 1 Corinthians 13:1–7.

Tongues and interpretation together edify the church just as much as prophecy. Tongues alone cannot accomplish this in a corporate worship setting because of the comprehension factor, even though uninterpreted tongues do edify the speaker (1 Corinthians 14:1–5, 18, 19).

Tongues that are interpreted edify the church through prayer, praise, thanksgiving, song, and declaration of the wonders of God, thus functioning in a complimentary relationship with the prophetic gifting.

## CONCLUSION

Each of the gifts covered in this series work together to edify the church, and none of the gifts alone can accomplish nearly so much as all of them together. The Spirit distributes gifts according to His will in order to edify, renew, refresh, and guide people into all truth as Jesus builds His kingdom through us. 

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

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# Koinonia

BY ISAAC J. CANALES

*Koinonia points to a relationship seen as a close association, a deep communion, a strong fellowship, a participatory group that shares and receives closeness in Christ.*

The meaning of *koinonia*, the Greek word we know as *fellowship*, is hard to pinpoint in any given text.<sup>1</sup> It can be translated a variety of different ways in the Word of God. *Koinonia* and other related words were especially favored by the apostle Paul and appear frequently in his letters. He used the word as part of his understanding of the gospel enterprise, reflecting both his Jewish and Greek cultural background.

## THE MEANING OF KOINONIA

Different translations of the Bible help us understand how Paul used this word as he wrote to Early Church groups. They do not stray very far from the meaning of intimate relationship or close partnership, with the common emphasis on relationship.<sup>2</sup>

Josef Hainz supports *koinonia* meaning relationship as “one who has something in common with someone else”<sup>3</sup> and adds that the sense of participation and close association are both present.<sup>4</sup> The word can mean communion<sup>5</sup> and is also connected to the idea of communication, distribution, and almsgiving (cf. Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 9:13; Hebrews 13:16).<sup>6</sup>

The noun form might point to a partaker or a partner.<sup>7</sup> This concept of being a partner—sharing something in common—is particularly intriguing from a commercial standpoint. The verb *koinonein* means to have a share in (cf. Romans 15:27; 1 Timothy 5:22; Hebrews 2:14), to give a share to, or go shares with (Romans 12:13). The compound verb *sunkoinonein* can mean to share together with, communicate with (Philippians 4:14), to have fellowship with (Ephesians 5:11), or be partakers of (Revelation 18:4). The relational sense of *sunkoinonein* seems to be both sharing by imparting and sharing by holding something in common.

*Koinonia*, then, signifies a strong relationship rooted in the sharing which one has in common with another—a deep participation, a fellowship recognized by the sharing of a common thing in a group.

## SHARING IN THE TRINITY

*Koinonia* also points to the sharing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The knowledge of the Son unites us in fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:9). Sharing in the gospel enterprise, for example, points to the positive results and effects of the blood and body of Christ in communion with Christ and others (1 Corinthians 10:18). It means sharing in the suffering, death, and resurrection embraced in Christ, and sharing the fellowship the Father has with the Son and the Spirit (1 John 1:3,6,7).

By definition *koinonia* points to a relationship seen as a close association, a deep communion, a strong fellowship, a participatory group that shares and receives closeness in Christ.

A close analysis of the way the apostle Paul used the word and its related terms indicates that he gave central focus to it in his writings. He searched for a word in the Greek vocabulary that would not only powerfully convey an insight he had into the Christian life, but whose root (*koin*) he could build on to express new linguistic meaning. In many ways he made this secular word his own, using it as a vehicle for revelation.

*Koinonia no longer means just any partnership, any fellowship, any association, or any communion. Paul used it in a new Christian way.*

*Koinonia* no longer means just any partnership, any fellowship, any association, or any communion. Paul used it in a new Christian way. The word does not merely refer to things like a sorority, fraternity, club, company, or community. It is not necessarily a parallel to *ekklesia* (local congregation) but has more to do with a much smaller group.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Paul's use of *koinonia* in itself has no clear-cut meaning, yet it is rich and full wherever the word occurs as it points to a group: “wherever two or three are gathered.”

He probably chose *koinonia* because it refers primarily to an intimate relationship with Christ based on

faith: “the fellowship of his Son” (1 Corinthians 1:9). It cannot be understood outside of a relationship to Christ.

## KOINONIA AS THE GLUE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

Speaking more personally of the common bond believers have in Christ, Paul wrote of the “right hand of fellowship” (Galatians 2:9, NIV) that the Jerusalem church extended to him. Surely this phrase goes beyond a mere formality to a common understanding between believers—in this case, James, John, Barnabas, Peter and Paul—that they were bonded (as steel bonds to steel) together by Christ. *Koinonia* was the word used for this common linkage. It was more than a handshake; it was a recognition of being inseparably together in Christ and stood as the integrating power of their new missionary group.

In this new Christian sense, *koinonia* was not some kind of mystical brotherhood or transformation of a person into a god.<sup>9</sup> It meant deeper participation—full participation of the believers in the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16). It united believers with the exalted Lord, and this union came by direct action of God himself. For Paul, this participation incorporated the believer into the death, burial, resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. This common experience welded the believing group together.

Yet this *koinonia* (participation) did not dissolve the identity or personality of the believer. For example, one small steel plate can be bonded to another even stronger steel beam. God’s direct action resulted in a new and stronger relationship between the believer and God based on faith in Christ and the forgiveness of sin. Paul gave expression to participating in this new relationship by using *koinonia*.

## KOINONIA CAN MEAN SUFFERING

This fellowship was not all pleasure or comfort. Philippians 3:10 shows that participating in His

suffering, as did the apostles, is part of the suffering of Christ. The true apostle shared in, was bound by, and had a reciprocal partnership between one person or more with regard to this suffering in Christ: A unique apostles’ *koinonia*, so to speak. This partnership in suffering set apart a true apostle (cf. Romans 16:7).

*Koinonia...was more than a handshake; it was a recognition of being inseparably together in Christ and stood as the integrating power of their new missionary group.*

Paul’s gospel never allowed for individualism. One of the problems of the Corinthian church was that they were individualists (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:12ff.). They were not a unified body. They used their gifts individualistically, and Paul corrected this (1 Corinthians 12:27ff.). Gifts were not possessed by an individual but shared in Christ with others.

Paul was not an individualist nor did he allow for individualism in the use of *koinonia*. He was very practical in his use of the term and always gave it a Christological, communitarian, organic meaning. The concept was not used of a person who shared in Christ but always of a person who shared in Christ in relationship with others.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND OF KOINONIA

*Koinonia* was that one Greek term Paul could use to express his Jewish understanding of the Hebrew word *hesed* (mercy), which may stand in the background of *koinonia*. All of the different translations of *koinonia* and its associated words have pointed to intimate relationship. In this case the intimacy is Christocentric. The peripheral bond of human fellowship in *koinonia* is held together by this centeredness in Christ. Yet in the background of this relationship may be the concept of

*The concept was not used of a person who shared in Christ but always of a person who shared in Christ in relationship with others.*



the primary relationship of the Jew with God or of Israel in covenant with God.

The covenant probably is positioned behind the relational sense of *koinonia*. God made a covenant with His people. It was a contract cut in blood sacrifice between two partners. As portrayed in the Old Testament prophets, fidelity was key to this covenant partnership. Unfortunately, the covenant stipulations were broken by unfaithful Israel (Amos 5, Micah 3). Israel became a bankrupt covenant partner. But the glory of *hesed*, God's covenant mercy, is the stupendous payment of debt by the faithful partner *Yahweh*. The bankrupt debtor could not meet the covenant obligation. *Hesed* paid the debt incurred by the indebted partner for the sake of maintaining the relationship (*koinonia*).

**The business background of the idea of *koinonia* may also give added meaning to the reality of Christian fellowship in small groups.**

The Jewish idea of *hesed* (covenant mercy), which very likely influences Paul's selection of the word *koinonia*, expresses the value God places on the relationship He has with His children. But *hesed* alone cannot go beyond explaining the value of the relationship to explaining its full nature: In Christ the fiduciary balance is completed, and righteousness has been credited to an otherwise empty account (cf. Romans 4:3,5). Sufficient funds have been transferred into an overdrawn account. The righteousness of Christ restores the broken covenant to a new level of relationship. It is this *koinonia* with God in Christ that is now the center of restored covenantal partnership. The *koinonia* that believers have together in Christ comes about through the creative intervention of God himself in the context of fiduciary reality.<sup>10</sup>

**KOINONIA AS A BUSINESS TERM**

We have already seen that *koinonia* can mean association, communion, fellowship, close relationship, participation, sharing,

companion, partner, or one who shares.<sup>11</sup>

Paul and his partners in tent making, Priscilla and Aquilla, were accustomed to business terminology and understood credit, account, ledger, etc.<sup>12</sup> It would not be surprising for Paul to use *koinonia* to express deep spiritual truth since it was already part of his commercial vocabulary as a business, economic, financial, and corporate term.

The New Testament context supports Paul's use of *koinonia* as a commercial term. Luke used the word *koinonoi* to refer to James and John as business partners with Simon (Luke 5:10).

Paul not only gave special spiritual meaning to *koinonia*, but he used other words from the marketplace to express salvific meaning. He used business words to express the crediting to our account of righteousness—an otherwise overdrafted account replenished by God's grace in Christ. Note how Paul admonished Philemon, a businessman, to credit against his account anything Onesimus, the fugitive slave-now-a-believer, may have stolen. From one businessman to another Paul in essence says, "Put it on my charge card."

Is it possible that Paul and Philemon may have been business partners or associates? The same word (*koinonon*) Luke used for the partners James, John, and Simon, Paul used of himself and Philemon (Philemon 17).

Even more interesting is the appearance, side by side, of two commercial, business terms in Philemon: *koinonon*, business associate or partner (verse 17) and *elloga*, charge to my account (verse 18). As a businessman, Paul chose words from his commercial world to express deeper, spiritual truth.

*Koinonon* (business partner) may indicate an economic bond in common enterprise and may also be speaking about their bond in Christ. Paul may be counting on the closeness and intimacy of his relationship with Philemon to abrogate the damage done by the slave Onesimus, thus giving an expanded meaning to *koinonon*. Philemon and Paul may have been close in their business and now closer in their association in

Christ. Paul appeals to this intimacy for the sake of a new partnership he, Philemon, and Onesimus now have in Christ.

What does this say about *koinonia*? Probably in a day not as litigious as ours, the word of a partner was more important than anything else, and it was perhaps accompanied by the "right hand of fellowship." The right hand of *koinonias* perhaps meant more than a simple, even fraternal, handshake. It was probably the serious handshake of intimate, close partnership in business, possibly as important as a present-day legal contract.

Thus, *koinonia* brought to a relationship an ever-deepening sense of closeness, fidelity, and intimacy in a business partnership. This is why Paul very likely chose this term to express closeness in Christ.


**HALLELUAH, JESUS IS MINE!**

A partnership in Christ could be seen in three ways: (1) sharing a common resource; (2) common ownership in a resource; (3) alert and responsible stewardship of a central resource. The business background of the idea of *koinonia* may also give added meaning to the reality of Christian fellowship in small groups.

In a very special sense, it might be said that the group "owns" Christ. But this should not be understood to mean that Christ is a marketable commodity. Nor should this new or radical notion of "owning" Christ be understood as in any way diminishing His Sonship, deity, or Lordship over us. Rather, what we have in this added view of fellowship in Christ is another picture in understanding the gospel alongside the image of adoption into a family. He owns us. And in a very real, yet subordinate way, we own Him.

Finally, understanding fellowship this way helps us highlight the accent that falls on the concept of a group as a tight partnership.<sup>13</sup> This is the special partnership of those who "own" Christ, not as a commodity but as the central resource of their spiritual survival. Therefore, a group would doggedly fight the powers of sin and individualism to keep Him central.

Paul's commercial background gives to this

new *koinonia* in Christ added significance. Fellowship in a small group takes on the added and appropriate dimension of close associates who have shares in Christ, whom they “own” in a very special way. Such a group can say, “Hallelujah, Jesus is mine!” 

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## ENDNOTES

1. The common idea that *koinonia* infers what affects everyone or is shared by everyone “was expanded by the Greek creative genius to all types of common enterprise, legal, social, civic, sexual, and religious.” See Josef Hainz, *Koinonia, “Kirch” als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1982), 186. Paul’s genius expands it even further.
2. For example, in Philippians 1:5 *koinon-ia* is translated as “your fellowship” in the KJV, RSV; “your partnership,” NASB; “your sympathetic cooperation,” Amplified Bible; and “you have shared in,” Jewish New Testament.
3. *Ibid.*, 163.
4. *Ibid.*
5. BAGD, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University Press, 1979), 438–439.
6. S. Zodhiates, ed., *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, KJV (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1991), 1472.
7. W.E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 420.
8. Although we must heed Hainz’ suggestion that “*koinonia* does have a special church dimension”; 193.
9. J. Schattenmann, “Fellowship,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 643.
10. *Ibid.*
11. BAGD, 439f.
12. *Ibid.*, 477.
13. C.M. Laymon, ed., *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1971), 732. I used the phrase “gospel enterprise” earlier in the article to highlight my idea.

# The Pastor's Response to the Internet

BY DARRYN  
SCHESKE

*Any church...that  
has an Internet  
connection should  
consider taking  
steps to implement  
some type of  
Internet policy.*

Let me ask you a question. Have you heard anything about the Internet today? In just 1 month's time, the Internet was mentioned over 2,486 times on CNN alone. Almost every major retailer in the world is now on-line, and the majority of television commercials now include a World Wide Web address. The presence of the Internet in everyday life is everywhere.

Pastors cannot ignore the effect of this medium on people in their communities and congregations. You no longer need personal computers to surf the Internet. TV-based web browsers are now available for under \$200. A recent Barna report estimates that although 42 percent of the population has access to a personal computer, 98 percent of U.S. homes have a television.

In our part of the country, Microsoft recently acquired ComCast, the largest cable company in the U.S., with plans to provide Internet connections to every home via the existing cable network. The Internet will soon be as easy to browse as it is to pick up FM radio. Plus, with Microsoft's release of Windows 98, Internet access will be completely integrated into the operating system of every PC sold worldwide. The Internet is here to stay.

## ON A POSITIVE NOTE

I'm glad for the Internet. It's a wonderful tool. With E-mail I stay in touch with people all over the world, communicating instantly regardless of distance. My wife and I are both second-generation MKs. When our grandfathers, John Lynn and the late Alfred Cawston, went to their respective mission fields of Africa and India in the early 1940s, it could take 6 months to send a letter home from the field and receive back a reply. Today, I can send an E-mail to a missionary in Tibet and receive a response within 5 minutes.

*The greatest asset of the Internet is  
its greatest problem: You can find  
just about anything you want to  
look for—good or bad.*

I can make phone calls over the Internet (I use VoxPhone 3.0, [www.voxphone.com](http://www.voxphone.com)) to my parents who are Assemblies of God missionaries to Belize, Central America. It's a local call for both of us to our Internet Service Providers (ISPs) so we can talk as long as we want with no long distance charges.

The Internet is the primary support mechanism for thousands of computer users worldwide. If a company or organization maintains a computer network, it is virtually impossible to support that network without an Internet connection.

The Internet is the greatest research tool imaginable. You can find information on just about any subject. I regularly use Internet resources for writing and sermon preparation. Most universities and research libraries have been on the Internet for years. And if it's not on-line, the largest bookstore in the world ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) is now on the Internet, with an inventory of over 2 million books in stock.

We will see more and more churches on-line in the next few years. You can visit a directory of Assemblies of God churches on-line at the newly updated Assemblies of God home page at <http://www.ag.org>. *Enrichment Journal* now has an Internet presence. You can visit its home page at <http://www.enrichmentjournal.org>.

## ON A PERILOUS NOTE

Pastors need to proceed into the on-line community with caution. The greatest asset of the Internet is its greatest problem: You can find



## ***Tools To Monitor and Control On-Line Activity***

Monitor and control on-line activity with one of these seven tools.

**Cyber Patrol 3.1.** List price: On-line registration, \$29.95; subscriptions: 6 months, \$19.95; 1 year, \$29.95. Microsystems Software, Framingham, Mass.; 800-828-2608, 508-879-9000; fax: 508-626-8515; [www.cyberpatrol.com](http://www.cyberpatrol.com).

**Cybersitter 2.1.** List price: \$39.95. Solid Oak Software Inc., Santa Barbara, Calif.; 800-388-2761, 805-967-9853; fax: 805-967-1614; [www.solidoak.com](http://www.solidoak.com).

**Cyber Snoop 2.0.** List price: \$29.95. Pearl Software Inc., Chester Springs, Pa.; 800-732-7596; fax: 610-827-7978; [www.pearlsw.com](http://www.pearlsw.com).

**Net Nanny 3.1.** List price: \$39.95. Net Nanny Ltd., Vancouver, B.C., Canada; 800-340-7177, 604-662-8522; fax: 604-662-8525; [www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com).

**Rated-PG.** List price: \$54.95. PC DataPowr, Irvine, Calif.; 714-553-8883; fax: 714-853-8136; [www.ratedpg.com](http://www.ratedpg.com).

**SurfWatch 1.6.** Direct price: \$19.95. SpyGlass Inc., Los Altos, Calif.; 888-677-9452, 415-948-9500; fax: 415-948-9577; [www.surfwatch.com](http://www.surfwatch.com).

**X Stop 2.0.** List Price: \$29.95. Logon Data Corp., Anaheim, Calif.; 888-786-7999, 714-577-4929; fax: 714-577-4932; [www.xstop.com](http://www.xstop.com).

—Darryn Scheske

just about anything you want to look for—good or bad. Several issues must be addressed regarding on-line activity, especially in relation to protection of churches.

### **SECURITY ISSUES**

Most churches do not think too much about data security. Passwords and good security habits, such as logging off the network when you leave your desk, can seem silly and unnecessary. I still have a hard time getting our secretaries to stop telling their passwords to each other. “Why the clandestine, Mission Impossible behavior?” you ask. The Internet exposes your PC and your network to a whole new set of potential risks.

Sound paranoid? Perhaps. But what’s undeniable is that security breaches aren’t merely the stuff of legend. Malicious programs with ominous-sounding names such as WinNuke have caused system crashes when downloaded from the Internet. Hackers—individuals who would delight in crashing your network, corrupting your data, or worse, gaining access to financial information—do exist.

The Internet has also given new impetus to an old security threat: computer viruses. Thanks to the Internet, new viruses appear at the dizzying rate of more than 200 a month.

### ***The Internet has become the pornographers’ playground.***

If you are connected to the Internet, you must install virus detection software for your own protection. If you plan to go on-line or host a web site for your church via your local network, get advice from a network security analyst before you go on-line.

### **PORNOGRAPHY AND OTHER OBJECTIONABLE CONTENT ON-LINE**

The Internet has become the pornographers’ playground. Every imaginable (and unimaginable) type of pornography is available. When people tell you that pornography on the Web is available only to those with credit cards, don’t believe them. There’s plenty of filth out there for free. Also, the racists, cultists, Holocaust deniers, paranoid conspiracy buffs, militant hate groups, and homosexual community all have access to post their material on the Web just as much as we have the ability to present the gospel on this new medium.

In addition, Internet "Chat room" (where users can converse by typing responses to each other) and USENET group discussions may be about subject matter a Christian would find objectionable.

## **SOMEBODY IS WATCHING**

What you do and where you go on the Internet should be no different than what you would do out in the real world. With the right software, owners of web sites can tell exactly who is accessing their pages and from where they originate. Small text files called "cookies" can be placed on your local machine identifying you to a web site the next time you come back. Other web site administrators can also see where you've been.

Here's how it works. Let's say I visit a web site for the first time. Without my knowing it, the server can gather information about where I

***What you do and where you go on the Internet should be no different than what you would do out in the real world.***

am connecting from, my E-mail address, the specifications of my PC, other sites I may have visited, and so on. A "cookie" is then transmitted and placed on my PC. The next time I come back to that site, any advertising that may be present is tailored to my "profile." The site knows where I am from and may provide custom links to other services such as my local news and weather forecast. In essence, the site "knows" me and attempts to automatically provide me with what I want. Should web site owners desire to generate more income, they may sell the information collected to a marketing firm that targets my profile for other companies. Then solicitation E-mail may soon begin to appear in my mailbox. The truth is, you are not very anonymous on the Internet.

## **Corporate Policy Elements Governing Internet Use**

One way to reduce your risks and protect your church from potential litigation is to establish a corporate policy governing use of the Internet. Such a policy should have the following elements:

- *Remind employees that their computer is church property and may be used only for job-related tasks.*
- *Warn employees that their E-mail transmissions are not private and may be reviewed at anytime by the church.* This warning should appear in your employee manual and on each monitor when computers are turned on each day. Employees should be asked to sign a document acknowledging that their E-mail transmissions are subject to inspection.
- *Warn employees that the church reserves the right to inspect all files and programs on their computer hard drive.* Such a policy not only will help the church monitor compliance with the Internet policy, but it will also (1) protect the church against software piracy; (2) protect the church against sexual harassment claims; (3) promote accountability; and (4) enable church staff to locate important information on an employee's computer when the employee is absent from work. Employees should be asked to sign a document acknowledging that their computer files and programs are subject to inspection.
- *Require full use of an employee's name (and church name) when using the Internet.* This will reduce the risk of access to inappropriate sites.

Senior pastors should give a designated board member or staff member complete access to their computers and passwords and encourage periodic inspections. Such a practice will promote accountability.

You also should install an Internet filtering tool to help reduce the likelihood that your employees will access inappropriate materials.<sup>1</sup> (See sidebar on "Tools To Monitor and Control On-Line Activity.")

### **ENDNOTE**

1. *PC Magazine* staff writer Kathryn Munro recently reviewed seven Internet filtering utilities. The review can be accessed on-line at <http://www8.zdnet.com/pcmay/features/utility/filter/open.htm> (*PC Magazine*, 8 April 1997).

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

Your Internet Service Provider can also see where and what you are browsing. This can be potentially harmful to your church organization and its reputation if someone is viewing something questionable on your Internet connection.

## **PROTECTING YOUR CHURCH**

The rapid development of the Internet has left churches, organizations, and companies in somewhat uncharted legal territory. If someone in your

***The Internet exposes your PC and your network to a whole new set of potential risks.***


organization downloads objectionable material—pornography, for example—and another employee or member sees it, your church could be liable for a harassment suit. Worse yet, if a user downloads material that is illegal within your community, your church could face criminal charges.

For ways to establish a corporate

***How you use the Internet  
reflects your own discipline and  
personal moral integrity.***

Internet-use policy see sidebar on  
“Corporate Policy Elements Governing  
Internet Use.”

**CONCLUSION**

The Internet is arguably the greatest communication asset of our day. In the years to come all of us will venture one way or another onto the information superhighway. The Internet itself is not evil. We must remember that the Internet is a communications medium just as TV and radio. It's just newer and as yet unregulated. Therefore, how you use the Internet reflects your own discipline and personal moral integrity. 

*Darryn Scheske is senior associate pastor  
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Pennsylvania.*



# Managing Church Conflict Creatively

## PART 1

BY RICHARD D.  
DOBBINS

**Conflict is normal  
in any human  
relationship, and  
the church is no  
exception.**

Acts 6:1–7 reminds us that churches are never free from conflict when they are true to their mission, and you don't pastor long until you discover the need for conflict management tools.

A majority of the conflict experienced in churches is the product of changing times rather than creative leadership. Remarkable changes have occurred in the pressures that pastors bear compared to pressures they experienced when their word was seldom questioned and their authority prevailed. Pastors need not be surprised when they find their authority and plans challenged, and they are caught up in a whole storm of protest. It's happening in every institution in our society, including the church.

Laypeople, frustrated by feelings of powerlessness from personal or professional change, often displace their frustrations and act them out in the church. Why there? The church is one of the few places they fear little or no recrimination. These conflicts must be managed constructively by mature church leadership.

Let's look at how the apostles handled the first major conflict in the Early Church (cf. Acts 6:1–7). The Jerusalem church was experimenting in "holding all things common." The Grecian widows, who were part of the Dispersion, lived outside Jerusalem and were saying they lived too far away to get as fair a share of the goods being divided as the Hebrew widows who lived in Jerusalem.

### STAGES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The apostles followed a 3-stage pattern of conflict management: (1) *Desensitization*. The widows were allowed to air their complaints, desensitizing the conflict. (2) *Deliberation*. There was time for serious, mature discussion of the conflict. (3) *Decision*.

Let's take a closer look at how this New

Testament formula for the creative management of conflict actually works.

### DESENSITIZATION

Desensitization requires active involvement by leadership. You cannot constructively manage conflict by continually avoiding or denying it. You can't say, "The problem isn't there."

And you cannot constructively manage conflict by dominating it or simply forbidding it to happen by saying, "We *will* be in agreement. Do you understand me?" That approach won't work.

Instead, you first reassure everyone involved that conflict is normal in any human relationship, and the church is no exception. The ideal of perpetual peace in the church—without conflict—is unscriptural and unrealistic. Remind your people that differing viewpoints are perfectly normal. Emphasize that conflicts occur because people *choose* to look at matters in different ways, not necessarily because those matters *are* the way people *choose* to see them.

**You don't pastor long until you  
discover the need for conflict  
management tools.**

If you're going to be a master at handling desensitization, you cannot be *ego-involved* by seeing a situation only your unique way. If you say, "Well, this is the way God has shown it to me, and this is the way it's going to be," you're not going to desensitize anything. Rather, you will only *intensify* it, because you have made debating the position you have taken equal to debating with God.

Before you get too ego-involved in declaring your divine revelation, listen to what the Lord may be saying to others. The apostles let the Hebrew and Grecian widows express their

***A majority of the conflict experienced in churches is the product of changing times rather than creative leadership.***

feelings before they went to the next stage of conflict management.

Why? Once anxiety is reduced, a broader perspective can be taken. In almost any situation, the Holy Spirit can lead us to many alternatives.

Abraham Lincoln frequently suggested other possible interpretations of circumstances. He put all the potential points of view before people so that his debate opponent couldn't say anything new. Desensitization involves helping people see several different ways of viewing a set of circumstances. After people's feelings have been sufficiently surfaced and aired, move to the second stage of conflict management.

## **DELIBERATION**

Consider the various points of view. In trying to help His disciples overcome their tendency to fear, Jesus said, "Fear not." Perhaps He was giving them the opportunity to have the broadest possible range of alternatives.

Christ wants a congregation to be open to any creative direction the Spirit of God may want to bring. But when church members and church leaders commit themselves to an ego-involved position, their anxiety that they may be proven wrong frequently builds rigid defenses that get in the way of God leading them the way He wants them to go.

Occasional personality conflicts between segments of the congregation and the pastor can affect the pastor's influence. But in most instances, it is a conflict with the *position* of pastor as the source of legitimate power in church leadership. People who refuse to engage in sincere, mature mediation while respecting the position of the pastor need to be seen for what they are and dealt with as decisively as possible (cf. 3 John 9–12 for the scriptural precedent).

John evidently felt he had been patient


enough with Diotrephes—a man who had a long history of being difficult to deal with in the church. John showed the church what he, as their pastor, believed to be the model of a good man (Demetrius) and what he believed to be the model of an evil man (Diotrephes). Then he told them to avoid being like Diotrephes but to follow those who had a good report among them.

Paul was not quite as patient as John. As a pastor I frequently found Paul a great comfort to my heart, especially when I read his prayer for Alexander: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works" (2 Timothy 4:14).

The extreme action needed to deal with this kind of person should be rare in the life of a church. Most people—dealt with in love and patience—will move through conflict satisfactorily. In the nearly 26 years I pastored, the church board rescinded the memberships of 10 people. And when our sister churches inquired

about any of these people, we were faithful to report the facts in terms of how these people had affected the unity of the congregation and the work of God.

In some instances these individuals learned from their discipline and did well. In other cases they caused the same kinds of disturbances in other churches that they caused among us.

Many people who cause disturbances in churches tend to be paranoid in their personalities—tending to feel either persecuted or messianic. Most congregations will have a person or two like this. If you try to nail them to a cross, you'll wind up with the marks in your own hands. And if you try to follow them in their messianic moments, it won't be long until they will be pastoring the church. 

*Part 2 will continue the discussion on the three stages of conflict management.*

*Richard D. Dobbins, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and founder and clinical director of EMERGE Ministries in Akron, Ohio.*



## Christian Submission vs. Codependency

BY ALAN W. ARAM

*Sometimes people confuse having self-confidence... with being selfish or proud.*

In counseling with Christians who endeavor to integrate psychological and spiritual healing, I often encounter unbalanced beliefs about submission and unhealthy dependency, which is often referred to as codependency. Sometimes people confuse having self-confidence (who they are and what is important to them) with being selfish or proud, which would be considered sinful.

Dependency is a universal and appropriate psychological need in childhood, and we become less dependent, more autonomous, as we mature. Spiritually, we are to depend on the Lord, but that does not negate having a sense of self or an accurate self-worth. God created us with talents and abilities we should utilize and not deny.

Lucifer was out of balance in his goal of total independence when he attempted to be like God. People can also be out of balance in the opposite direction if they avoid using their God-given gifts and talents, thinking self-depreciation equals righteousness.

To avoid Lucifer's sinful error of having a grandiose self-worth—"I'm entitled to everything. I want to be like God"—some people advocate going to the opposite extreme of self-depreciation—"I'm entitled to nothing. I have no sense of self-worth." Rather than either of these, we should strive to know who we are—our values, needs, wishes, strengths, and weaknesses. Having an accurate self-worth is qualitatively different. A person who is raised in a self-deprecating atmosphere will often have a poorly defined sense of self or an inaccurately negative sense of self-worth, which is neither Christian nor healthy.

Codependent individuals are initially attractive in relationships. They are willing to meet our needs and wishes and seem to have no needs of their own. They appear loving and giving, but we soon realize they are leaning on us or following us because they don't know what else to do.

In a codependent relationship, a self-depreciating person fails to add his or her point of view, robbing the relationship of a vital second opinion on the complexities of life. In unhealthy codependent relationships, people tolerate neglect and abuse because they cannot stand being alone. They have no sense of self or identity to guide them. Further, it is psychologically easier, though certainly not healthier, to deny our sense of self—our needs and wishes—rather than risk the interpersonal conflict of having those needs met.

*In a codependent relationship, a self-depreciating person fails to add his or her point of view, robbing the relationship of a vital second opinion on the complexities of life.*

Codependent individuals have two basic sets of beliefs: (1) They are helpless and inadequate. (2) They need to find somebody to take care of them. They often feel taken advantage of in their relationships and seek counseling for depression or anxiety.

### SCRIPTURES RELATED TO SUBMISSION

Several passages of Scripture address the concept of healthy Christian submission. In each passage when people are encouraged to set aside their own needs and wishes, it is for some greater good, not because they lack self-worth.

*Matthew 16:24.* \* "Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' " This verse is often quoted out of context. The phrase "deny himself" refers to putting God's will above our own



will. By doing so, we understand that God will meet our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

*Matthew 26:39.* “Not as I will, but as you will.” Christ’s supreme example of submission at the cross is noteworthy. He knew what He wanted, yet submitted to the greater good manifested in the will of His Father.

***We must develop an accurate sense of self, knowing when to strive to have our needs and wishes fulfilled and when to knowingly set them aside for some greater good.***

*Luke 10:25–27.* “Love your neighbor as yourself” assumes some degree of self-love and an awareness of what our needs and wishes are.

*Romans 12:3.* “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” We could also say we are not to think

of ourselves more *lowly* than we ought to think, but with sober (accurate) judgment.

*Ephesians 5:22,33.* This passage discusses wives being subject to their husbands and calls for husbands to love their wives sacrificially. Both are needed to run a healthy marriage. When a husband loves his wife sacrificially, it is safe to be submissive to him.

Nowhere in these verses are we told not to have a sense of what is best for ourselves, but neither are we encouraged to demand our needs and preferences be met.

### **FAMILY INFLUENCES ON CODEPENDENCY**

How is the codependent personality style learned? Some methods of child rearing contribute to a poorly defined identity, and certain church teachings may inadvertently encourage codependency.

Parenting styles and other factors can contribute to codependency and an undeveloped sense of self. These include: domineering or autocratic parenting, unequal balance of power in the

parents’ marriage, overprotective parents, a domineering older sibling, alcoholism, and physical or sexual abuse.

As a result, these factors can produce children who do not have strong convictions about their beliefs. They have not thought through their beliefs, discussed both sides of issues, or practiced standing by their beliefs in a carefully incremented manner.

Some church teachings can inadvertently contribute to a person developing a negative or poorly defined sense of self. A misunderstanding of total depravity can lead to an inaccurately negative self-worth. Although we are totally unable to earn our salvation, we do many good things in life (cf. *Matthew 7:9–11*). When Scripture talks about “our righteousness is as filthy rags” (*Isaiah 64:6*), it is comparing our righteous acts to God’s righteousness. This comparison does not negate the positive aspects of our good deeds but puts them in the perspective of God’s righteousness.

***People cannot truly submit unless they also know what their will is.***

Pastors should balance hell fire with grace in their preaching. They should encourage their congregation to ask questions about a teaching or a sermon. Church members raised in an atmosphere where self-depreciation equals righteousness may interpret a balanced sermon as condemnatory and miss the emphasis on grace.

We must develop an accurate sense of self, knowing when to strive to have our needs and wishes fulfilled and when to knowingly set them aside for some greater good. People cannot truly submit unless they also know what their will is. **E**

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

*Alan W. Aram, Psy.D., is a clinical psychologist in Springfield, Missouri.*



# Ministry Wives: Accountable to Ourselves, Others, God

BY LYNN DUGAN

*Accountable women  
know how to help  
others carry their  
c rushing burdens.*

Accountability to others is not easy for ministry wives. It grows out of close relationships, and ministry wives sometimes feel they shouldn't develop personal friendships within their congregation. Others feel that people expect them to be perfect, and they're afraid to show just how imperfect they are. Some ministry wives that have had close relationships have experienced hurts that have never healed.

In 1989 I helped form a ministry wives support group in the Washington, D.C., area for mutual support and encouragement in life and ministry. The individuals involved in forming the group realized we needed to be accountable to ourselves, to others, and to God.

## SAFETY IN NUMBERS

We created a safe place for ministry wives to share, pray, and be accountable with one another. One woman wrote:

"The unique position of a pastor's wife does not allow freedom to share her needs or concerns with other women in her congregation; it's not always safe. Because other ministry wives have faced the same situations and problems, they can offer understanding, encouragement, and an objective viewpoint. If a ministry wife has been hurt, it's easy to keep busy and close off meaningful relationships, but isolation is not healthy."

Many ministry wives experiencing loneliness feel as if they exist on an island. No matter how lush and lovely their environment, they desire a bridge to the mainland. A support group provides that bridge by creating an atmosphere where trust and commitment are the fabric of meaningful relationships.

After one of our "Alive and Empowered" events, one pastor's wife commented: "This support group has helped me be accountable to God in my own spiritual life, deepened my

love for the Lord, and led me to a new friend."

## MINISTRY WIVES ACCOUNTABLE TO OURSELVES

*"For each one shall carry [her] own load"* (Galatians 6:5\*).

We are responsible for our "backpack" of attitudes and actions toward people and circumstances that come into our lives. God does not leave us to struggle alone. He shares our load. He invites all who are weary to come to Him. (Cf. Matthew 11:28–30.)

Many ministry wives have received support from our group that has helped reduce their load and enabled them to better account for their behavior.

- *Vulnerability.* "This support group helps me be more vulnerable—more honest so I am free to share my needs."

## WHY MINISTRY WIVES NEED A SUPPORT GROUP

**1. Encouragement.** A support group provides a safe and confidential atmosphere in which caring friendships and mentoring relationships can flourish. Prayer support for personal concerns is provided through one-on-one prayer partners.

**2. Equipping.** Through seminars and retreats, the expressed needs of the women in your area can be met. Pastors' wives can share skills they have learned. Mentor relationships are encouraged in the Titus 2:3–5 role model.

**3. Edification.** A support group provides a platform where ministry wives from various evangelical denominations can unite in worship of God and prayer for one another. Personal testimonies will encourage them in their ministry role.

—Lynn Dugan

- *Relief*. “I can feel the pressure from my fears being relieved.”
- *Renewal*. “It renews my calling. I am encouraged.”
- *Courage*. “The support group meetings give me courage to press on in my own life and ministry.”
- *Freedom*. “I have the freedom to be who I am.”
- *Equipping*. “I soak up everything and go home refreshed, equipped, and motivated.”

## MINISTRY WIVES ACCOUNTABLE TO OTHERS

*“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).*

The word burden denotes a crushing load that calls for others to help carry it. Accountable women know how to help others carry their crushing burdens through:

- *Support*. “I can’t be objective sometimes about my own needs. When someone is praying for me, I feel supported and loved.”
- *Openness*. “It is encouraging to see fellow heirs opening up to each other, holding each other to the highest for Christ’s sake.”
- *Prayer*. “There is someone else holding me up. They stand in the gap in prayer for me.”
- *Mentoring*. “I am thankful for the mentors who come alongside me. They give me a chance to be real.”

***We are responsible for our “backpack” of attitudes and actions toward people and circumstances that come into our lives.***

- *Friendship*. “I don’t feel isolated when I am with other pastors’ wives. I am free to be accountable to them because they know what I’m talking about.”
- *Understanding*. “I’m not misunder-

## HOW TO START A SUPPORT GROUP

1. *Collect the names of local evangelical pastors’ wives, and invite them to come for tea and to discuss forming a support group.* Or invite ministry wives you are personally acquainted with to form a core group. Include only women married to ministers. Encourage missionary women and laywomen to form their own unique groups.
2. *Form an advisory council.* It will plan the large-group programs, using suggestions from the small groups regarding their women’s needs.
3. *Adopt a statement of faith.* To receive a copy of the D.C. Metro Association’s guidelines, contact the National Association of Evangelicals at 1023 15th St., NW Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005.
4. *Agree to meet as a large group four times a year—winter, spring, summer, fall.* Form smaller groups according to geographical area to meet monthly to pray for each other.
5. *Contact the NAE for copies of the newsletter W.O.M.E.N. (Wives of Ministers Encouraging Nationwide).*

—Lynn Dugan

***Many ministry wives experiencing loneliness feel as if they exist on an island...they desire a bridge... A support group provides that bridge by creating an atmosphere where trust and commitment are the fabric of meaningful relationships.***

stood when I’m with other pastors’ wives. They bear my burden.”

These women “love one another deeply from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22). One wife wrote: “The dear women carried me through the darkest time that my husband and I have yet experienced.”


## MINISTRY WIVES ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

*“So then, each of us shall give an account of [herself] to God” (Romans 14:12).*

One of the ministry wives said it for all of us: “God’s loving support comes through this fellowship and deepens my love for the Lord.”

An accountability support group provides ministry wives the atmosphere where they can be themselves, develop close friendships, and come closer to God in worship and biblical teaching.

Friendships are an accountable mirror of the Trinity. We can see God working in our sisters’ hearts and ours because godly attributes are reflected. Someday these wives will hear from the Lord: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

Support groups are marvelous vehicles for accountability. That’s why I always smile and say, “If you don’t find one, found one!” 

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

*Lynn Dugan is a member of the national advisory board of Ministry Wives Network International and founder of D.C. Metro Association of National Evangelical Pastors’ Wives.*



# Federal Court Says Assemblies of God Pastor Is Self-Employed

BY RICHARD  
R. HAMMAR

A federal appeals court has ruled that for federal income tax reporting purposes an Assemblies of God minister was self-employed rather than an employee. This article will review the facts of the case, summarize the court's decision, and address the significance of the case to other ministers and churches.

## FACTS

James Alford, an ordained Assemblies of God minister, served as pastor of an Assemblies of

God church in Hampton, Arkansas, for several years. He reported his income taxes as self-employed while serving as pastor of the church. The IRS audited three of Rev. Alford's tax returns and determined that he should have reported his income taxes as an employee rather than as self-employed. This reclassification resulted in additional taxes.

Rev. Alford paid the taxes under protest and then sued the government in a federal court in Arkansas, seeking a refund. The court agreed with the IRS that Rev. Alford

**For federal income tax reporting purposes most clergy are employees, but for social security purposes all clergy are self-employed.**

**TABLE 1.—U.S. Supreme Court 12-Factor Test**

Factor	Explanation
1. The hiring party's right to control the manner and means by which the product is accomplished—	Indicates a worker is an employee.
2. The skill required—	The more skill that is required, the more likely a worker is self employed.—
3. The source of the instrumentalities and tools—	Workers who provide their own are more likely self-employed.
4. The location of the work—	If the work occurs on the employer's premises, this indicates the worker is an employee.
5. The duration of the relationship between the parties—	The longer the relationship, the more likely a worker is an employee.
6. Whether the hiring party has the right to assign additional projects to the hired party—	Indicates a worker is an employee.
7. The extent of the hired party's discretion over when and how long to work—	The more discretion, the more likely the worker is self-employed.
8. The method of payment—	Employees are paid by the hour or week; self-employed workers are paid by the job.
9. The hired party's role in hiring and paying assistants—	Self-employed workers hire and pay their own assistants; employees do not.
10. Whether the work is part of the regular business of the hiring party—	An employee's work is part of the regular business of the employer.
11. Whether the hiring party is in business—	Employers are more likely to work for organizations that provide services or products to the public.
12. The provision of employee benefits—	Employees are more likely to receive fringe benefits.

was an employee and that the IRS had correctly assessed the additional taxes.

## THE APPEALS COURT'S RULING

Rev. Alford appealed the court's ruling to a federal appeals court which reversed the lower court's decision and concluded that for income tax reporting purposes Rev. Alford was self-employed rather than an employee. As a result, it ordered the IRS to refund to Rev. Alford the additional taxes he paid because of the erroneous decision by the IRS that he was an employee.

In deciding whether Rev. Alford, for federal income tax reporting purposes, was an employee or self-employed, the court applied a 12-factor test developed by the United States Supreme Court. (These factors are summarized in Table 1, p.92.)

The appeals court concluded, on the basis of this 12-factor test, that Rev. Alford was not an employee of the local church he served. It acknowledged that the following facts suggested that Rev. Alford was an employee of his church: (1) his salary (though not based on percentage of church income) was dependent on church revenue; (2) the church

***Certain fringe benefits provided by a church on behalf of a worker are nontaxable only if the worker is an employee.***

paid several fringe benefits, including a portion of his self-employment tax, a housing allowance, and health insurance; (3) the church provided him with a credit card to purchase gasoline; (4) the church provided him with an annual Christmas gift; and (5) the church made available a desk, chair, and copy machine.

On the other hand, the court concluded that the following additional facts demonstrated that Rev. Alford was self-employed: (1) he provided most of his own furniture; (2) he used his own car, computer, and library in the performance

of his duties; (3) he set his own schedule; (4) he was free to perform weddings, funerals, and revivals for a fee and was not required to pay over any of the fees to the church; (5) he was not expected to pay for a substitute pastor if one was necessary; and (6) he arranged for evangelists or special speakers and contributed to special collections taken for them.

## RELEVANCE OF THE CASE TO OTHER MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

What is the significance of this important ruling to other ministers and churches? Consider the following:

### 1. Continued confusion.

The *Alford* case will insure that the correct reporting status of ministers for income tax purposes will remain ambiguous.

### 2. "Dual tax status."

Most of the confusion associated with clergy tax preparation is based on the fact that clergy have a "dual tax status." For federal income tax reporting purposes most clergy are employees, but for social security purposes all clergy are self-employed (with respect to services performed in the exercise of ministry). Many church treasurers assume that ministers who are treated as employees for income tax purposes must be treated as employees for social security purposes. They accordingly withhold FICA taxes from the wages of their ministers just as they would for a nonminister church employee. While common, this approach is incorrect. All ministers are self-employed for social security purposes with respect to their ministerial services. As a result, they pay the self-employment tax, not FICA taxes. This is so even if, for income tax reporting purposes, the ministers are employees.

### 3. The Supreme Court's 12-factor test.

In deciding whether or not, for federal income tax reporting purposes, Rev. Alford was an employee or self-employed, the court relied on a 12-factor test developed by the United States Supreme Court (see Table 1). Ministers are free to use this test in determining

their own status for income tax reporting purposes.

### 4. What difference does it make?

What difference does it make whether a minister or other church staff member is an employee or self-employed? Consider the following:

#### *a. Reporting compensation.*

Employees report their compensation directly on Form 1040 (line 7—wages) and deduct unreimbursed (and "nonaccountable" reimbursed) business expenses on Schedule A, only if they itemize deductions and only to the extent that such expenses exceed 2 percent of adjusted gross income. Self-employed persons report compensation

***Persons who report their income taxes as self-employed face a significant risk of additional taxes and penalties if they are audited by the IRS and reclassified as employees.***

and business expenses on Schedule C. Business expenses are in effect deductible whether or not the minister itemizes deductions and are not subject to the 2 percent floor.

#### *b. Adjusted gross income.*

Adjusted gross income ordinarily will be higher for persons who report their federal income taxes as an employee, since unreimbursed (and "nonaccountable" reimbursed) business expenses are deductions from adjusted gross income. Self-employed persons deduct business expenses in computing adjusted gross income. Adjusted gross income is a figure that is important for many reasons. For example, the percentage limitations applicable to charitable contributions and medical expense deductions are tied to adjusted gross income.

#### *c. W-2 or 1099?*

Persons working for a church or church agency should receive a Form W-2 each year if they are employees and a Form 1099-MISC if they are self-employed (and receive at least \$600 in compensation).

**d. Tax-deferred annuities.**

Nonprofit employers, including churches, can offer “tax-deferred annuities” (also known as “403(b) annuities”) to their employees. These are a popular form of retirement program for many churches. These annuities are available to ministers whether they report their income taxes as employees or as self-employed. However, they are not available to nonminister church staff who are self-employed.

**e. Tax treatment of various fringe benefits.**

Certain fringe benefits provided by a church on behalf of a worker are nontaxable only if the worker is an employee. Examples include medical insurance premiums paid by a church on behalf of an employee; group term life insurance (up to \$50,000) provided by a church on behalf of an employee; amounts payable to employees on account of sickness, accident, or disability pursuant to an

employer-financed plan; and employer-sponsored “cafeteria plans” which permit employees to choose between receiving cash payments or a variety of fringe benefits.

**f. Audit risk.**

Self-employed persons face a much higher risk of having their tax returns audited. Why? IRS data reveals that the “voluntary reporting percentage” (i.e., persons who voluntarily report the correct amount of income) is 99.5 percent for employees covered by mandatory income tax withholding but is only 13 percent for persons not covered by mandatory withholding and for whom no 1099 or W-2 forms are filed. As a

***A minister's eligibility  
for a housing allowance is not  
affected by his or her tax  
reporting status.***

result, the IRS scrutinizes the tax returns of self-employed persons (who are not subject to tax withholding) much more closely than those of employees.

**g. Consequences of being reclassified as an employee.**

Persons who report their income taxes as self-employed face a significant risk of additional taxes and penalties if they are audited by the IRS and reclassified as employees. This is because many persons who report their income taxes as self-employed deduct unreimbursed (and “nonaccountable” reimbursed) business expenses as a deduction on Schedule C. If they are reclassified by the IRS as employees, their business expense deduction will be allowable only as an itemized deduction on Schedule A, and then only to the extent that the expenses exceed 2 percent of adjusted gross income. Persons who are not able to itemize end up with no deduction for their business expenses. This can result in a substantial increase in taxable income.

**h. Housing allowances.**

A minister's eligibility for a housing allowance is not affected by his or her tax reporting status. Employees and self-employed ministers are eligible for this benefit.



*i. Miscellaneous.*

Persons who are, for federal income tax reporting purposes, employees are more likely to be deemed employees for purposes of other laws, including the following: (1) workers compensation; (2) minimum wage and overtime; (3) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibits covered employers from discriminating in any employment decision on account of an employee's race, color, national origin, gender, or religion); (4) the Age Discrimination in Employment

Act (which prohibits covered employers from discriminating in any employment decision on account of an employee's age—if 40 years of age or older); (5) the Americans with Disabilities Act (which prohibits covered employers from discriminating in any employment decision on account of an employee's disability); and (6) state civil rights laws.

**5. Advantages of employee status.** Some ministers will find it easier to defend self-employed status on the basis of the *Alford* case. However, this should

***The simple fact is that in the vast majority of cases ministers will be better off for federal tax purposes by reporting as employees rather than as self-employed.***

not cause ministers who report their income taxes as employees to change their status to self-employed, nor should it keep self-employed ministers from changing to employee status. The simple fact is that in the vast majority of cases ministers will be better off for federal tax purposes by reporting as employees rather than as self-employed.

The advantages of employee status include:

- The value of various fringe benefits will be nontaxable, including the oftentimes significant cost of employer-paid health insurance premiums on the life of the minister and his or her dependents.
- The risk of an IRS audit is substantially lower.
- As an employee, a minister and his or her employing church avoid the additional taxes and penalties that may apply in the event a self-employed minister is audited by the IRS and reclassified as an employee.

The only "advantages" of self-employed status are that business expenses are deductible whether or not the minister is able to itemize deductions on Schedule C, and these expenses are not subject to the 2 percent "floor" that applies to employee business expenses (deductible only to the extent they exceed 2 percent of adjusted gross income). However, employees can realize the same benefits by having their employing church adopt an accountable business expense reimbursement policy. **E**

*Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA, serves as legal counsel to The General Council of the Assemblies of God. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he is the author of over 30 books on legal and tax issues for churches and pastors. This article is excerpted from his Church, Law, & Tax Report newsletter.*



**"When you said I was a key leader, I didn't know you meant I had to open and close up!"**

# The Confidentiality Factor of HIV/AIDS: Blessing or Curse?

BY DAVID BATTY

*Until the person with AIDS chooses to go public, how can you work around the confidentiality factor and provide effective ministry?*

• “We just had a lay leader in our church die of AIDS. He did not allow anyone to know he was dying of AIDS. The feelings of the whole congregation are still raw over this incident.”

• “I’m providing premarital counseling to a couple—he is HIV positive; she is not. She doesn’t want to tell her parents about his HIV status until after they are married.”

• “When it comes to AIDS, I feel like I’ve been locked out. I’ve pastored here for 16 years, and I’m still waiting for my first opportunity to minister to someone with AIDS.”

Three pastors—each faced with a different dimension of confidentiality surrounding HIV/AIDS.\* Is the confidentiality factor accomplishing its intended purpose of helping persons with HIV/AIDS? Does it make it harder for persons with HIV/AIDS to experience God’s help?

Why do people with AIDS want to keep this secret? Should you, as their minister, encourage them to go public with their HIV status?

Until the person with AIDS chooses to go public, how can you work around the confidentiality factor and provide effective ministry?

## CASE 1: THE CHURCH LEADER’S SECRET

“In our young and growing church, he was a strong, dynamic leader. People looked up to him. It came as a shock when he told me a routine hospital visit for medical tests revealed he had AIDS.

“Then came the second disappointing surprise: both he and his family requested that no one in the church be told of the cause of his illness. In the last several years of church leadership his family had been very open to others. Now in their greatest hour of need, the door was slammed shut.

“As this man’s health deteriorated, others in our church came to me and asked, ‘Pastor, does Bill have AIDS?’ The family’s requested confidentiality made it impossible for me to answer with the simple truth.

“Proponents of confidentiality ask, ‘Why do

they need to know his HIV status?’

“But as their pastor, I know this family desperately needs caring Christians to support and encourage them during this great crisis. The shame, fear, and denial of this family resulted in two tragedies: (1) Their vow of silence robbed the church of the opportunity to minister to Bill and his family. (2) The family’s decision to keep this secret robbed Bill of the opportunity to use his situation to minister to others.

“Bill’s death came quickly compared to others who have died of AIDS. Sadly, the family’s lack of candor regarding the cause of death left a raw feeling in many relationships.

“My greatest disappointment is the loss of so many opportunities for the church to experience God’s grace fully in such a difficult situation. I wish we could have found a way to convince this family that their greatest hour of need could have become their greatest opportunity for ministry.”

## CASE 2: AIDS AND MARRIAGE

“‘Pastor, we’ve decided to get married,’ Angela told me. ‘I know that marrying an HIV-positive person carries a lot of special challenges, but we believe God wants us to get married.’

“Theirs had not been a hasty decision. They had come to me regularly over the past 9 months seeking my counsel as their pastor. Both are deeply committed to the Lord and actively involved in ministry.

“Though her fiancé is willing, Angela does not want to tell her parents about his HIV status. ‘My parents love God, but they are very prejudiced against anyone with AIDS. If we tell them Fred is HIV positive, I’m afraid they will forbid me to marry him, even though I’m 22,’ Angela said.

“In excellent health, Fred has no outward symptoms that betray the presence of this virus in his body. He, like many others living with this virus, is in good health and has a good job.

“But even if Angela’s fear of her parents’ reaction proves accurate, is her plan to keep this secret

in anyone's best interest? If Angela were your daughter, would you feel betrayed if you didn't learn about your son-in-law's HIV status until after he married your daughter? Would you also feel that the minister who counseled your daughter betrayed you?

"The confidentiality factor regarding AIDS has encouraged those personally affected by this disease to keep silent, but communicating the truth would be of far greater benefit to all involved.

"In our last counseling session, at Fred's urging, Angela expressed a willingness to tell her parents about his HIV condition. So now the challenge is helping Angela find an effective way to communicate with her parents on an issue that appears loaded with potential conflict," relates the second pastor.

### CASE 3: CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

"When it comes to AIDS, I feel like I've been locked out. I've pastored in this town of 10,000 people for 16 years, and I'm still waiting for my first opportunity to minister to someone with AIDS," reports the third pastor. "I've tried to develop the ministry of our church to accommodate all hurting people and not to focus simply on one issue.

"I know people with AIDS live in our community because medical professionals attending our church have told me of their encounters. But because of the confidentiality factor, they are prevented from identifying these persons with AIDS."

This pastor is not alone in his lack of personal encounters with persons with AIDS. In a 1992 survey of Assemblies of God pastors, 40 percent stated they had not had any personal contact with someone living with AIDS.

So how have other churches broken through this conspiracy of silence to begin ministry to persons with AIDS?

**Pray.** A church in California had a group of ladies who began praying for those in their community who had AIDS, even though they didn't know any of these persons. Their weekly prayer meetings went on for 12 months, and then God began to send people to them for ministry.

**Advertise.** One pastor in Oregon put an ad in the newspaper: "Our congregation invites

anyone who has AIDS to come to our church. You will receive a warm welcome and meet people who really care about you."


And the calls and visitors came. Some were skeptical—what's the hidden motive? But through this ad and a proactive effort on their part, they have been able to minister to persons with AIDS.

**Volunteer.** A church in Arizona has trained a small group of volunteers who have a desire to minister to persons with AIDS. Anytime they hear of someone with AIDS, they call and offer to visit him or her. They do not hide their Christianity as they show concern and love for this person.

Many welcome the friendships, which have opened the door for some to become Christians. Often those with AIDS refer others to the volunteers from this church.

Today the confidentiality factor makes it easy for people to hide their HIV/AIDS status from almost everyone. The challenge of ministry to persons with AIDS and their families is often crowded with fear, denial,

shame, and pain. In His day Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw people who were harassed and helpless.

As church leaders we must find creative ways to encourage these hurting people to break their code of silence and open themselves to the healing work of the Spirit in the context of His church. 

*\*Many, if not most, states have not addressed the confidentiality issue. There are no specific statutes assuring confidentiality with respect to the condition of AIDS. A number of states have enacted laws protecting confidentiality of AIDS test results. A few courts have ruled that persons face liability on the basis of invasion of privacy for disclosing the fact that another person has AIDS.*

—Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL. M., CPA, is legal counsel for The General Council of the Assemblies of God.

David Batty, formerly Teen Challenge national curriculum coordinator, is the executive director of the Brooklyn Teen Challenge in New York.

### Resources for Ministry to Persons With HIV/AIDS

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Wood, Glenn G., and John E. Dietrich. *The AIDS Epidemic: Balancing Compassion and Justice*. (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah, 1990). Written by two medical doctors, the book gives detailed information on the disease and how Christians can minister to those affected by HIV/AIDS.





# Living Within Your Means

BY DENNIS  
R. WUBBENA

Recently, I spoke with a young pastor who was concerned that his expenses within the first 6 months of being a full-time minister had already equaled the entire previous year's total income. He was unsure that he could maintain his current, seemingly meager, standard of living without extensive debt. He understood the destructive nature of credit card debt but did not know what to do about it.

## **A conscientious review of your financial situation is necessary stewardship.**

We started with a review of current and projected expenses for each of the typical budget categories and soon discovered that his concern was warranted. He would run out of income before he ran out of expenses. (See Table 1.)

**TABLE 1.—BUDGET CATEGORIES**

<b>Tithes</b>	<b>Savings</b>
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Medical</b>
Insurance	<b>School</b>
Taxes	<b>Entertainment</b>
Utilities	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Telephone	<b>Automobile(s)</b>
Mortgage/Rent	Payments
<b>Food</b>	Gas/Oil
<b>Insurance</b>	Insurance
<b>Debts</b>	License/Taxes
<b>Clothing</b>	Maintenance/Repairs

The young pastor had two basic problems:

1. *He did not know how much he spent for entertainment and miscellaneous.* We dealt with this common problem by implementing a modified envelope system. A set cash amount for entertainment and miscellaneous was placed in a labeled envelope each month. When it was gone, it was gone. Nothing more could be spent for either category unless it was an emergency and both husband and wife agreed—receipts were to be placed in the envelopes to account for the cash spent.

2. *His spending percentages in different budget categories were out of line.* (Table 2 indicates budget percentages for each category.) He needed practical advice on how to reduce his projected expenses. We set realistic goals, established a system for tracking expenses, and implemented practical ideas that would help him and his wife live within their means. The following money-saving ideas were considered.

## **GENERAL**

1. Let people know what is needed. Friends, church members, and family members might have what you need in a storage shed or attic.

2. Spend if necessary to save. Buy an oil wrench to change your own oil, an ax for firewood, and a freezer (or borrow freezer space from a friend) for garden items.

3. Create a *skills pool* by listing all the talents represented in your church. Cooperate by helping each other with projects. Start a *shoe swap* for athletic shoes (the kind that kids grow out of faster than they can wear them out).

4. Do your own personal services such as laundry, cleaning, or grass cutting.

5. Read *Consumer Reports* to determine the best brands and lowest prices.

6. Make a game out of stretching food dollars and using coupons.

7. Stock up on sale items at larger grocery stores, warehouses, and cash-only stores.

8. Ask for a rain check for any sale item not in stock.

9. Regularly reconcile your bank statement, budget, and checkbook.

10. Check your salary exemptions, and reduce them if you usually get a tax refund.

11. Differentiate between needs and wants, and don't let short-term desires interfere with financial goals. Wait 2 weeks before buying any high-priced item.

**You are living beyond your means if you have no cash reserve for emergencies, savings, and offerings beyond your tithes.**

**TABLE 2.—AFTER-TAX BUDGET PERCENTAGE GUIDELINES**

	Student	Working Single	Couple Kids <18	Single Parent	Couple Kids >18	Couple >55
<b>Gifts</b>	4–6	5–8	3–5	3–5	4–8	3–5
<b>Housing</b>	0–25	30–35	25–35	20–30	25–30	25–35
<b>Transportation</b>	5–10	15–20	15–20	10–18	12–18	10–18
<b>Food</b>	15–20	15–25	15–25	13–20	15–20	18–25
<b>Clothing</b>	5–12	5–15	5–10	5–10	4–8	4–8
<b>Health</b>	3–5	3–5	4–10	8–12	4–6	6–12
<b>Entertainment</b>	5–10	5–10	4–8	4–8	6–10	5–8
<b>Education</b>	10–30	2–4	3–5	3–5	6–12	2–4
<b>Insurance</b>	0–5	4–8	5–9	5–9	4–7	6–8
<b>Savings</b>	0–10	4–15	5–10	5–8	2–4	3–5

Source: Internal Revenue Service

## FOOD

1. Purchase day old bread and freeze it.
2. Avoid prepared and prepackaged foods.
3. Eat a breakfast-style meal for dinner once a week.
4. Fast more often.
5. Plant a garden. Grow what can be frozen or canned, but avoid anything you can buy cheaply.
6. Use grocery store plastic bags instead of buying trash bags.
7. Ask the produce department manager for discounted merchandise.

## AUTOMOBILE(S)

1. Put a new engine in an old car. Your insurance will be cheaper.
2. Carpool, walk, and ride a bus more often.

## CLOTHING

Check with friends, church members, thrift stores, and garage sales for pre-worn clothing.

## INSURANCE

1. Avoid duplicate or excessive insurance.
2. Consider raising your deductibles.
3. Obtain term life insurance quotes from Insurance Clearinghouse (1-800-522-2827).
4. Consider dropping disability waivers and double indemnity on insurance.

5. Check out the rates, and shop around for insurance—life, auto, health, home. Different companies and geographic locations cause rates to be extremely varied.

## HOUSEHOLD

1. To reduce laundry, restrict the number of towels used, and stretch the number of days that clothes are worn.
2. Drop subscriptions and memberships that you can do without. Request the church to pay for ministry-related subscriptions.
3. Cut down on long-distance phone calls, and make sure you have the best plan.
4. Evaluate the cost of owning a pet.
5. Spend less on hobbies and cable TV, and do more reading, talking, and visiting.
6. Sell possessions not needed.
7. Reduce the utilities bill by wearing warmer clothing in the winter and cooler clothing in the summer.


## DEBTS

1. Contact credit card companies and ask for assistance through lower interest and lower monthly payments. Pay early to avoid excessive interest charges.
2. Don't think *a little debt can't hurt*.
3. Avoid a fixed mortgage rate over 10 percent.
4. Cut up credit cards.

## CONCLUSION

Living within your means is easier said than done. However, this advice is a key to maintaining a balanced life. A conscientious review of your financial situation is necessary stewardship. My young pastor friend can defer dealing with the consequences of violating this principle with the use of credit but only for a short period of time. God does provide. However, He has directed each of us to count the costs. Fortunately, because of my friend's diligence to live within his means, he has not displayed any of the danger signs listed below.

You are living beyond your means if:

- You are borrowing or using credit just to meet normal living expenses.
- You can barely make the minimum required payments on bills.
- You are using one form of credit (debt consolidation) to make payment on other debts.
- More than 20 percent of your take-home pay is used to pay credit card bills.
- You have no cash reserve for emergencies, savings, and offerings beyond your tithes. 

*Dennis R. Wubbena, Ed.D., is an associate professor of business at Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri. He and his wife are certified counselors and provide seminars on biblical financial planning.*

# Preachers' Kids: Their Unique Challenges and Battles

## PART 1: The Problems and Benefits

*Articles on preachers' kids will appear periodically to highlight the unique issues children of ministers face.*

BY BILL  
CARMICHAEL

*There is no such thing as the perfect family, the perfect parent, or the perfect child—including those of us in ministry.*

I am not a preacher's kid, but my children are. My father was a building contractor, so I was not in the spotlight as my children have been. There are obvious pros and cons of growing up in a minister's home. PKs face unique challenges.

I have visited with many pastors and minister friends and observed their children and family interactions. For most of us, our children are our greatest joy and, at times, our greatest frustration and heartache. Let's be honest. There is no such thing as the perfect family, the perfect parent, or the perfect child—including those of us in ministry.

In this first of two articles, I'll discuss potential problems in the lives of ministers and their children and the potential benefits of raising children in a minister's home.

### THE PROBLEMS

#### • Hypocrisy

Nothing is more harmful to our children than to live in a home where we say one thing in the pulpit and act another way at home. Leading double lives is one of the most damaging things our children face. Ministers often feel pressured to lead perfect lives. We all know it is not possible, so why are we tempted to play this role? Do our congregations expect us to be a notch above everyone else?

Somewhere along the line, we inadvertently adopted the unwritten behavior pattern that overcoming Christians are never angry, never depressed, never sick, never upset with a spouse or child—always happy. If ministers try to live that way, they run the risk of not only destroying their health, but their children will see the fallacy of such nonsense and may even reject the gospel message as unreal and irrelevant.

God knows we are a needy people, and the people we minister to need to know it too. It is out of our needs that we see God work. When we show we are also in need of God's help and

*Nothing is more harmful to our children than to live in a home where we say one thing in the pulpit and act another way at home.*

grace, the people who follow our ministry will see the reality of God working in us. And most importantly, our children need to see God working in us.

#### • Dirty Linen

Pastors have to deal with all sorts of problems within their congregation. An effective, growing church is more like a spiritual hospital. People's lives are messed up in sin. Ugly things happen. Sexual sin, divorce, addiction, depression, bitterness—it all crosses our desks. If ministers bring this "dirty linen" home and discuss it in front of their children, they do them a great disservice. It is important that our children do not pick up our grievance or frustration. They should not be given either the burden or the right to hear about other people's problems and sins. Believe me, they will see plenty of problems without us calling attention to them.

#### • Spotlight

PKs live in a glass bubble. Expectations are high. Some people in our congregations may have a habit of forgetting that all children are born in sin, including the preacher's kids. Many congregation members absolve their guilt about their children's behavior by pointing out the flaws they see in PKs.

Ministers need to be aware that their children are in many ways on trial, not only among church members but in the community as well. Reminding our congregations that we and our children are human—subject to sin and in need of



God's grace—is one way to help thwart this problem. We must never fall into the trap of requiring our children to live up to other people's expectations. However, we all are called to try to live up to God's expectations, but none of us fully succeed.

- **Abandonment**

Abandonment of children does not just happen in homes when a parent physically moves out and ceases to have contact with his or her children. PKs can feel abandoned when our ministry lives are too full of other things or are out of sync. Saying, "You matter to me more than everything else in the world," and then letting everything else in the world eat up all our time tells our kids that our words are hollow and meaningless.

Being there means we are not only physically there, but our eyes, our affection, and our interest are there too. We must be real enough to occasionally kick up our heels and have a good time with our children.

- **Isolation**

Missionary children are physically isolated from their culture by living in a foreign country. They are further isolated if they are sent to boarding school. PKs of ministry parents who pastor small churches with few children in the church can also feel isolated. Sometimes our children feel

***We must never fall into the trap of requiring our children to live up to other people's expectations.***

isolated socially as well. Ministry parents may not understand how not attending or participating in certain social activities make their children feel isolated.

Missionary parents should bring their children's feelings of cultural isolation out in the open and provide a framework for them to express their feelings. If our convictions restrict our children's social activities, we shouldn't just say "No, because we told you so." Rather, we should discuss with them the reasons behind our decisions. Then when they feel isolated, we can offer options for them or at least empathize with them.

## **THE BENEFITS**

- **Seeing God Work**

A wonderful benefit of being a PK is the opportunity to see God work. When our children frequently participate in our ministry, they see faith at work in the lives of others. When God moves in our lives and in the congregation, the extra spiritual exposure spills off onto our children. Nothing has been more gratifying in my ministry than to see God's Holy Spirit not only sweep over a congregation but to see my children caught up in earnest worship.

***When God moves in our lives and in the congregation, the extra spiritual exposure spills off onto our children.***

We may think our children, sitting on the front row drawing doodles on a piece of paper during our sermons, are not absorbing anything, but they are. Hours of pew sitting bring rewards. Many PKs

have a better knowledge of the Bible and doctrine than other children.

In addition, the theology taught through most of our hymns and choruses will stick with them forever. Most of us raised in church can sing from memory dozens of hymns—the majority contain excellent theology.

- **Increased Opportunities**

PKs who participate in church life and their family's ministry have increased opportunities to discover their giftedness in areas of music, hospitality, verbal communication skills, and leadership skills. Many of today's well-known Christian music artists were raised in ministers' homes.

In Part 2, I'll offer suggestions on how we can help our PKs overcome the difficulties they may face. **E**

*Bill Carmichael, an Assemblies of God minister, is founding publisher of Christian Parenting Today and Virtue magazines and author of Lord, Bless My Child and Habits of a Healthy Home. For information about a family seminar in your church, call 541-549-0176.*

# An Appreciation Letter to All Pastors

*The View From the Pew column will appear periodically to give pastors and their staff a congregation member's perspective on ministry.*

BY DON COLEY

***Forgive me for not honoring all you do and for taking you for granted.***

Dear Pastor:

Please forgive me for not writing earlier to express my appreciation to you for being my pastor. I want you to know that the influence of your ministry and the model of your life mean more to me than can be expressed in an occasional hallway thank-you. You deserve more. Accept these words of thanks from all of us whom you so faithfully serve.

When I stop and think of all you are called to do, I know I see only the tip of the iceberg. Too many times I don't stop to think of all the unseen contributions you make and the sacrifices you pay to make them. I do not comprehend the depth of your work. I do not appreciate your fatigue. I do not encourage you as I should. I fail to properly express my thanks to you. I am undisciplined in my prayer for you. Forgive me for not honoring all you do and for taking you for granted.

Thank you for preparing your public work so diligently. And thank you for your private work that often goes unrecognized. Thank you for being there—for the times your evenings are interrupted by the telephone's intrusive ring, and your rest is shortened by an unscheduled late-night trip. Thank you for your weekends that are punctuated by the joy of weddings, and your vacations that are cut short by the sorrow of funerals. Thank you for being all too familiar with hospital corridors, waiting rooms, and nursing homes. Thank you for the peaceful spirit you bring into the first anxious moments that surround sudden loss.

Thank you for your listening ear and godly counsel. Thank you for ensuring that my young children are properly cared for and my teens are affirmed in their journey to adulthood. Thank


you for teaching them the simple truth that will one day be more important to them than any other: Jesus loves me; this I know. Thank you for praying with and for my family during hard times and for sharing our joy and laughter when the darkness lifts. Thank you for choosing to patiently love the part of me God is disciplining and not abandon me to my failures.

Thank you for enduring all-night graduation parties and junior high camps. Thank you for consistently braving the wintry weather that sometimes keeps me at home in warmth, comfort, and safety. Thank you for the example of your life and the precious gift of your time. Thank you for being a friend.

Thank you for working through your own seasons of discouragement when God seems far off. Thank you for "keeping on" when the fruit of your labor does not appear to be an abundant harvest. Thank you for enduring unfair criticism while embracing criticism that is uncomfortable but constructive. Thank you for the spirit of servanthood you reflect. Thank you for your willingness to be involved with the non-spiritual but important practical details of ministry—vacuuming the sanctuary or cleaning the rest rooms when there is no one else to do so.

Thank you for sowing peace. Thank you for the integrity of your witness and for being strong enough to value the strength that comes only with being broken. My list of thank-yous is endless. As I write, I am impressed to add: "Well done." It is framed in my mind and comes from the Father's heart. He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

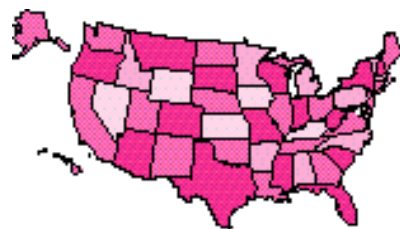
Pastor, continue to serve for your service pleases Him. Continue on the path He has shown you. Do not weary at the challenge, but draw strength from His provision.

Thank you for being obedient to His calling. 

*Don Coley attends First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.*



# Seven Important Pastoring Principles



Pastoring today is vastly different than it was in 1958 when I took my first church. To maintain relevance, today's church leadership should reevaluate their focus at least every 5 years—every year is better.

I spent 31 years as a pastor (29 years at one church), so I am always intrigued when I'm asked, "What would you do differently if you were to pastor again?" The following are important pastoring principles I would follow if I pastored again. Some of these were a vital part of my past ministry, and some were not.

**1. Focus on prayer.** A church that prays is a church of peace and harmony. Every phase of church life—board meetings, business meetings, church ministries—would revolve around prayer. I would get a word from God for my situation through fasting and prayer rather than seeking it elsewhere. I have learned that when I get desperate in prayer, God always comes through, does the impossible, and crowns my efforts with success and blessings. I would do all I could to encourage and teach people to pray.

**2. Preach so that common people would hear me gladly as they did Jesus.** I would concentrate on a simple verse-by-verse exposition of the Word so that people could understand how to live a godly and productive life in today's society. I would not be concerned about catchy titles or profundity, but I would concentrate on preaching a message so simple that it could be clearly understood by everyone, including the children.

**3. Pay more attention to social changes.** Most social changes bring great pain and division, especially to families. I would concentrate on finding answers from God's Word that would bring health and healing to the lives of people even in the midst of social upheaval. I would keep all political references out of the pulpit and not identify with any political agenda. I would vote in every election and take a


stand on scriptural issues, but I would not let it be known from the pulpit where I stood politically.

**4. Focus on people, not buildings.** I would concentrate on building people, not structures. I would erect the facilities that were needed, but they would never be used as an example of how successful we were. I would keep reminding everyone that we are in the people business, not the building business. I would look for opportunities to meet the needs of hurting people because they are much easier to reach than those who are comfortable.

**5. Develop lay leadership.** This would be one of my highest priorities because strong churches are built when lay leadership plays a vital role. I would role model the attitude and spirit of a godly leader and make sure leaders were trained to do their lay ministry jobs.

**6. Welcome all sinners.** I would intentionally reach out to the lost regardless of color, background, or social standing. I would constantly affirm people as unique creations of God but let them know that without Christ, they have no hope. I would not allow any ridicule from the pulpit about any sinner, no matter how strongly I felt about the sin, and there would be neither jokes nor humor that would focus on the lifestyle of a sinner. Our church's motto would be, "Jesus loves you, and so do we. Let us prove it."

**7. Be less sectarian.** I would fellowship with and encourage anyone who loves Jesus. I would stop looking for the perfect group. I would not be a part of criticizing other Christians or nit-picking on the interpretation of Scripture with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I would focus on our areas of agreement rather than the areas of disagreement.

To sum it up, I would try to please Jesus. 

*BY CHARLES  
E. HACKETT*

*I would concentrate on preaching a message so simple that it could be clearly understood by everyone, including the children.*

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



# The Ongoing Harvest



BY JOHN BUENO

Our mission will not be complete until the Lord of the Harvest returns. Assemblies of God foreign missions will constantly keep sending missionaries to punctuate the spiritual darkness in this world with the light of the gospel.

We are praying and working to keep reaching lost both where we have already planted the church and in areas where people groups can be classified as unreached.

Several of our recent missionary candidates indicated they are called by the Spirit to unreached people groups on new frontiers. Others are called of God to take the place of retiring missionary soldiers of the Cross and to help our sister churches overseas in new ways.

## *God is calling us to a new phase of ministry, not calling us away.*

After years of laborious seed sowing, we are seeing in many countries the greatest ingathering of souls in history. Surprisingly, in recent years some have questioned the necessity of still sending missionaries to countries such as Brazil, Nigeria, and Korea. But is it wise to withdraw workers during a harvest? When the harvest is abundant, should we redeploy our laborers?

## **A NEED FOR TRAINING**

Some missionaries' function will necessarily change, but the need is ever greater for workers to disciple new believers and train leaders. Historically, many great revivals have waned and died because of a lack of discipleship and training. We must not merely praise God for revival and harvest and then move on before the task is completed.

As dramatic change has occurred in some national churches, missionaries have had to

grow, adjust, and sometimes even move in order to meet challenges. Needs are not the same in every country. Some nations have multiple cultures, each of which is at a different level of growth. Missionaries must help train leaders and develop support ministries for the local church. God is calling us to new phases of ministry in the harvest, not calling us away from the field.

New Bible schools and extension education programs are being developed. Discipleship programs at the local church level are being encouraged. We need missionaries to help the church in these processes. Utilization of our resources must be maximized to disciple and train current and future leaders.

## **"REACHED" COUNTRIES?**

The Book of Acts records that Paul and his co-laborers returned to countries where they had established viable works. With nearly every missionary journey, Paul stated his intent to return to the work, to nurture and fortify the believers' faith, and to provide further instruction in Christian living.

Though in missiological terms we might consider some countries to be "reached" fields, God is preparing some of those churches to reach Muslims in countries where North Americans have difficulty entering. Brazil is now sending hundreds of missionaries to other nations. In the last 5 years Argentina has sent more than 80 missionaries to different lands—many of them in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Assemblies of God churches in Singapore, Korea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and many other countries are penetrating unreached people groups in many parts of the world. This will intensify as missionary vision continues to catch fire among our fraternal church bodies overseas.

A burden to reach the world through

university and campus ministries is growing. Clearly, the demand is increasing for missionaries to work in specialized areas not easily defined in terms of traditional missions. More than 50 percent of Latin America's population is under the age of 15. In many churches men are a minority. Workers are needed to reach the children and men.

## **FOLLOWING GOD**

In modern missions, we must have a fresh sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Missionaries are still going to countries in harvesttime because they are called. We must not deter them. God's leading is still central to our missions process.

"God called me to be a missionary to Latin America when I was 17 years old," said Missionary Michael Files. "From that day forward, my primary ministry goal has been to fulfill that call to the best of my ability. After 27 years of ministry, I still feel that call clearly and I must continue to obey."

## **REACHING THE UNREACHED**

Assemblies of God Foreign Missions is providing a new opportunity for local churches to become more involved in sharing Christ with people groups yet unreached with the gospel. While missionaries serve on the front lines, every believer has a role in reaping the harvest. This role can effectively be fulfilled through involvement with Unreached Peoples PrayerNet.

Through Unreached People PrayerNet, a local church, missionaries in the vicinity of a people group, and other Assemblies of God churches can link together to reach new frontiers with the gospel. Churches in the PrayerNet share information about and ongoing concern for unreached people groups targeted by the Division of Foreign Missions. (See PrayerNet sidebar.)

While obedience to the Great Commission motivates us to pray for unreached people, PrayerNet facilitates informed intercession. Those who pray will have important information about

the people group they are targeting. Means for establishing a healthy indigenous church will follow prayer. Men and women will respond to God's leading to serve on the mission field.

The Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions does not recruit missionaries; the Holy Spirit does. This is the dynamic of Pentecostal missions. Jesus instructed, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). As believers have prayed, the Holy Spirit has spoken to hearts regarding missionary service.

He is still speaking to many today in response to prayer. According to Cary Tidwell, personnel director for Assemblies of God Foreign Missions, more than one phone call per working day is received from people saying God is speaking to them about missionary service. While many church organizations must actively recruit missionary personnel, Assemblies of God Foreign Missions carefully screens and evaluates hundreds of applicants each year.

God is moving within the frontiers of our world. Prayer is the key to removing spiritual darkness so people can respond to the love of God. Focused, fervent prayer will bring results. Without a prayer base, other components for planting Christ's church will be ineffective. So, prayer—informed intercession—is the heart of the PrayerNet strategy.

***Prayer is the key to remove the darkness so people can respond to the love of God.***


The Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Committee launched this new prayer strategy to help provide the safe transfer of information and to protect the safety of our missionaries and local believers. Several parachurch prayer efforts are doing commendable work involving congregations in intercession,

and we will network with them in any way possible.

Partnership in the Unreached Peoples PrayerNet will help your congregation be personally involved in the worldwide network of Assemblies of God churches committed to reaching unreached people in the power of the Spirit.

## **STAYING THE COURSE**

While there are many unreached people groups yet to hear the gospel of salvation, we must not abandon missionaries now serving in well-established fields. Nor should we turn a deaf ear to those who feel called to those fields. For the unreached peoples we pray that God will send laborers, then support those who answer His call. For those now serving on foreign soil, we pray that their labors will bear even greater fruit and raise up more laborers for the ongoing harvest.

Should we withdraw from Korea, Singapore, Brazil, and Latin America? Not until the harvest is complete and the Lord of the Harvest returns. 

*John Bueno is the executive director of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions, Springfield, Missouri.*

## **The PrayerNet Strategy**

Churches wishing to join the Unreached Peoples PrayerNet of the Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions should follow these guidelines.

1. Write to: PrayerNet, c/o Assemblies of God Foreign Missions, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri.
2. Several unreached people profiles will be mailed to you.
3. Study the profiles and seek God's guidance.
4. Prayerfully select a people group. Commit yourself to faithful prayer for those unreached people.
5. The church will receive updates, ideas, and testimonies through mail, fax, or E-mail.

# The Priority of Prayer

BY SANDRA G.  
CLOPINE

The practice of prayer stands out as a prominent priority in numerous Assemblies of God churches today. Thank God! Add to that the churches of other denominations that are experiencing a growing hunger for God, and you have the recipe for powerful spiritual renewal throughout the land.

Bjorn Pedersen, a former Minnesota banker, experienced such a renewal in his personal life. In April 1986, he drove toward another town in Minnesota for a speaking engagement. As he left the city limits of his hometown, he began weeping uncontrollably and did so until he reached the city limits of the town where he was going to speak. After the meeting as he drove toward home, a fountain of tears again overwhelmed him.

Arriving in his hometown, he went to his office and wept for 3 hours, inquiring of the Lord concerning this experience. As he lay before the Lord, he saw a vision. I recently heard him describe the vision as follows:

***Lord, teach us the priority of prayer.***

*A sickly pitiful-looking bride came to the church for her wedding. Although the groom was strong and handsome, the bride was carried on a stretcher from which she could not arise. As the wedding ceremony began, a man from the congregation went to the bride, knelt down, and placed his hands upon her. Others from the congregation knelt one behind the other and placed their hands on the person in front of them until the bride was surrounded by people praying for her.*

*Soon a transformation started taking place. Color began to return to the bride's face, and she became strengthened. This so encouraged the congregation that others responded in prayer. Before long she looked beautiful and healthy. She took her place beside the groom,*

***If Jesus the Son of God relied unreservedly on His Father, disciplining himself with fasting and prayer, who are we to feel that we don't need it or that our schedules are too busy for such intensity?***

*and the wedding continued.*

Bjorn Pedersen said the Lord impressed him with three principles from this vision. (1) God is calling His people to intentional prayer. (2) God is bringing a movement of healing and restoration to the body of Christ. (3) Time is precious. Jesus is coming back soon and is preparing His bride to finish the task so the wedding can take place.

This former banker now serves as pastor of prayer ministries at the Community Church of Joy in Phoenix, Arizona, an Evangelical Lutheran Church with 30 active prayer ministries. The church has grown substantially each year and offers a prayer coordinator's training course that draws church leaders from around the world.

As I have met with various prayer leaders, I've noted that people who are moved consistently to prayer and fasting respond in similar ways. Churches that make prayer a priority see the following happen:

- The miraculous takes place.
- A burden for the lost increases.
- The Great Commission takes on a new urgency.
- People give greater financial support to missions and the church as a whole.
- Individuals depend more on the Lord for His help and direction.
- Personal needs of pastors and other ministers are addressed and provided for.

Luke 4 relates that Jesus was led by the Spirit



***The practice of prayer  
stands out as a prominent  
priority in numerous Assemblies  
of God churches today***

into the wilderness to be tempted 40 days by the devil. Verse 2 states, “And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they ended, He was

hungry” (NKJV). If Jesus the Son of God relied unreservedly on His Father, disciplining himself with fasting and prayer, who are we to feel that we don’t need it or that our schedules are too busy for such intensity? How can we do less?

Lord, teach us the priority of prayer. 📖

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



## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BIBLE WOMEN

**Joel 2:28,29**

### INTRODUCTION:

The Holy Spirit works with people who are receptive to Him, both men and women. Mother's Day is a fitting time to emphasize evidences of the Spirit's work in the lives of women of the Bible.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Professional Women

- a. Lydia—saleswoman (Acts 16:14)
  1. Worshipped God.
  2. Opened her heart to the Lord.
  3. Opened her home to Paul and Silas.
  4. Saw her household baptized.
  5. Opened her home as the meeting place for believers (Acts 16:40).
- b. Priscilla—tentmaker (Acts 18:3)

1. Showed hospitality to Paul.
2. Taught Apollos.
3. Hosted a church in her house (Romans 16:5).

#### 2. Mothers

- a. Hannah (1 Samuel 1,2)
  1. Prayed for a child.
  2. Promised child to God (1:11).
  3. Kept her vow (1:24–28).
  4. Prayed prophetically (2:1–10).
  5. Continued to meet Samuel's needs (2:19).
- b. Eunice (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5)
  1. Influenced her son, even though Greek husband was probably an unbeliever.
  2. Had unfeigned faith, a fruit of the Spirit (2 Timothy 1:5).

3. Others
  1. The four virgin daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) prophesied, anointed of the Spirit.
  2. Deborah—the prophetess (Judges 4:4)
    1. Anointed to prophesy (4:6,7).
    2. Anointed to lead (4:8,9).
    3. Anointed to encourage others (4:14).
  3. Phoebe—"our sister" (Romans 16:1,2)
    1. Served the Cenchrea church.
    2. Helped many.

### CONCLUSION:

Even in Bible times, women had a broad scope of opportunities for ministry and influence. Today, Spirit-filled women have even more opportunities to serve and make a difference in the church and the world.

—Elva J. Hoover, Lakeland, Florida

## BOASTING IN THE CROSS

**Galatians 6:11–18, NIV**

### INTRODUCTION:

Boasting in the Cross suggests a spirit of humility, not high-mindedness.

1. Not a *blowhard* about *afflictions*.
2. Not a *bluffer* about *attachments*.
3. Not a *braggart* about *attainments*.

### MESSAGE:

Two common attitudes are taken toward the Cross.

1. The enemies of the Cross (6:12,13)—"they."

- a. Because of *pride* (6:12). "Those who want to make a good impression outwardly."
- b. Because of *pain* (6:12). "The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted."
- c. Because of *power* (6:13). "They want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh."

#### 2. The evangelists of the Cross (6:14–16)—"I."

- a. Because of *compassion* (6:14). "Through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

- b. Because of *character* (6:15). "What counts is a new creation."
- c. Because of *contentment* (6:16). "Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule."

### CONCLUSION:

In light of these choices, everyone should examine their attitude toward the Cross.

1. The *proof* of sincerity (6:17). "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."
2. The *power* of the Savior (6:18)—"grace" (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9).

—Steve D. Eutsler, Springfield, Missouri

## THE GREAT EPITAPH

**Colossians 2:13–15**

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. What Jesus accomplished in living.

- a. He fulfilled all prophecy regarding His messiahship (Acts 3:18).
- b. He fulfilled all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).
- c. He demonstrated all power (Mark 2:10–12).
- d. He resisted all temptation (Hebrews 4:15).
- e. He fully revealed the Father (John 14:7).
- f. He began the Church (Matthew 16:18).
- g. He declared and manifested the kingdom of God (Luke 9:11).

#### 2. What Jesus accomplished in dying.

- a. He took the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:55).
- b. He entered His priestly ministry (Hebrews 5:5,6).
- c. He closed a life of obedience (Philippians 2:6–8).
- d. He completed a perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11–14).
- e. He inaugurated a new covenant (Hebrews 9:15–18).
- f. He bore our sins (Hebrews 9:14).
- g. He bore our sicknesses (1 Peter 2:24).
- h. He bore our sorrows (Isaiah 53:4–6).

- i. He was judged in our place (1 Peter 3:18).
- j. He set us free from the dominion of the flesh (Romans 6:14).
- k. He canceled all debts against those who believe in Him (Colossians 2:14).
- l. He disarmed the rulers who were armed with our guilt (Colossians 2:15).
- m. He took the keys and spoiled Satan's dominion (1 Peter 3:18,19).
- n. He released the righteous dead into the presence of God (Ephesians 4:8).
- o. He stepped forward to take the title deed of man's inheritance (Revelation 5:1–8).

—M. Wayne Benson,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan



## WHY YOU NEED THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Luke 24:36-49

#### MESSAGE:

You need the baptism in the Holy Spirit for your:

1. **Witnessing** (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, 14, 40, 41).
2. **Warfare** (Matthew 3:13-4:11; Acts 1:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:12).

3. **Worship** (Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Colossians 3:16).

4. **Walk** (John 14:26; Romans 8:15; Galatians 5:25).

5. **Weaknesses** (Romans 8:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 14:14, 15).

6. **Watching** (Exodus 30:22-33; Joel 2:28;

Matthew 25:1-13; 1 Timothy 4:1).

#### CONCLUSION:

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is God's plan for the empowerment of Christians. Be baptized in the Holy Spirit today!

—James T. Meadows, Kansas City, Missouri

## MARY: A MODEL FOR PENTECOSTAL MOTHERS

### Acts 1:14

#### INTRODUCTION:

In the life of this magnificent mother is a model for a woman overshadowed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

#### MESSAGE:

1. **Wondering** (Luke 1:26-34).  
God's *ways* are beyond our understanding.
2. **Surrendering** (Luke 1:38).  
God's *will* is for our obeying.
3. **Rejoicing** (Luke 1:46-55).

God's *salvation* is for our enjoying.

4. **Pondering** (Matthew 2:11; Luke 2:8-20, 25-38).

God's *dealings* are for our meditating.

5. **Fleeing** (Matthew 2:13-15).

God's *plans* may involve our changing.

6. **Searching** (Luke 2:43-46).

God's *presence* is for our continuing.

7. **Witnessing** (John 2:5).

God's *love* is for our sharing.

8. **Sorrowing** (Luke 2:35; John 19:25-27).

Christ's *passion* is for our contemplating.

9. **Obeying** (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:14).

God's *Word* is for our following.

10. **Empowered** (Acts 2:1-4).

God's *power* is for our living.

#### CONCLUSION:

Mary's experiences depended on the Holy Spirit. He overshadowed her and filled her. Mothers today can find all the help they need for their taxing task through the power of the Holy Spirit.

—R.C. Champion

## WHY CHRIST MUST HAVE RISEN FROM THE DEAD

### 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

#### INTRODUCTION:

The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the crowning miracle of His incarnation and gave validity to His miraculous life and ministry. Jesus must have risen from the dead. If he didn't, He is history's greatest charlatan.

#### MESSAGE:

Christ must have risen from the dead:

1. **To fulfill Old Testament prophecies concerning Him** (Psalm 16:10; 22; Isaiah 53; Luke 24:25-27).
2. **To fulfill His promises** (John 2:19-22).
3. **To save the lost** (John 14:19; Romans 5:10; 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17; Hebrews 7:25).
4. **To prepare heaven for all who believe**

(John 14:1-3).

5. **That we might rise also** (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

#### CONCLUSION:

A mighty resurrection is yet to come when the Almighty will gloriously manifest His omnipotence.

—William Ward Ayer

## THE SPIRIT WITHIN

### Ezekiel 37:27

#### INTRODUCTION:

The Spirit was not absent in Old Testament times, but His complete ministry to God's people awaited the finished work of Christ. This text is a prophecy of the New Testament day that the prophet saw by God's revelation.

#### MESSAGE:

1. **The Spirit dwells within God's people now, not merely upon them** (John 14:17).  
a. This indwelling makes us God's temples and calls us to a pure life (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

b. The Spirit's work begins in our hearts and works outward.

2. **The indwelling Spirit affects our daily walk.**

a. God's laws are our standard of living.

b. The Spirit inscribes those laws in our hearts (Hebrews 8:10).

3. **The indwelling Spirit is the mark of Christ's ownership** (Romans 8:9).

a. The Spirit is God's seal that we are His property (Ephesians 1:13).

b. The Spirit within leaves no doubt about our relationship with God (Romans 8:15, 16).

4. **The indwelling Spirit is not temporary**

(John 14:16).

a. To "abide" means to settle down and make one's home in a place.

b. As a result of the Spirit's inward work, we also abide in the Lord (1 John 2:27).

#### CONCLUSION:

At Sinai God was a great distance from His people. In the tabernacle He was closer, with His glory hovering over the mercy seat. Now He dwells within each cleansed heart by His Spirit.

—Kenneth D. Barney, Springfield, Missouri





## SOCIAL CONCERN COMMITTEE

In my first years as a pastor, I had the idea that to openly oppose a societal ill would create problems for me from people within the congregation who felt uncomfortable with their pastor talking about news-type subjects. And I was right. I was hammered from all sides and became somewhat reluctant to even speak my conscience. But I eventually took a stand on public policy that would have made me feel less than honest had I not done so.

It was difficult, however, for me to know where I stood with those who mattered most to me—my congregation. Then it dawned on me that I should not stand alone nor take abuse for my well-intentioned convictions. Thus the genesis of a social concern committee.

### What is it?

Every congregation has a nucleus of people who are motivated and concerned

when society moves in a direction that could be detrimental to the institution of the family, the church, and our children. Call them together around a cause, and you have the simple beginnings of a social concern committee.

### What does it do?

A social concern committee can be used as a research and information source for the whole church body.

They can:

- Attend city council and school board meetings.
- Gather pertinent information related to social issues.
- Meet each month to discuss whether or not the issue is worthy of further action.
- Make telephone calls and visits to the significant players in the community who have influence on policy matters.
- Formulate lists of telephone numbers and names of those who need to be contacted and whose opinions can be influenced by public opinion.
- Write letters.
- Provide to the congregation pertinent material filled with issue-related information that can be easily digested by those within the church body who need to become better informed.

In short, the social concern committee is like Nehemiah on the wall—a watchman on behalf of the church and the community it serves.

### How can it assist the pastor?

1. It can provide you with a group of people to run point for you on issues about which you might be uncertain.
2. It can give you a point of reference or serve as a resource reservoir. The social concern committee can do research on your behalf to provide accurate information. Committee members can go to the source and ask hard questions. They can stimulate interest within your congregation that might be difficult for you to do.
3. When you grow weary, the committee can hold your arms up, and when you are discouraged, it can be a Gideon's army—not many, but very dedicated. In addition, it can prove to be a source of great prayer support.

Contrary to what many might say, I do not believe that everyone can be an

activist, but everyone can have an opinion and ultimately a vote on social issues. Why stand alone when, in front of you every week, there is a small remnant of people who are just waiting to be challenged to exercise their passion for the cause of Christ in the interest of righteousness and godliness?

*"With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands" (Judges 7:7, NIV).*

*"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34, NIV).*

*Adapted from H.B. London, "A Social Concern Committee: Worth a Try?" Pastor to Pastor, August 1997, 1-2. Used by permission.*

## SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

After our Easter and Christmas programs, we invite visitors (if not all present) to the fellowship hall or gym for refreshments. We set up a newcomers table where a host or hostess provides information and materials about our church programs and activities.

Since our church hosts the annual baccalaureate service for a local high school, we host an afterglow for all seniors and parents who attend the baccalaureate service.

These seasonal times of fellowship open to the public make a favorable impression on the community and help increase church attendance.

—Doug Rose, Belleville, Illinois

## HUSBAND AND WIFE REACHING YOUNG MARRIEDS

Create a new Sunday school class or small group by teaming up a husband and wife to reach newlyweds and young marrieds. The husband and wife should model quality mate interaction, share outreach efforts, and lead in Bible teaching and fellowship.

With both a male and female role model, young adults and newlyweds respond especially well to this approach and are assimilated more quickly than when only one person is the class leader.

A church in Roswell, Georgia, used this



idea and has three new young married classes. They began with a list of names to contact. Within 6 months, each class had 10 to 12 in attendance. Care was given to make continued contact and build a strong base of fellowship and Bible teaching.

After the class stabilized, usually within 6 to 9 months, a permanent teacher was selected for the class, and the teaching couple started another class unit.

People go where they know they are wanted. The last time I checked, the church had grown from 550 to 800 average attendance in Sunday school.

—Adapted from Neil E. Jackson, Jr.,  
100 Great Growth Ideas (Nashville, Tenn.:  
Broadman & Holman, 1990) 33–34.  
Used by permission.

## RECOVENANTING: SECRET TO SMALL GROUP HEALTH

Do you want your small groups to remain healthy year after year? From the vantage point of overseeing 140 small groups, I observe one common denominator of vibrant, enduring groups: they recovenant.

Since people come into a small group with a wide range of experiences and expectations, I strongly advocate that new groups develop a covenant—a written statement outlining the group's purpose and ground rules. It's important for a group to agree upon which needs they can legitimately fulfill and how they will meet those needs. Once a covenant is developed, groups should regularly consult it for planning, accountability, and evaluation.

Of course, people grow and circumstances change. That's why it's so important to periodically revisit the covenant. Recovenanting allows groups to express new hopes and expectations, redefine purposes, and restructure ground rules to accommodate changes.

Groups recovenant at different times: after each unit of study, after a prolonged break (such as summer vacations), or when new members join. People are more willing to join groups and make commitments when they know it's for a specific period. I suggest recovenanting at least once a year.

In groups where no one talks about

needs, people often become sporadic in attendance and eventually drop out. Recovenanting provides a graceful place to "step off" and allows departing members to maintain close friendships developed in the group.

Recovenanting may reveal new expectations and hopes for the group: "We would like more in-depth Bible study." "Let's do more mission projects." "Could we meet once a month just for fellowship?"

Recovenanting is also a good opportunity to "step out." A group may decide to branch into two new groups. For example, one group might offer in-depth Bible study and another might focus on service projects. Current members would form the nucleus of these new groups and recruit others to join.

Discipline yourselves to recovenant. You'll avoid stagnation and experience greater growth and community.

—Keith D. Wright, Kansas City, Missouri

## CREATE A RESOURCE CENTER

Create a resource center to effectively serve and equip small group leaders. Some of the items you can collect, purchase, and provide include:

- *Sample Bible-study guides.* Make it easier for groups to select curricula and for leaders to prepare lessons by providing sample Bible-study guides that can be checked out.

- *Evaluations.* Each quarter have your small groups evaluate the materials they use. Place the evaluations alphabetically in a binder. When a group is trying to select their next Bible-study guide, they can use feedback from others to make an informed choice.

- *Handouts.* Have a filing cabinet of articles on effective small group leadership, handouts from past training events, and information from other churches' small group ministries.

- *Sample covenants.* Encourage your groups to develop written agreements with one another and provide samples and guidelines.

- *Catalogs.* Keep stacks of catalogs from evangelical publishers on hand for groups to peruse.

- *Mission-project ideas.* Exchange

current mission and service opportunities in your church and community through the resource center.

- *Bulletin board.* Post news of key events such as leadership training, open enrollment for small groups, and kick-off rallies.

- *Videos.* Keep a cabinet well stocked with videos for small groups to borrow.

—Keith D. Wright, Kansas City, Missouri

## 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](mailto:Enrichment@ag.org)



## DON'T LET FAILURE STOP YOU

When the great Polish pianist Paderewski first chose to study piano, his music teacher told him his hands were too small to master the keyboard.

When the great Italian tenor Caruso first applied for instruction, the teacher told him his voice sounded like the wind whistling through windows.

When the great statesman of England Benjamin Disraeli tried to speak in Parliament for the first time, members hissed him into silence and laughed when he said, "Though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear of me."

Henry Ford forgot to put a reverse gear in his first car. Thomas Edison spent \$2 million on an invention that proved to be of little value.

Very little comes out right the first time. Failures are fingerprints on the road to achievement. Albert Einstein failed his university entrance exams on his first attempt. Abraham Lincoln's life demonstrates that we can fail forward toward success.

Do not give up before you have failed the first time. Remember history's greats who succeeded after failure.

—Submitted by Douglas R. Rose,  
Belleville, Illinois.

Adapted from Pulpit Helps, 1992.

## DRIED FISH OR JEWELS?

Many historians consider Ramesses II the greatest Egyptian ruler who ever lived. His reign extended to present-day Libya and Iraq and as far as Turkey and the Sudan. During his 67-year reign, Egypt enjoyed unsurpassed military might and economic power. To this present day, mammoth statues of Ramesses and the ruins of his extensive building programs are scattered across Egypt, silently testifying to his former greatness.

But time has a way of leveling even the world's greats. When archaeologists unearthed his mummified body and sent it to the Cairo Museum, Ramesses suffered a monstrous indignity. As his body passed through customs, a bewildered inspector, not sure

what was before his desk, taxed the body of Ramesses the Great as—imported dried fish.

"Man in his pomp," notes the Psalmist, "yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:20, NASB). Life, wealth, and power are fleeting gifts that slip through our grasp as water from clutched fingers. Each of us is presented with the choice to either serve ourselves or to serve Christ, to establish our kingdom or His, to finish our lives as dried fish or jewels in Christ's crown.

—Submitted by Richard Maffeo,  
San Antonio, Texas. Adapted from  
Time Life Books, vol. "Ancient Egypt"  
(N.Y.; Time, Inc., 1965.)

## IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER

If I had my life to live over again, I'd try to make more mistakes next time. I

would relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I know of very few things I would take seriously. I would take more trips. I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers, and watch more sunsets. I would do more walking and looking. I would eat more ice cream and fewer beans. I would have more actual troubles and fewer imaginary ones. You see, I am one of those people who lives prophylactically and sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments; and if I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I have been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a gargle, a raincoat, aspirin, and a





parachute. If I had it to do over again, I would go places, do things, and travel lighter than I have.

If I had my life to live over, I would ride on more merry-go-rounds and pick more daisies.

—*Brother Jeremiah. Source unknown. Quoted from In Stories for the Heart (Vision House, 1996).*

## HOW TO BAKE A CAKE

Light oven; get out utensils and ingredients. Remove blocks and toy autos from table. Grease pan; crack nuts.

Measure 2 cups of flour; remove Johnny's hands from flour; wash flour off him. Remeasure flour.

Put flour, baking powder, and salt in sifter. Get dustpan, and brush up pieces of bowl Johnny knocked on floor. Get another bowl. Answer doorbell.

Return to kitchen. Remove Johnny's hands from bowl. Wash Johnny. Answer phone. Return. Remove 1/4-inch salt from greased pan. Look for Johnny. Grease another pan. Answer telephone.

Return to kitchen, and find Johnny. Remove his hands from bowl. Take up greased pan, and find layer of nutshells in it. Head for Johnny who flees, knocking bowl off table.

Wash kitchen floor, tables, walls, dishes. Call baker. Lie down.

—*From The Speaker's Quote Book by Roy B. Zuck. Copyright 1997. Published by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Used by permission.*

## BURIED TREASURE IN SPIRITUALLY DRY TIMES

In 1986 two brothers who lived on a kibbutz near the Sea of Galilee made an incredible discovery. As the two Israeli fishermen monitored their equipment on the beaches of Gennesaret, they noticed something they had not seen before. A partially exposed object covered with mud glistened in the sun. Upon examination, archaeologists determined that the brothers had discovered a fishing boat from the time of Jesus.

The reason this first-century fishing boat was discovered was due to a shortage of rain. A 3-year drought resulted in an unprecedented exposure of the shoreline, which allowed the boat's bow to be seen. Bad times were necessary for something incredibly good to come to light.

In times of spiritual dryness, God often uncovers buried treasure in our character we didn't even know was there. Peter knew it. He wrote, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:12,13, NIV).

The apostle Paul knew it too: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18, NIV).

—*Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois*

## CHRONIC COMPLAINERS

A man training to become a monk was

required to be silent for 30 years. He was allowed to speak only two words every 10 years. At the end of his first term his two words were, "Bad food." The next 10 years went by quickly, and when asked what his two words were, he responded, "Hard bed." The last 10 years went by slowly, and his two words at the end of his 30 years were, "I quit!"

To which the head monk replied, "I'm not surprised. All you have done for 30 years is complain, complain, complain!"

Chronic complainers are not fun companions. Complaining never solves anything and only brings discouragement and disheartenment. Paul said, "Do everything without complaining" (Philippians 2:14, NIV); and "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV). We should always be thankful and not be chronic complainers.

—*Jerry Newswander, Des Moines, Iowa*

## IVAN THE MONK

Ivan the Terrible was as bad as he sounds. He could've been an eloquent



and able leader, but his temper and cruelty were life-long attributes. This Russian czar tortured thousands of citizens and had 60,000 people killed in one city. In a fit of anger, he struck his 27-year old son and killed him.

After each wild affair, he indulged in long drunken periods. Ivan would then atone by prostrating himself in front of the church altar. He believed he was divinely chosen to rule Russia, so any of his acts, no matter how bad, were acts of God.

On March 18, 1584, Ivan died. His head was shorn, and he was buried in monk's robes so as to fool God.

—Submitted by  
Robert Strand,  
Springfield,  
Missouri. Adapted  
from They Went  
That A Way by  
Malcolm Forbes.

## MOTHERS

Thomas Edison's tribute to his mother:

I did not have my mother long, but she cast over me a good influence that lasted all my life. The good effects of her early training I can never lose. If it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me at a critical time in my experience, I would never likely have become an inventor. I was always a careless boy, and with a mother of different mental caliber, I would have turned out badly. But her firmness, her sweetness, her goodness were potent powers to keep me on the right path. My

mother was the making of me. The memory of her will always be a blessing to me.

M is for the million things she gave me;

O is only that she's growing old;  
T is for the tears she shed to save me;

H is for her heart of purest gold;  
E is for her eyes with love light shining

R is for the right and right she'll always be.

Put them all together, they spell Mother, the name that means all the world to me.

—From The Speakers Quote Book by  
Roy B. Zuck. Copyright 1997.  
Published by Kregel Publications,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.  
Used by permission.

## WHERE IS YOUR HOPE?

When David Livingstone appeared at the University of Glasgow to receive the honorary doctor of law degree, he was received with silent respect. He was gaunt and weary from 16 years of exposure to Africa's hardships. One arm hung useless at his side because of an attack by a lion.

Livingstone asked, "Would you





like me to tell you what supported me through all the years of exile among people whose language I could not understand and whose attitude toward me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' "

—Thomas F. Zimmerman,  
Pentecostal Evangel

## THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Charles Spurgeon once shared an incident that took place in England as a group of men attempted to blow up a stone wall. After they lit the fuse to the dynamite and ran for cover, suddenly one of the men saw a young boy walking up toward the wall. They all stood up and screamed for the boy to take cover. As they screamed, the young boy was paralyzed with fear and just stood there.

His mother came by and saw the danger her son was in. She knelt, smiled, and said with love in her voice, "Come boy; come to your mother." The boy immediately ran to his mother and escaped the explosion.

The Bible says "that the goodness of God leads you to repentance" (Romans 2:4, NKJV). Are you standing paralyzed with fear, in bondage to sin, ready to explode any minute? Why don't you listen to His voice and come to Him?

—Submitted by Roger Johansson,  
Loris, South Carolina. Adapted from  
1001 Illustrations for Pulpit and  
Platform compiled by Aquilla Webb  
(New York: Richard R. Smith, 1930).

## THE NEED TO BE AUTHENTIC

It is reported that a nursemaid was employed in the Freud household who made a profound impression on Sigmund when he was 2 years old.

He liked his nursemaid very much. She took him to church, told him Bible stories, and taught him the beliefs of the church. On returning home from church services, he would often pretend he was the preacher.

Unfortunately, the nursemaid was convicted of a theft at a local store and was dismissed from her job.

A psychiatrist peer commented: "It would be fair to surmise that Freud's hostility to religion goes back to his disappointment with the very person who first introduced him to religion."

What we need is more authentic Christians.

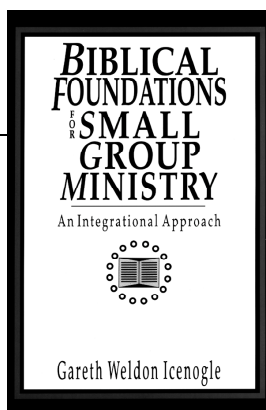
—Submitted by Douglas R. Rose,  
Belleville, Illinois. Adapted from The  
Psychology of Jesus  
by Raymond Cramer.

## ILLUSTRATIONS WANTED

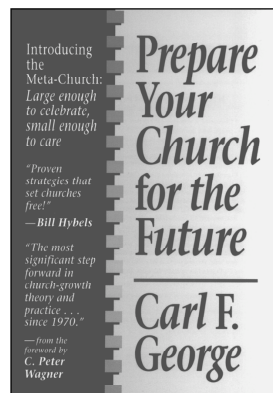
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E-mail: You may send your illustrations to [Enrichment@ag.org](mailto:Enrichment@ag.org)

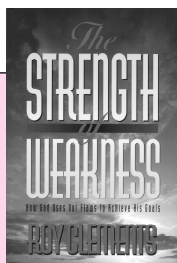




Gareth Weldon Icenogle  
(InterVarsity Press, 396 pp.,  
paperback, \$15.99)



Carl F. George (Revell, 240  
pp., paperback, \$10.99)



### **The Strength of Weakness: How God Uses Our Flaws To Achieve His Goals**

Roy Clements (Baker, 215 pp., paperback, \$14.99)

Clements provides a series of expository messages based on 2 Corinthians explaining those times when God uses

the frailties of His servants to accomplish His will.

This book would especially benefit those who have struggled with infirmities and chronic illnesses despite sincere effort to apply scriptural promises and principles.

Woven throughout is a strong emphasis on the quality of spiritual life for the individual believer as well as the entire assembly. The author offers a marvelous contrast between secular and spiritual standards of success.

Its treatment of real repentance and what happens after death make this a valuable addition to any pastor's library.

—Reviewed by Robert H. Spence, president, Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri.

### **Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach**

Gareth Weldon Icenogle (InterVarsity Press, 396 pp.,  
paperback, \$15.99)

As a pastor, theologian, scholar, and teacher, Gareth Icenogle gives us a veritable encyclopedia of small group ministry. The book's core message is: "Scripture begins and ends with God calling humanity into relationship with the divine community and with one another." God who is plural created humans in His image to be one together. Community was shattered when sin caused the man and woman to hide from God.

Misguided desire for independence and equality with God brought humanity into the paradoxical position of wanting to be together but fearing to lose independence. God's work requires human cooperation. The aim of small group ministry is to help individuals find their purpose and strengthen one another as they serve God and perpetuate His plan.

A three-part treatment of biblical foundations of small group ministry is provided: Old Testament foundations, Jesus' work with groups, and apostolic foundations. Each part begins with biblical exegesis and theological explanations integrated with theories and methods. The result is a set of practical guidelines thoroughly grounded in both theory and theology.

This book is unsurpassed in its balance of the

technical and spiritual. You will learn exact directions for forming and maintaining groups, and you will feel the tug of the Holy Spirit urging you into community with God and His people. The closing words are: "God desires to be with humanity in community forever and ever."

—Reviewed by Billie C. Davis, Ed.D., professor emeritus of behavioral sciences, Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri.

### **Prepare Your Church for the Future**

Carl F. George (Revell, 240 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

*Prepare Your Church for the Future* introduces and explains the *metachurch* approach to church growth and ministry, defined as "large enough to celebrate, small enough to care."

The early chapters give a history of church development since 1900 in the context of societal changes. In light of church history, the author lists eight societal needs the church must address to effectively minister today.

George shows the value of small group ministry in meeting these societal needs. The book brings together in a usable form the information a pastor should have to develop and maximize the use of small groups to accomplish this task.

Later chapters introduce *metaglobe*, a systematic approach to coordinating and structuring small groups to maximize the disciplining process. Included in the explanation is a sample filing system and role descriptions for those involved in the metaglobe process.

In addition, illustrations, charts, and other supporting material that can be easily made into overhead transparencies for group training and presentations are provided.

Any pastor who wants to use small groups for reaching and discipling people will find this book helpful.

The information is presented in a fresh manner. It is well organized in a concise and clear format making it easily understood and implemented in the local church to assist the process of making disciples.

—Reviewed by Larry Thomas, training coordinator, Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.

## The Small Group Book: The Practical Guide for Nurturing Christians and Building Churches

Dale Galloway with Kathi Mills (Baker Book House, 157 pp., paperback, \$9.99)

"Small group ministry is not an option if people are to be cared for, nurtured, and equipped for ministry." These challenging words launch Dale Galloway's comprehensive look at fully-integrated small group ministry.

Galloway's insight is born of experience. When he was pastor of New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon, Galloway built the largest small-group driving congregation in North America, with over 5,000 members.

*The Small Group Book* is the ideal resource for every phase of the process of moving to small group ministry. The authors offer an excellent blend of principles, practical steps, and personal experience from New Hope's remarkable growth.

Valuable chapters present both the case for small group ministry and many of the thinking "boxes" from which pastor and congregation must escape. Leadership models and accountability strategies are clear and seem easy to implement. Other basics such as recruiting, group dynamics, and meeting plans are covered as well.

One of the books greatest contributions is an extensive list of topics for leadership development. In Galloway's model, small group leaders gather weekly for training and preparation for their group meetings. Some 50 topics are listed as a part of the group leader's ongoing training. In addition, Galloway presents his strategy for leader advancement using what he calls the Jethro principle.

This inexpensive paperback seeks to help today's pastor bring the church growth successes of South Korea to North America. It seems capable of that extraordinary goal.

—Reviewed by Michael H. Clarensau, editor in chief,  
Sunday School Curriculum & Literature  
Department, Springfield, Missouri.

## Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching Through a Bible Book

Harold T. Bryson (Broadman and Holman, 320 pp., hardback, \$29.99)

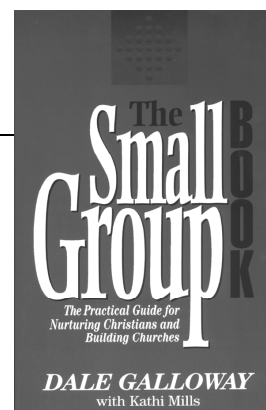
To preach the Word of God effectively requires a willingness to study the biblical text and a sensitivity to the contemporary needs of the preacher's audience. In *Expository Preaching*, Harold Bryson provides a detailed plan for presenting God's Word in an expository style.

Bryson defines expository preaching as "the art of preaching a series of sermons, either consecutive or selective, from a Bible book." He allows for expository preaching to include a wide range of approaches to the text rather than only detailed verse-by-verse exposition.

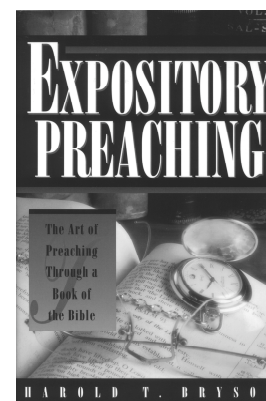
Without sacrificing attention to technical aspects, Bryson equips the reader with a practical application of expository preaching. The book covers the disciplines necessary for expository preaching, four homiletical guidelines, how to analyze and exegete, and how to structure biblical ideas from a Bible book.

Helpful illustrations of various styles of exposition from such noted preachers as D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, F.W. Robertson, J.R.W. Stott, R. Kent Hughes and Warren Wiersbe are included.

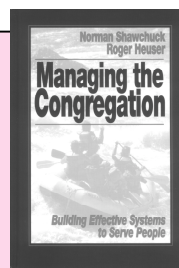
For those who are desirous of learning more



Dale Galloway with Kathi Mills (Baker Book House, 157 pp., paperback, \$9.99)



Harold T. Bryson (Broadman and Holman, 320 pp., hardback, \$29.99)



## Managing the Congregation

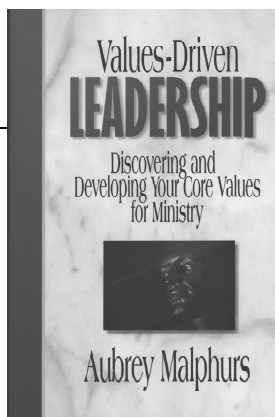
Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser (Abingdon Press, 387 pp., hardback, \$24.95)

*Managing the Congregation* progresses from the inner life of the manager or pastor outward toward the goal of building an adaptive congregation. The manager's control panel is understanding the local congregation as a system with four main components: mission, spirituality and vision, organizational design, and human relationships. These components are presented as the means of transforming the congregation to its most effective form.

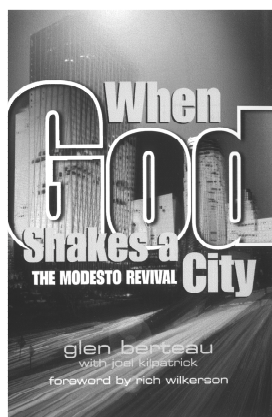
The authors carefully define, illustrate, and reinforce with real-life anecdotes all issues raised in their book. Review outlines and reflective questions at the end of each chapter assist application to the manager's present situation.

This is an exciting and enlightening book useful for classroom instruction in church administration or personal growth of the experienced religious leader. I strongly recommend it for everyone who is called to lead religious organizations.

—Reviewed by J. Duane Rice, senior pastor, St. Peters Assembly of God, Saint Peters, Missouri.



Aubrey Malphurs (Baker, 224 pp., paperback, \$16.99)



Glen Berteau with Joel Kilpatrick (Gospel Publishing House, 176 pp., \$9.95)

## B O O K R E V I E W S

about expository preaching or are interested in expanding their preaching skills, *Expository Preaching* offers some wonderful insight on the art of expository preaching. The volume includes an extensive bibliography for further study and would be an excellent resource for any student or preacher.

—Reviewed by John Lindell, senior pastor; James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

### Values-Driven Leadership: Discovering and Developing Your Core Values for Ministry

Aubrey Malphurs (Baker, 224 pp., paperback, \$16.99)

"This is what we stand for; this is what we are all about; this is who we are; this is what we can do for you." With those words Aubrey Malphurs defines core values and states, "This book is written for ministry organizations in general and for churches in particular."

*Values-Driven Leadership* is divided into seven chapters dealing with the importance, definition, discovery, development, communication, implementation, and preservation of core values.

One of its benefits is the emphasis the author places on the importance of reconciling personal core values with organizational core values at the beginning of an association. This helps avoid a pleasant alliance devolving into a state of frustration.

Malphurs notes that the larger the church, the greater the probability the core values of the institution will be defined by the leadership. And the smaller the church, the greater likelihood the core values will be determined by the congregation.

He gives excellent guidance on how to develop and communicate the core values or credo for an institution. To illustrate the concept and value of clearly written institutional core values as credos, he includes in the appendix section sample credos from 11 contemporary churches, 3 parachurches, and 4 marketplace institutions.

Although *Values-Driven Leadership* may seem unnecessarily technical to the single-minded preacher, the implementation of the

principles outlined is basic to the success of ministries and institutions.

The volume is worthy of a place in the minister's library.

—Reviewed by Everett R. Stenhouse, Rancho Mirage, California.

### When God Shakes a City: The Modesto Revival

Glen Berteau with Joel Kilpatrick (Gospel Publishing House, 176 pp., \$9.95)

An estimated 81,000 people attended 29 performances of *Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames* at Calvary Temple Assembly of God, Modesto, California, starting in January 1995. At least 33,000 were saved. Pastor Glen Berteau tells the inside story of this revival, which continues to impact Modesto.

Instead of confining the book's scope solely to his testimony, philosophy of ministry, and the story of the revival, Berteau wisely opted for the human interest approach. Nearly half the book is spent chronicling the lives of four individuals on the path to nowhere, who instead wound up in Modesto and saved. Seemingly most hopeless was Doug Adams—a member of the Hell's Angels, Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, one-time Green Beret, POW in Vietnam, and a 5-year San Quentin convict. Chapters of Berteau's story are interspersed with chapters of the four subplots—a microcosm of what God did in the lives of all 33,000.

For a year Berteau prepared his church for revival, casting the vision and inspiring the congregation, but his message is that God is the true hero of the story. He is the giver and rebuilder of the vision. He orchestrated lives and events. He was faithful throughout.

Thus, any church willing to pay the price can experience the same result. That's why Berteau calls this book "a manual in story form." He says, "The Modesto revival was not meant just for Modesto; it was meant for every church in America, every city, every community."

—Reviewed by Chuck Goldberg, Springfield, Missouri.



# Shoulder to Shoulder: Strengthening Your Church by Supporting Your Pastor

Dan Reiland (Thomas Nelson, 178 pp., paperback, \$10.99)

As a senior pastor who recently completed 24 years as an associate pastor, I can readily say this is the finest book I have read on the subject of supporting your church and its leadership.

*Shoulder to Shoulder* should be read by laypeople who need a fresh appreciation for their pastor, the pastoral staff, and other church leaders. In turn, associate pastors and church leaders will find the book to be a source of guidance and insight into basic principles of effective ministry.

Dan Reiland depicts the ideal pastor, as one who merits the loyalty of his or her people, in such a way that the book should be on every pastor's "must read" list. After reading the book, I was challenged to be a more effective pastor and a better mentor. The author's presentation of the 10 keys to connecting with your pastor and the 7 misconceptions about a pastor's life were especially useful.

*Shoulder to Shoulder* is a practical guidebook for coping with the more challenging issues facing church leadership today. Laypeople will learn from this volume that they can make a difference in their pastor's life, working "shoulder to shoulder" to help build a great church.

If the church is important to you, and you would like to see it and its pastor transformed into more effective instruments in the hands of God, you will want to read *Shoulder to Shoulder*.

—Reviewed by Charles Arsenaault, senior pastor,  
Evangel Temple Christian Center,  
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.

# Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership

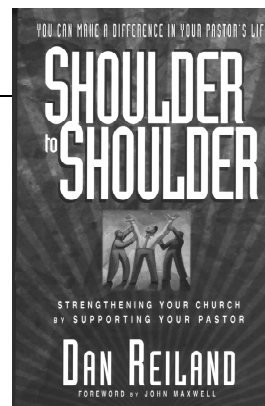
Carl F. George with Warren Bird (Kingdom Publishing, 216 pp., paperback, \$12.99)

For every pastor who has a desire to see leaders blossom and increase in number, this book is well worth reading. It should be in the hands of every leader in the church that purposes to be on the cutting edge of ministry.

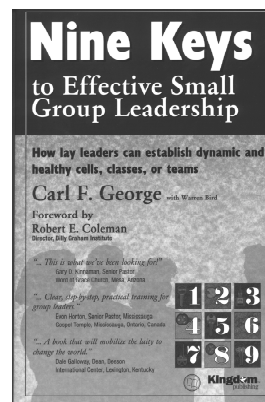
In the process of developing ministry-capable leaders for our Care Circles, we began using *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership* in our leadership training. Carl George effectively presents the essential elements of small group leadership in an easily read yet instructive format. And a significant part of the effectiveness of this material is the flexibility that allows the application of these principles in training leaders for a wide variety of small groups in a growing church.

The author confidently predicts that "every year your church develops a net of 10 new ministry-capable leaders with apprentices, you could add 100 people to your attendance." What does it take to be a leader in today's church? Get a copy of *Nine Keys* into the hands of your current leaders and those you are nurturing to be leaders and find out.

—Reviewed by Bud Smythe, associate pastor of  
Small Groups and Missions, Princeton Alliance  
Church, Princeton, New Jersey.



Dan Reiland (Thomas Nelson, 178 pp., paperback, \$10.99)



Carl F. George with Warren Bird (Kingdom Publishing, 216 pp., paperback, \$12.99)

# Women Mentoring Women: Creative Ways To Start, Maintain, and Expand a Biblical Women's Ministry

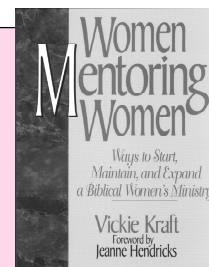
Vickie Kraft (Moody, 170 pp., paperback, \$14.99)

It's a challenge to meet all the diverse needs that women face today. *Women Mentoring Women* provides a good starting point for developing an effective women's ministries program.

Kraft gives insight on how to effectively communicate vision to the pastor and the board, how to include as many women as possible, how to determine what the needs are, and how to go about meeting them. There is also much-needed information on organizing special events and how to secure and care for speakers.

Of special interest is the section on Heart-to-Heart, an effective program on older women teaching younger women. If for no other reason than this, I would recommend that every women's ministry leader have a copy of this manual.

—Reviewed by Nancie Carmichael, editor at large for *Virtue* magazine.



# NEWS & RESOURCES

## ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHAPLAINS AND PASTORS ACCEPTED BY THE MILITARY

Chaplain Lemuel D. McElyea, director of the Division of Home Missions Chaplaincy Department, has announced the recent placement of seven new Assemblies of God military chaplains on active duty.

Assemblies of God chaplains recently endorsed and placed by the military include: Chaplain (CPT) Jeryl L. Adams, U.S. Army, Ft. Stewart, Hinesville, Ga.; Chaplain (CPT) W. Scott Doby, U.S. Army, Charles Price Support Center, Granite City, Ill.; Chaplain (CPT) Kevin M. Leideritz, U.S. Army, Ft. Bragg, Fayetteville, N.C.; Chaplain (CPT) Allen J. Raub, U.S. Army, Ft. Lee, Va.; Chaplain (CPT) Rolando Rosado, U.S. Army, Ft. Bragg, Fayetteville, N.C.; Chaplain, 1Lt, Brian M. Swain, U.S. Air Force, Altus AFB, Okla.; and Chaplain, Capt, James D. Tims, U.S. Air Force, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

With the addition of these 7 chaplains, the Assemblies of God has 108 chaplains serving in the U.S. military on active duty.

The Chaplaincy Department has also named 10 newly appointed contact pastors for military bases across the country, including: Tony B. Ashworth (Waynesville, Mo.) for Ft. Leonard Wood; Brandon B. Becker (Phoenix, Ariz.) for Luke Air Force Base; Thomas J. Conant (Virginia Beach, Va.) for Ft. Story; Stephen C. Fountain (Walkersville, Md.) for Ft. Detrick, Frederick, Md.; Russell D. Fuller (Albuquerque, N. Mex.) for Kirkland Air Force Base; Gary L. Morton (Anchorage, Alaska) for Ft. Richardson; Sidney C. Porter (Mountain Home, Idaho) for Mountain Home Air Force Base; Robert C. Rhoads (Bloomington, Ind.) for Naval Weapons Support Center, Crane, Ind.; David C. Verbeck (Abilene, Tex.) for Dyess Air Force Base; and Dale M. Wolyniak (Monument, Colo.) for U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.

### Recent Endorsees

Chaplain McElyea has released the names of six men who have recently received endorsement from the Commission

on Chaplains. The endorsees are Richard W. Anderson, Air Force Reserves; Bradford A. Baumann, Active Duty Army; Guy R. Caley, Army Reserves; Arthur J. Dawson, Veterans Affairs; Daniel W. Morey, Active Duty Air Force; and Timothy G. Stiers, Army National Guard.

## INDUSTRIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCY ENDORSES CHAPLAINS FOR SERVICE

Chaplain Rick Davis, the field representative for the Industrial and Institutional Chaplaincy, announced the endorsement of eight more Assemblies of God chaplains, with six of the chaplains having already been placed.

Chaplains receiving recent endorsement and positions include: L. Trenton Davis III, Hospital Chaplaincy, New Orleans, La.; Scott B. Langager, Hospital Chaplaincy, Minot, N. Dak.; Darryl M. Paddock, Hospice Chaplaincy, Tulsa, Okla.; H. Wayne Priest, Correctional Chaplaincy, Raiford, Fla.; J.W. Walker, Hospice Chaplaincy, Siloam Springs, Ark.; and Bruce Williamson, Rescue Mission Chaplaincy, Allentown, Pa. Also receiving endorsement are Arthur J. Dawson, Hospital Chaplaincy, and Kelly R. Sexton, Correctional Chaplaincy.

Currently, 133 Assemblies of God chaplains serve in the Industrial and Institutional Chaplaincy program.

## NEW CHAPLAINS NEEDED

The U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains Office has notified the Assemblies of God Chaplaincy Department that there is an urgent need for 130 fully qualified chaplains during this calendar year and the following year.

Qualifications for the chaplaincy are demanding and should be noted: Candidates are required to have a master of divinity (90-semester-hour seminary degree), be ordained, be 40 years of age or younger, be in good physical condition, be endorsed by the Assemblies of God Commission on Chaplains, and have 2 years senior

pastoral experience.

More information concerning the chaplaincy is available from the Chaplaincy Department: 417-862-2781, ext. 3270.

## BEREAN UNIVERSITY PRODUCES MATERIALS FOR STUDY CENTER FACILITATORS

Most of Berean's approximately 12,000 students study independently. However, many live in areas where they can choose group study with other adults in one of Berean's 390 official study centers nationwide. Each group is led by a local facilitator, someone selected for his or her familiarity with Berean curriculum.

To meet requests from facilitators for supplemental materials to enhance classroom presentation, Berean began producing *Instructional Facilitator's Manuals* in 1996. These manuals contain session outlines, commentary, discussion questions, presentation ideas, graphic transparencies, and much more. Many of the charts and maps are reproducible in multiple color or black and white.

Five IFMs are available: *Acts, Ministering to Children, Life of Christ, New Testament Survey*, and *Old Testament Survey*. *Soul Winning* and *Introduction to Theology* will soon be available. Berean's goal is to prepare and publish IFMs for the entire ministerial sequence of courses.

## BEREAN UNIVERSITY COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET AVAILABLE

"The 50th anniversary of Berean University has given us a new awareness of the heritage and mission of this great institution," says Dr. Zenas J. Bicket, president of Berean. This year marks the golden anniversary of the school, and Berean launched the celebration by hosting a reception for attendees of the 47th General Council last August.

The rich Berean heritage is brightly depicted in a commemorative booklet that tells the Berean story through prose, a collage of historical

photos, and a visual time line. The booklet is available free of charge to those who contact the university and request it. (Call toll free: 800-443-1083.)

### **BEREAN UNIVERSITY MEMORABILIA AVAILABLE**

Although Berean University is a distance education institution, it has characteristics in common with residence schools. One of those characteristics is school pride on the part of its students. Many students choose to express school pride by purchasing and using items that sport their college or university logo.

Berean University offers these quality products that display the official university logo: mugs, class rings, T-shirts, sweatshirts, and pocket knives. Students, alumni, and friends of the university can receive an order form that describes these items by calling: 800-443-1083.

### **NEW SPEED-THE-LIGHT VIDEO: TWO WORLDS, ONE CHOICE**

Using a straightforward, confrontational style, this new video contrasts the pain of this world with the hope Christ provides. Additional spots highlight the crucial role Speed-the-Light plays in equipping missionaries to reach the world. Show this presentation to youth group, missions convention, or small group attendees to heighten awareness of the choices we must make to spread the gospel. *Two Worlds, One Choice* is available by calling 800-641-4310 and requesting #731-650. Cost of video is \$10.

### **NEW QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR YOUTH LEADERS**

*It's All About Uth* is the new magazine sent free of charge each quarter from the national Youth Department to all Assemblies of God churches in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Jammed with practical helps and inspirational articles from members of the national youth ministries team, this magazine is a valuable tool for

vocational and volunteer youth leaders.

### **MISSIONETTES UPDATES FOR 1998**

The national Missionettes office is currently updating the Missionettes program to better equip churches in evangelizing and discipling today's girls. Changes include grade-level adjustments, new full-color curriculum for girls, user-friendly sponsors manuals, more teaching helps, updated music, new uniforms, and much more.

Every church reporting an active Missionettes program on the 1996 Annual Church Ministries Report will receive a 1998 Missionettes theme packet containing details of the program revisions. If your church does not receive a packet by Mar. 1, please contact the national Missionettes office.

### **NATIONAL MISSIONETTES WEEK**

National Missionettes Week is May 10-16, 1998. The theme Come Grow With Us, adapted from 2 Peter 3:18, encourages girls to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Sponsors will be honored for their ministry to girls and Missionettes' achievements will be highlighted at banquets, teas, luncheons, award presentations, and Honor Star crowning ceremonies in local churches across the nation during the week.

According to the 1996 Annual Church Ministries Report, 174,277 girls, ages 3 through high school, are members in 21,636 Missionettes clubs nationwide.

Every church reporting an active Missionettes club on the 1996 ACMR will receive a 1998 Missionettes theme packet from the national office including ideas for hosting memorable events.

National Missionettes Week offerings from local clubs and churches enable the national Missionettes office to continue providing excellent helps for the local church.

### **1998 VBS CURRICULUM—DEEP SEA ADVENTURES: EXPLORING GOD'S TREASURES**

The 1998 VBS curriculum *Deep Sea Adventures: Exploring God's Treasures* is an exciting way to introduce the children in your community to a world of underwater fun.

Imagine descending underwater with a scuba mask and gear, just like a marine scientist or explorer. The marine life found in this environment will captivate everyone's imagination. Bible stories highlight a world of colorful marine animals, a precious jewel, a fish with a mission, a sea escape, and nature-defying pedestrians.

Children's normal fascination with underwater exploration will help them discover God's treasures that are provided for all of us. They will see God as the awesome Creator, the Promise of Salvation, the One who cares for us personally, the One who protects us, and the One who gives us peace to replace anxiety and fear.

To order your Coordinator's Exam Treasure Kit, contact your Radiant Life representative or call 800-641-4310.

### **SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES DIPLOMA WITH AN EMPHASIS IN SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY OFFERED**

Berean University cooperated with the Senior Adult Ministries office to develop three courses for those desiring a Specialized Ministries Diploma with an emphasis in senior adult ministry. One course utilizes the *Senior Adult Ministries Manual* along with six lessons to assist the student in understanding and beginning such a ministry. The second course is based on the text *Celebrate Life After 50* by Roger Palms. The final course uses *Ministry in Action: A Basic Guide for Hospital and Nursing Home Ministry* as a text.

All three courses were released Jan. 1, 1998. They are ideal for seniors or anyone interested in ministering to seniors.

For more information contact: Berean



# NEWS & RESOURCES

University, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802, 800-443-1083, ext. 1216.

## ROYAL RANGERS MINISTRY STRENGTHENS OBJECTIVES

Training and discipleship have been two main elements of the Royal Rangers ministry since its inception in 1962. The national Royal Rangers office continues to improve methods for mentoring boys, training leaders, and strengthening its missions ministry.

### Urban Focus

Since 1993 the national Royal Rangers office has concentrated on developing new programs and training materials to reach urban boys for Christ and to strengthen its evangelism efforts overseas.

### Royal Rangers Harvest Task Force

Harvest Task Force trips engage Royal Rangers commanders in fasting, prayer, and evangelism in key urban areas across the U.S. The national office has challenged each district commander to conduct at least one HTF per year.

### National Urban Leadership Conference

The National Urban Leadership Conference was implemented in New York City in 1996 to better prepare leaders for urban outreach. Over 60 participants engaged in workshops, an urban tour, evangelism efforts, special services, and ceremonies.

Three NULCs were held in 1997: Dallas, Tex.; Milwaukee, Wis.; and Albany, Ga. Royal Rangers commanders participated in door-to-door visitation, activities, and evangelism services. Thanks to dedicated commanders, many inner-city boys are attending local Assemblies of God churches and participating in Royal Rangers.

### LFTL Junior Council Program

The Light-for-the-Lost Junior Councilmen program was established in 1993 to expose Royal Rangers boys to gospel literature outreach. Hundreds of boys across the nation participate in LFTL functions and give of their finances. To date the funds generated through the LFTL Junior

Councilmen program have enabled the national office to print over 300,000 copies of *The Book of Hope* distributed by the Division of Home Missions, ChurchCare America, and during Royal Rangers Harvest Task Force trips.

Thousands of copies of *Edward the Elephant Says...*, a comic book with an evangelism focus that teaches AIDS prevention, have been purchased through this program and distributed to foreign missionaries in Africa.

### Pathfinders Program

To spread the gospel message, the Royal Rangers ministry also assists in MAPS overseas construction projects. The Frontiersmen Camping Fellowship "Pathfinder" missions program was developed in 1992 for the purpose of sending FCF church construction teams into areas where working and living conditions are too harsh for other MAPS construction teams.

The FCF national ministry sponsored 6 national Pathfinder trips and 11 other missions trips last year. Teams build churches and other church-related projects.

### National Academy

The Royal Rangers National Academy for training instructors is held annually at the National Royal Rangers Training Center, Eagle Rock, Mo. Some 180 men have attended the National Academy in the past 3 years.

### Camporama

The National Camporama is a major camping event held at the national campground every 4 years. At the 1994 Camporama, over 1,000 boys received Christ as Lord and Savior.

Promotion is under way for the seventh National Camporama. Over 5,500 boys and leaders are expected to gather from the U.S. and overseas. Boys and leaders will be challenged to enter the new millennium with a greater zeal to reach the world for Christ.

### Summary

Well over 1 million boys in the U.S. have participated in Royal Rangers

since its beginning. This ministry now exists in 63 nations and continues to look for methods to strengthen its missions focus of reaching youth for Christ.

## ACCESS THE PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL REVIVAL REPORTS AND ORDER SPECIAL EDITIONS

Revival reports and other features that focus on revival published in the *Pentecostal Evangel* can be accessed on Berean University's web page (<http://www.berean.edu/chapel>). Review these exciting stories about powerful moves of God throughout the U.S. This interactive web site also contains subscription and advertising information.

Copies of the *Evangel's* monthly evangelism editions are still available. Each one is ideal for outreaches and discipleship.

Also, the **Visitors Edition** issue is available. Introduce your congregation and visitors to the Assemblies of God by using this attractive edition. Articles include: "What We Believe"; "Who Is the Assemblies of God?"; "Why Be a Member of the Assemblies of God?"; and testimonials on "What the Assemblies of God Means to Me." Call 800-641-4310 to order these special editions (20 cents per copy; minimum order of 50; order #69-6808 for the Visitors Edition).

## THE PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL: NEW FACE, SAME HEART

The *Pentecostal Evangel* has undergone a redesign.

"Everything we do at the *Pentecostal Evangel* is motivated to serve the churches and readers," says *Evangel* editor Hal Donaldson. "The redesign was prompted by a desire to present the articles and columns in a fresh way, believing it would continue to increase readership."

The *Evangel* staff worked with an award-winning magazine design firm to develop a new format. The magazine will not deviate from its original purpose.

"Our vision for the magazine remains

unchanged—to win people to Christ and to provide encouragement and instruction to our readers,” Donaldson says.

New equipment recently purchased by the Gospel Publishing House will enable pastors to personalize the back covers of their church's *Evangels* with the pastor's name, church address, and service times. Eventually churches may be able to print special messages. This process is designed to help churches disciple people who have found Jesus Christ.

The same piece of equipment will also change the *Evangel's* distribution system allowing bundles to be mailed flat, in shrink-wrapped packages.

“The purchase of this equipment will result in cost savings of time, materials, and personnel; the elimination of rolled magazines; and faster mailing,” says Arlyn Pember, national director of the Division of Publication. “The *Pentecostal Evangel* staff is to be commended for its forward thinking that led to the purchase. Other magazines and periodicals printed at Gospel Publishing House will also benefit from the new unit.”

### **NATIONAL MEN'S DAY**

HonorBound: Men of Promise, the Assemblies of God ministry to men, has changed the date of its National Men's Day to Father's Day each June. The emphasis will focus on all men, not just fathers, calling them to grow in God and be all they can be in Him. Promotional packets and materials are available through the national HonorBound office for this special day for men.

### **LIVING BY THE BOOK**

HonorBound: Men of Promise has just completed 15 individual discipleship courses for men and their families entitled *Living by the Book*. The courses cover a number of topics ranging from finances to families. All 15 courses are available through Gospel Publishing House.

### **HONORBOUND LEVEL 1 & 2 TRAINING**

HonorBound: Men of Promise announces new training seminars for local church men's ministries leaders. The training seminars are given in two different levels and teach basic leadership skills for the local leadership team. Both levels include skill building and interface with Promise Keepers training. Information concerning the dates and times of the seminars is available through the national and district HonorBound offices.

### **HONORBOUND START-UP KIT**

HonorBound: Men of Promise has compiled a Start-Up Kit for ministry to men. The kit includes many valuable resources and highlights the new *Local Church Training Manual* for men's ministries leaders. The kit will help a local church begin to focus its ministry to men in a strategic and effective way. The kits are available through Gospel Publishing House.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S AWARD PRESENTED TO LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST COUNCILMEN**

Two of the three laypersons receiving the Superintendent's Medal of Honor at the 47th General Council in Indianapolis in Aug. were Light-for-the-Lost councilmen: Raymond A. Neill, founder and builder of Neill Aircraft in Long Beach, Calif.; and Charles “Chuck” Freeman, owner of Chuck's Auto Body Repair and Freeman properties in Bethany, Okla.

Ray Neill has been involved in LFTL since 1958 and has toured the Southern California District speaking on its behalf. He and his wife Geneva have financed the building of 15 Assemblies of God churches overseas and have made frequent trips to encourage and assist missionaries by coordinating Good News Crusades and distributing LFTL literature. They attend First A/G in Wilmington, Calif.

Charles Freeman pioneered the Light-for-the-Lost ministry for the Oklahoma District, which has led the

nation in LFTL giving for 2 consecutive years. He has served LFTL on the national level for many years and organized the first Prayer Task Force team to Mexico City in 1979. Since then he has taken 17 teams around the world. He and his wife Inez attend Rock A/G in Oklahoma City. Their son Ric is pastor of First A/G in Weatherford, and son Jerry, a businessman, serves on the LFTL executive board.

The Superintendent's Award was established in 1989 by the Executive Presbytery to honor laypersons in the Assemblies of God who have distinguished themselves through meritorious service to God, church, community, and fellow citizens.

### **1998 PRAYER TASK FORCE TRIPS**

Light-for-the-Lost will target five cities for Prayer Task Force trips in 1998. (1) The target city in Africa will be Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, led by H.H. “Spud” DeMent from May 21 to June 1. This trip is scheduled in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of the Assemblies of God of Equatorial Guinea. (2) The Asia Pacific target will be the French Territories. (3) Benny Ferguson, national LFTL coordinator, and William Gross, Ohio District LFTL chairman, will lead a team to Bangkok from Jan. 2–10. (4) The Eurasia PTF team will go to Kathmandu, Nepal. (5) The Latin America team will head to Mexico City. For further dates of PTFs, please contact the LFTL office at 417-826-2781.

### **CANDIDATES APPROVED FOR MISSIONS SERVICE**

The Division of Home Missions approved 28 candidate home missionaries for service during candidate interview/orientation held Feb. 10–14, 1997, at the Assemblies of God Headquarters in Springfield, Mo.

Fields of ministry, candidate names, and their home districts are as follows:

*Chi Alpha Campus Ministries*—Matt and Elaine Tallman (Oreg.), Chris and Jennifer Hutchinson (Ark.), David and Kristine Tucker (Ohio), Dale and Jan

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Crall (Ill.), Jayme Harris (Oreg.), Noble and Kesia Bowman (Ark.), Kirk Rohde (Colo.), Rebecca Washburn (Mich.), Scott and Anita Lansing (N. Tex.), and Danforth Goff (Mich.).

*Hispanic Ministries*—Larry and Donna Graham (Midwest Latin), Reginald and Rose Stone (N.C.), and Ted and Karen Haynes (Ohio).

*Jewish Ministries*—Dale and Virginia Floyd (Okla.).

*Native American Ministries*—Ed and Janice Sullivan (S.C.).

*Urban Ministries*—David and Lynda Blackburn (Ill.).

## 1997 J. ROBERT ASHCROFT NATIONAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED

SPRINGFIELD, MO.—The top three winners in the Assemblies of God 1997 J. Robert Ashcroft National Youth Scholarship Program have been announced by officials in the Christian Higher Education and Youth Departments, cosponsors of the annual program.

Joshua Peters of Cottonwood, Ariz., is the first-place winner. He is using his \$2,500 scholarship to attend Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Tex. Joshua graduated first in a class of 254 from Mingus Union High School. He attends First Assembly of God, serving as a Royal Rangers leader, music and drama team member, and participant in AIM ministry trips to Alaska, England, Nicaragua, and Peru. Joshua is the son of Rev. Lynn and Louanne Peters.

Second-place winner and recipient of a \$1,500 scholarship is Keyla Butts of Fortine, Mont. She is attending Trinity Bible College in Ellendale, N. Dak. Keyla was valedictorian at Lincoln County High School. In her church, Whitefish Assembly of God, she is active in music ministry, serves as an assistant Missionettes leader, and is involved in campus ministry. Keyla is the daughter of Ned and Tillie Butts.

Third-place winner Amanda Cotter of Columbus, Ohio, was awarded \$1,000 to attend Central Bible College in Springfield, Mo. In her church, Evangel Temple Assembly of God, she

is assistant youth choir director, worship leader, and substitute Sunday school teacher. Amanda is the daughter of Joseph and Dolores Cotter.

The J. Robert Ashcroft National Youth Scholarship Program applications are available from the Assemblies of God district youth directors after Nov. 3 and are accepted from Jan. 1 to Mar. 31 each year. Completed applications and supporting documents must be submitted to district youth directors by Mar. 31. High school seniors who attend an Assemblies of God church (or are dependents of Assemblies of God missionaries) who plan to attend an endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary school upon graduation are eligible to apply.

There are 17 endorsed A/G colleges.

## SEATTLE '97 OUTREACH

Over 80 students and faculty from 6 A/G colleges went to Seattle, Wash., May 15–26 for the fifth annual North American A/G College Student Ministry Outreach. The theme Windows of Opportunity came from the team's love and concern for the community.

Students formed outreach teams to help area churches: Cedar Park Assembly, East Ridge Christian Assembly, Westwood Christian Assembly, Burien Life Center, Southgate Assembly, Outreach Christian Assembly, and Trinity Life Center.

Students' work assignments included litter cleanup and drive-by lawn care. They also participated in door-to-door distribution of Bibles and *Pentecostal Evangel*s, J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) Street children's outreach services, and a Not-So-Underground Party youth outreach meeting.

Colleges represented in the ministry outreach were Southeastern A/G College, Valley Forge Christian College, Northwest College of the A/G, Trinity Bible College, Southwestern A/G University, and North Central Bible College.

## A/G POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE SPRING 1998 COMMENCEMENT DATES

The following Assemblies of God

postsecondary schools have announced spring 1998 commencement dates:

American Indian College of the A/G, Phoenix, Ariz.—May 1.

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—June 5.

Berean University of the A/G, Springfield, Mo.—June 11.

Bethany College of the A/G, Scotts Valley, Calif.—May 9.

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—Apr. 30.

Central Indian Bible College, Mobridge, S. Dak.—May 8.

Evangel College, Springfield, Mo.—May 1.

Latin American Bible Institute, San Antonio, Tex.—May 1.

Latin American Bible Institute, La Puente, Calif.—May 2.

North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minn.—May 8.

Northwest College of the A/G, Kirkland, Wash.—May 9.

Southeastern A/G College, Lakeland, Fla.—Apr. 24.

Southern California College, Costa Mesa, Calif.—May 2.

Southwestern A/G University, Waxahachie, Tex.—May 8.

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N. Dak.—May 8.

Valley Forge Christian College, Phoenixville, Pa.—May 9.

Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.—Apr. 27.

## MINISTERS BENEFIT ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES PLAN ENHANCEMENTS

Legislative provisions effective for years beginning after Dec. 31, 1996, permit ministers employed in the course of their ministry by organizations other than a church or qualified church-controlled organization to be treated as if they were employed by the church. This provision allows such ministers to participate in the 403(b)(9) retirement plans sponsored by their denomination.

Contributions made on behalf of such ministers are excludable from the minister's income to the same extent as if the minister were an



employee of the church. Participation may be accomplished up to the aggregate limits applicable to retirement plans. These include the annual limit on elective deferrals, the annual exclusion allowance, and the limit on annual additions to a retirement plan as outlined in regulations.

Organizations who employ such ministers need not include the minister for nondiscrimination testing purposes as long as the employing organization is not otherwise participating in the church plan.

This provision is of particular benefit to chaplains, evangelists, and others employed by nonchurch-controlled ministries.

### **MAR. 15 IS CHILD CARE DAY**

Government officials and other national spokespersons publicize the importance of caring for our nation's children.

The Assemblies of God, through the ministry of the national Benevolences Department, helps care for some of America's needy children through Hillcrest Children's Home and Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home.

Pastor, please share with your congregation the ministries of these homes for neglected and abused children and for pregnant, unmarried girls.

To receive a packet of information about Highlands and Hillcrest, please check #2 on the reader service card.

### **APRIL IS DISASTER RELIEF MONTH**

Through the Disaster Relief program, your church can help bear the burdens of other congregations whose churches or parsonages become damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.

The Disaster Relief fund has helped hundreds of churches and ministries rebuild after being hit by natural disasters.

April, the traditional start of the tornado season, is Disaster Relief month. Please encourage your congregation to share in this ministry during April.

For a free brochure and more information on the Disaster Relief program check #3 on the reader service card.

### **MAY 24 IS AMA DAY**

Aged Ministers Assistance Day, recognized in our churches on the Sunday before Memorial Day, gives churches an opportunity to thank our pioneer preachers in a tangible way for their years of sacrificial service to the Assemblies of God.

Over 500 retired and disabled pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and their spouses are on the AMA rolls. AMA will provide nearly \$1 million in assistance to our retired and needy ministers. An offering from your church would be a great help.

AMA bulletin inserts are available by checking #1 on the reader service card and indicating quantity needed

### **DATES FOR A/G PREACHING SCHOOL ANNOUNCED**

Make plans to attend the Assemblies of God Preaching School June 1-4, 1998, in Memphis Tenn. The school, cosponsored by the Ministerial Enrichment Office and the National Evangelists Office, is hosted by The Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching.


Speakers for the school include: Dr. Stephen Olford; Dr. David Olford; Rev. Charles T. Crabtree, Assemblies of God assistant general superintendent; Dr. Wayne I. Goodall, national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office; and Dr. James O. Davis, national evangelists representative.

Some attending last year's school had this to say: "I would sign up for next year's school right now if I could." "Every pastor, old or young, will reap bountifully from attending this school." "This was the most enlightening conference I have ever attended."

The registration fee is \$245 and includes all seminar materials, three lunches, and two dinners. A \$50 deposit is required. Space is limited, so call 800-843-2241.

### **DRESSELHAUS ELECTED EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER**

Richard L. Dresselhaus, pastor of First Assembly of God in San Diego, Calif., since 1970, was elected to the Executive Presbytery by delegates

to the 47th General Council in Indianapolis. He has served as a presbyter of the Southern California District and as a general presbyter for The General Council of the Assemblies of God since 1985. Dresselhaus serves as the executive presbyter for the southwest area. 

# With Christ

Edward W. Anderson  
Everett, Washington

Jack A. Andrews  
Seattle, Washington

William H. Anglin  
Southport, Florida

Blanche Armstrong  
Saint Thomas,  
Pennsylvania

Doris G. Arnesen  
Cottage Grove, Oregon

Percy Q. Arnold  
Natchez, Mississippi

Bobby R. Bailey  
Lebanon, Ohio

Ralph D. Bellows  
Roy, Washington

Sarah L. Bishop  
Scotts Valley, California

Pauline Borders  
Benton, Arkansas

Robert H. Boyd  
Glenwood, Missouri

Ruth A. Breusch  
New Holland,  
Pennsylvania

Audie L. Bruton  
Camden, Arkansas

Edgar A. Bush  
Huntsville, Alabama

Richard G. Carl  
Kenilworth, New Jersey

Frank H. Chandler  
Bossier City, Louisiana

Cyril T. Chegwin  
Elkton, Maryland

Neva M. Clarke  
Palestine, Texas

Winifred M. Clouch  
Porterville, California

James T. Cooper  
Paducah, Kentucky

Lois J. Covlasky  
Wasilla, Alaska

Ellis C. Damiani  
Poughkeepsie, New York

Vista H. Daniel  
Dallas, Texas

Vallariee M. Drake  
Dekalb, Texas

Larry J. Ferguson  
Mount Sterling,  
Kentucky

William F. Flack  
Edwardsville, Illinois

Dorothy F. Fogle  
Fordland, Missouri

Helen M. Gallatin  
Greensboro,  
Pennsylvania

Eleazar A. Garza  
Floresville, Texas

Paul F. Gilbert  
Duncan, Oklahoma

Richard S. Gonzales  
Roswell, New Mexico

B.L. Greene  
Tyler, Texas

James E. Griffin  
Mayo, Florida

Harold C. Grove  
Lake Stevens,  
Washington

Glenn Gulick  
Carthage, Missouri

Myrtle M. Hollis  
Osborne, Kansas

Gail Howard  
Overland Park, Kansas

Alice L. Jackson  
Franklin, Texas

Clyne A. Jones  
Coolidge, Arizona

Marguerite E. Kelso  
Tacoma, Washington

Winnifred I. Kenney  
Kennewick, Washington

Paul M. Kiss  
Cleveland, Ohio

D. Fred Leader  
Springfield, Missouri

Cecil R. Liddle  
Springfield, Missouri

C. Emery Link  
Casper, Wyoming

James W. Lynd, Jr.  
Chico, California

Yolanda Magallanez  
Chicago, Illinois

Harvey Mankins  
Oklahoma City,  
Oklahoma

Dessie E. McIntosh  
Falling Waters,  
West Virginia

Lloyd McIntosh  
Seymour, Texas

Nicolas Medina  
Modesto, California

David C. Merring  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Paul M. Middaugh  
Groom, Texas

Sherman I.  
Montgomery  
Chester, Virginia

Stanley J. Morris  
Richlands, Virginia

Hal C. Noah  
Red Oak, Texas

Hugo W. Olson  
Madison, Wisconsin

Rodolfo A. Orsini  
Sanford, Florida

Edith B. Osgood  
Millville, New Jersey

Daniel B. Pecota  
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# In Closing

BY LEROY R. BARTEL

## **SMALL GROUPS: THE HUMAN SIDE**

All too often we only hear about the theoretical side of small group ministry in the church—its structure, value, and spiritual and sociological dynamics. Small groups are analyzed for the contribution they make to church growth and disciple making. All of this is valuable and necessary, but what about the human side of small group ministry in the church? When we hear stories of people who have been helped and changed by small groups in the church, we learn the most about this ministry and are convinced of its value.

## **JANET AND HAROLD**

Recently, my wife and I attended a farewell for Darrell, a friend of ours who taught Sunday school for years in a large church. When members of the class were invited to make comments, Janet stood, choked up with tears, and began to share: “When Harold and I moved to Springfield last year, we visited this church and it seemed so big—so impersonal. We didn’t know if we wanted to stay or find a smaller congregation. But then we began to attend this class. Darrell and all of you have been so kind. You accepted us and included us in everything you did. Now we feel right at home, and you couldn’t get us to go anywhere else.” Darrell’s Sunday school class was the key element in making a large church “small” for Harold and Janet.

## **JIM AND VALARIE**

Several years ago, two dear friends of mine shared their concern about their son and new daughter-in-law who


were moving to the Dallas area. They really wondered whether the newlyweds would get involved in a good local church or just become occasional attenders. They didn’t want to see their commitment to Christ suffer. Fortunately, the church they chose to attend had small groups. A small group leader and his wife were assigned to Jim and Valarie and drew them into their group. My friends, who had once been afraid of what might happen, marveled as they began to see their kids’ faith grow, their commitment to Christ deepen, and their involvement in the church increase.

These parents said, “We are firm believers in small group ministry because we’ve seen the impact of it on the lives of our kids. Jim and Valarie were Christians, but the involvement wasn’t there. Now they don’t just go to church—they’re involved. They teach in vacation Bible school and help in many other ways in the church. They’re growing spiritually.”

## **JENNIFER**

Recently, I was conducting a Christian education conference in a large city. In one session I emphasized how small groups help create a climate in which people can be honest with one another and vulnerable about their needs. I pointed out that in a small group atmosphere—where there is love, acceptance, and prayer—God can bring remarkable healing to people’s lives. A young lady named Jennifer raised her hand and said, “Several years ago I began to attend this church and became a part of one of its small groups. I had just had a child

out of wedlock and felt so alone. I was overwhelmed by guilt and isolation. I didn’t know what to do. One day, I just couldn’t stand it anymore. We were having prayer time, and people were being so honest about their struggles and needs. I suddenly just blurted out my feelings. I told them how guilty I felt—how lonely and fearful. Those people gathered around me, loved me, and prayed for me. They supported me, accepted me, and helped me in the months and years that followed. Jesus has healed me, and now I’m teaching others about His life-transforming love.”

Well, that’s just a taste of the human side of small group ministry in the church. There are many, many more stories to tell. Small groups are a dynamic tool that God can use to bring life change and spiritual growth in your church! 

*LeRoy R. Bartel is the Division of Christian Education national director and the Division of Church Ministries coordinator, Springfield, Missouri.*





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**"Stop nagging me, Jane. After all, I have my Th.M., and I know what I am doing."**