

# ENRICHMENT

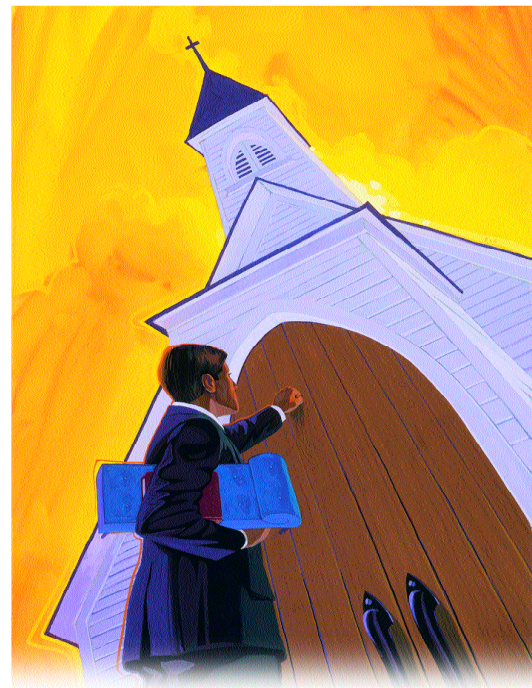
S U M M E R 1 9 9 8

## Counseling

- Paul L. Walker **The Counseling Pulpit** ..... 12  
*When the counseling pulpit speaks the loudest.*
- Richard D. Dobbins **Hidden Feelings of the Heart** ..... 18  
*Here's how to get in touch with your hidden feelings to help make you a wiser leader.*
- Gary R. Collins **When Good Preaching and Discipleship Aren't Enough** ..... 24  
*A question still persists in the minds of many Christian leaders: Does the church need Christian counselors? This well-known author thinks so.*
- Michael J. McManus **Preparing Couples for Lifelong Marriages** .. 30  
*From the author of Marriage Savers comes proactive steps churches can take to help couples build lifelong marriages.*
- H. Norman Wright **Pitfalls in Marriage Counseling** ..... 36  
*Avoid these 17 pitfalls to become a more effective marriage counselor.*
- Ron Turner **Referral: Safeguarding the Integrity of the Counseling Relationship** ..... 48  
*Unsure of how or when to make that referral? Consider these guidelines.*
- Ruth Hetzendorfer **Healing the Broken Heart of Divorce** ..... 56  
*If you can grasp the feelings associated with devastation and hopelessness, you are on your way to understanding the inner world of the divorced.*

## Also inside...

- George O. Wood **The Pentecostal Pulpit of the 21st Century** .. 76  
*Here are three distinctives that will characterize the Pentecostal pulpit in the next century.*
- Gary B. McGee **Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire: The Revival Legacy of Minnie F. Abrams of India** ..... 80  
*Who is this little-known Methodist "deaconess-missionary"?*
- John R. Wootten **Confessions of a Former Associate** ..... 104  
*Increase your longevity as an associate pastor by adopting these 10 timeless principles.*



A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY





# Ministry Matters

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL

Most people in crisis seek the help of a minister. Ministers' counseling situations might not be in the same format that professional counselors use. They may counsel in the church foyer, at the altar, across the restaurant table, or on the telephone. But every minister is a counselor.

When I was in Bible college studying for a life of pastoral ministry, I decided to stay a little longer and receive extra training in psychology. I felt then, and I still do, that if I was going to serve people all my life, I needed to understand human behavior as much as possible. My skilled, Spirit-filled professors carefully explained mental illness, emotional pain and trauma, the devastating results of those who have been abused, how to help those with an alcohol or substance abuse problem, and numerous other dysfunctional and psychological issues that people face.

My eyes were opened. I realized that not only do we preach Christ to our congregation each week, but the church could also serve as a catalyst of emotional healing for those who are wounded and broken psychologically. Since then I have watched person after person become stable in life as they surrendered to the lordship of Christ, become involved in a loving congregation, and at times, receive Christian counseling.

Jesus used the word *counselor* (*paraklētos*) when He described what the Holy Spirit would do for us (cf. John 14:16). *Paraklētos* (literally means *one called alongside to help*) can mean comforter, strengthener, counselor, helper, adviser, advocate, ally, and friend.<sup>1</sup> As pastors, missionaries, or evangelists, we need the Holy Spirit to help us as we endeavor to strengthen, help, advise, and be


the friend to those we serve. The Holy Spirit helps us be sensitive to those who are emotionally weak, understand the depth of their problems, and know how to advise.

Charles Spurgeon said, "The great King, immortal, invisible, the divine person called the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit: it is He that quickens the soul, or else it would lie dead forever; it is He that makes it tender, or else it would never feel; it is He that imparts efficacy to the Word preached, or else it could never reach farther than the ear; it is He who breaks the heart; it is He who makes it whole."<sup>2</sup> We need to depend on the Holy Spirit not only as we preach and teach but as we speak to people one-on-one. Oswald Chambers said, "The Holy Spirit does not obliterate a man's personality; He lifts it to its highest use."<sup>3</sup>

As ministers we need to also utilize trained Christian counselors in our communities. Unless ministers have received professional training, they will need to refer many situations to skilled professionals. Those who are mentally ill, suicidal, clinically depressed, or have deep emotional pain brought on by childhood abuse are only a few of the types of people that need professional help. We can work hand in hand with Christian counselors for the common goal of helping hurting people become whole.

Wherever I pastored, one of the first things I did was to find the Christian counselors in the city and become acquainted with them. I wanted to hear about how they came to Christ and how they felt about the Word of God. I wanted to know where they received their education and what state certification

they held. Knowing this information was critical for referral and liability reasons, because not every counselor has the necessary certification for state approval.

In this issue of *Enrichment*, there are excellent articles and interviews from skilled leaders in the body of Christ. Let these experts come alongside you and help you minister to the "precious ones" that you serve. 

## ENDNOTES

1. Donald C. Stamps, ed., *The Full Life Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), footnote on John 14:16, 1624.
2. Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1992), 315.
3. Ibid.

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# ENRICHMENT

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—COUNSELING

### THEME ARTICLES

#### Ask the Superintendent

*Interview with Thomas E. Trask*

There is no escape from the counseling responsibilities of ministry. General Superintendent Trask discusses the importance of pastoral counseling and offers candid advice to those who counsel in the local church . . . . . 8



#### The Counseling Pulpit

*By Paul L. Walker*

Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the preached Word through the counseling minister focuses on needs, offers spiritual resources, and motivates behavioral change . . . . . 12

#### Hidden Feelings of the Heart

*By Richard D. Dobbins*

The feelings that ministers have, but often hide, can complicate their relationships. Mature ministers take total responsibility for the emotional transactions between themselves and others . . . . . 18

#### When Good Preaching and Discipleship Aren't Enough

*By Gary R. Collins*

God is using thousands of Christ-honoring counselors to bring fresh hope, maturity, wholeness, inner peace, and healed relationships into shattered and struggling lives . . . . . 24



#### Preparing Couples for Lifelong Marriages

*Interview with Michael J. McManus*

Marriage Savers' founder Mike McManus offers pastors a strategy to consciously work at strengthening their own marriages and in turn work at nurturing the couples in their churches . . . . . 30

#### Pitfalls in Marriage Counseling

*By H. Norman Wright*

How can counselors and ministers avoid potential counseling problems when they counsel couples in marital crises? Do any of the 17 listed pitfalls apply to you? . . . . . 36



#### Counseling Ministries: A Legal Checkup

*By Richard R. Hammar*



If churches have a counseling ministry, church leaders and counselors must know their legal obligations. And to help prevent legal action being taken against them, churches should develop strict counseling policies . . . . . 42

#### Referral: Safeguarding the Integrity of the Counseling Relationship

*By Ron Turner*

The reason for making referrals is to ensure that people in your church get the best care possible. This article offers the how-tos of referring counselees . . . . . 48

#### Discerning Depression in the Believer

*By Carl L. Miller*

Depression is an illness that at times is so severe that even some believers cannot deal with it. The author discusses what ministers need to know and what they can do to help those suffering from depression . . . . . 52



#### Healing the Broken Heart of Divorce

*By Ruth Hetzendorfer*



Jesus was our example of how to treat hurting people—He was moved with compassion for the hurting. What can we do to help those trying to heal from the trauma of divorce? . . . . . 56

#### Selecting a Counseling Training Program

*By Donald A. Lichi*

For ministers interested in additional counseling training, the author lists 10 questions to ask when looking for a balanced counseling program . . . . . 64

## FEATURES

### Insights From an Accomplished Preacher

*Interview with Stephen F. Olford*  
The founder of The Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching discusses his views on preaching, the ministry, and revival . . . . . 68

### Celebrate Jesus 2000: Reaching Every Home for Christ

*Interview with Thomas E. Trask, Charles T. Crabtree, and Charles E. Hackett*  
Three Assemblies of God executives discuss the plan of America's evangelical churches to bring a witness of Christ to every household by the end of 2000. . . . . 72

### The Pentecostal Pulpit of the 21st Century

*By George O. Wood*  
Pentecostal preachers must get into the heart of the matter that this is the hour of God's visitation in their lives, their homes, their churches, their towns . . . . . 76

### Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire! The Revival Legacy of Minnie F. Abrams

*By Gary B. McGee*  
Who is this little-known Methodist "deaconess-missionary" who was a leader in revival and evangelism in India in the late 19th century and early 20th century? . . . . . 80

## EDITORIALS

### MINISTRY MATTERS

*By Wayne I. Goodall* . . . . . 1

### IN CLOSING

*By Rick Knott* . . . . . 143

## COLUMNS

### WORD STUDY: (NOR'A)

**Awesome**  
*By William D. Bjoraker* . . . . . 88

### THEOLOGICAL ENRICHMENT

**Filled With the Spirit PART 1**  
*By Anthony D. Palma* . . . . . 90

### MINISTERIAL ENRICHMENT

**Pastoral Counseling: 10 Key Principles**  
*By Wayne I. Goodall* . . . . . 96

### MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY

**Managing Church Conflict Creatively PART 2**  
*By Richard D. Dobbins* . . . . . 98

### FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY

**Lord, Are You Sure?**  
*By Linda F. Horne* . . . . . 101

## PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

**Confessions of a Former Associate**  
*By John R. Wootton* . . . . . 104

## CLERGY, CHURCH, & LAW

**Charitable Choice: Government Funding for a Social Ministry**  
*By Kert G. Parsley* . . . . . 106

## CONFRONTING CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

**What Pastors Need To Know About Cults**  
*By Kerry D. McRoberts* . . . . . 108

## FINANCIAL CONCEPTS

**Safeguards for Handling Church Funds**  
*By Mark S. Burgund* . . . . . 112

## FAMILY MATTERS

**Preachers' Kids: Their Unique Challenges and Battles**  
**PART 2: Helping PKs Develop Positive Spiritual and Social Goals**  
*By Bill Carmichael* . . . . . 114

## VIEW FROM THE PEW

**What Would Life Be Like if There Were No Pastors?**  
*By Don Coley* . . . . . 116

## WORLD LINK

**Together in a Cause: The Power of a Missions Convention**  
*By David E. Godwin* . . . . . 118

## FOCUS ON AMERICA

**The Right Way To Split a Church**  
*By Howard L. Cummings* . . . . . 119

## FASTING & PRAYER

**Prayer and Fasting in Today's World**  
*By Sandra G. Clopine* . . . . . 120

## DEPARTMENTS

**SERMON • SEED** . . . . . 122  
**MINISTRY • IDEAS • THAT • WORK** . . . . . 125  
**ILLUSTRATE • IT** . . . . . 129  
**BOOK • REVIEWS** . . . . . 132  
**NEWS & RESOURCES** . . . . . 136  
**WITH • CHRIST** . . . . . 142

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INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

# Ask the Superintendent



*Life leaves in its path both the wounded and the hurting. Human desperation strikes at the cord of compassion in the heart of the caring, sensitive minister. By virtue of the office, the minister is a symbol to the hurting community of the meaningfulness of the Christian faith. Pastoral care and counseling become avenues of ministry by which the church stays relevant to human need.*

*There is no escape from the counseling responsibilities of ministry. With it, however, come important safeguards that the prudent caregiver would be wise to observe. In his quarterly interview, General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask discusses the importance of pastoral counseling in the local church and offers candid advice to those ministers who counsel.*

## SHOULD PASTORS BE INVOLVED IN COUNSELING?

Some pastors have taken the posture that Christian counseling should not be a part of the church. I don't believe that. I believe God has placed us in our role as shepherd to give counsel and help to those in need.

During the years when Brightmoor Tabernacle in Detroit, Michigan, was in a growth pattern, I involved myself in considerable counseling. Later on, we added a full-time Christian counselor to the pastoral staff to help carry the counseling load.

## WHAT WERE SOME OF THE COUNSELING GUIDELINES YOU FOLLOWED WHEN YOU PASTORED THAT YOU RECOMMEND OTHER PASTORS FOLLOW?

So that the enemy does not have any advantage over ministers as they counsel, I suggest they follow these guidelines:

1. *Never permit yourself to be in a position with a member of the opposite sex that could appear compromising.*
2. *Have an open-door policy so no one can accuse you of an inappropriate setting.*
3. *Have your spouse or another person of the same gender present at all times when counseling someone of the opposite sex.* (See Richard R. Hammar's article "Counseling Ministries: A Legal Checkup," pp. 43-46, regarding the clergy-penitent privilege discussed under subheading Method #1: The Third Person Rule.)

***There are many lonely people out there—many in unhappy marriages. Given the right setting, an unwholesome relationship could be nurtured that would be destructive to both the counselee and the counselor.***

4. *Assure the counselee that matters discussed will be kept confidential.* One of the things that destroys Christian counseling is if people know they can't trust the persons present in the counseling sessions. Pastors who divulge confidential information in their messages or conversations destroy confidence in leadership.

5. *Do not allow too much of your time to be taken up with counseling.* I discovered I could spend several afternoons a week in counseling if I was not careful.



6. *Counselees need to understand that they have to be willing to submit themselves to what the Lord wants to accomplish in their hearts.*

Let me give an example. A lady in the church asked me to meet with her neighbor who was a kleptomaniac. I agreed. After 45 minutes of listening to the woman brag about her ability to shoplift and not get caught, I asked her if she came to me for help. Her reply was, "No." There was no need for me to spend any more time with her. She didn't want help. She enjoyed what she was doing. She was not a Christian and didn't make any profession of being a Christian. It was kind of her neighbor, who was a member of our church, to want to help her. But people have got to want God's help.

***I believe God has placed us in our role as shepherd to give counsel and help to those in need.***

7. *Expect the counselee to attend your church services.* Up front, you need to let people know that if you are going to give them counseling time, you expect them in services. They need to know that the power of God's Word is able to correct, heal, and help their situation. But if people don't want to attend your church services, then refer them to a secular counselor. Give your time to those who are part of the body of Christ that need and want help.

Pastors could literally spend all of their time counseling and never have any time to study the Word and prepare for the ministry of the Word. That's why I found it necessary to establish and follow these guidelines for counseling.

Pastors need the gift of discernment to help them determine if a person who comes to them for counseling really wants help or just sympathy.

#### **HOW CAN MINISTERS AVOID DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS WITH COUNSELEES?**

I tell you what can happen. Not only can counselees transfer an emotional attachment to their counselors, but many counselors, pastors, and laypersons have been caught in a trap of counter-transference. They become overly familiar with counselees and begin to allow their hearts to overrule their heads. Their emotions become involved. The counselor might have been well meaning and sincere in the beginning but became trapped by the enemy. Those who counsel should be compassionate and understanding, but they

must never allow themselves to become so emotionally involved that they can't separate their feelings from the counseling situation.

It is so subtle. Ministers must be very careful. Some people deliberately set traps to lead ministers into relationships that would destroy their



ministries and marriages.

A good rule of thumb is to counsel the same person only three to five sessions and then refer that person to a professional counselor for any further help.

#### **DID YOU DEVELOP A REFERRAL LIST OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

We did. When we brought a minister on staff who was doing a lot of the counseling, we also had a referral list.

#### **SINCE MOST CHURCHES CAN'T AFFORD A FULL-TIME COUNSELOR, WHAT ARE SOME GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW IN DEVELOPING A REFERRAL LIST?**

When it comes to matters of the church, pastors must know the person who is doing the counseling. I only referred to licensed professional counselors who were born-again Christians living victoriously. They had to be established in a local church and accountable to a pastor so that their reputation was above reproach. They had to have references. And we required bona fide credentials, including being licensed with the state. We were

***When it comes to matters of the church, pastors must know the person who is doing the counseling.***



very careful which licensed mental health professionals we used.

#### **HOW CAN MINISTERS PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM MORAL FAILURE?**

Ministers cannot be too careful. Let me give you an example apart from counseling. I don't believe that a pastor or any pastoral staff member should be found in a car with a companion of the opposite sex—no matter how innocent the situation. I never allowed two staff members of the opposite sex to go out to eat together, even though both were happily married.

The Scriptures say to shun not only evil but the *appearance* of evil. Why should we give the enemy an opportunity to accuse us?

This holds true within the area of counseling. I

unspotted and untainted in these areas.

We're living in a deceptive age, and ministers need to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves so that they never bring reproach to the church of Jesus Christ.

There are many lonely people out there—many in unhappy marriages. Given the right setting, an unwholesome relationship could be nurtured that would be destructive to both the counselee and the counselor.

#### **WHAT SHOULD BE THE MINISTER'S GOAL AND MOTIVATION WHEN COUNSELING PEOPLE FROM THE CONGREGATION?**

The ultimate goal is to help people with their spiritual relationship and walk with God. If pastoral counselors will keep this goal in focus in all of

*Pastors need the gift of discernment to help them determine if a person who comes to them for counseling really wants help or just sympathy.*



believe the counselor's spouse should always know where the counselor husband or wife is and what he or she is doing.

My wife always knew where I was and what the setting was, particularly if I had to work after normal working hours. I always had somebody close at hand in the office so I could never be accused of being in an unwholesome situation.

Ministers will be much better off if they will take these necessary steps to guard their lives and their testimonies. It's better to be overcautious than reckless. Ministers **can** keep their lives

their counseling and advice, then they will stay on track. When they begin to move away from nurturing a person's spiritual well-being, they will find themselves going down the road of no return. It will only open doors to destruction.

The second goal is restoration. Let's say a minister is counseling a couple that is either separated or on the verge of divorce. The purpose of the counseling sessions is restoration. Those who are counseling must always follow the biblical admonition, direction, and instruction and not allow circumstances to move them away from scriptural



## ***What To Expect in a Christian Counselor***

When it is necessary to refer someone from your congregation to a Christian counselor, the following guidelines will be helpful.

### **Choose someone who:**

#### **1. Can be trusted to keep confidentiality.**

People in your congregation who have been referred do not want to hear their stories from the pulpit some Sunday or in a gathering of community Christian leaders.

#### **2. Is a good listener.**

People go to a counselor to be heard, not to receive a sermon.

#### **3. Will not turn the client into a counselor.**

Counselors should not share their weaknesses or reflect on their failures or problems but should focus on the needs of the counselee.

#### **4. Has integrity and experience.**

Before you recommend anyone, check his or her credentials and experience.

#### **5. Is adequately educated by a reputable school.**

You can tell a great deal about the Christian counselors you choose by where they have received their training and done their internship.

#### **6. Is affordable and can be recommended without feeling guilty.**

You can expect Christian counselors who work with you and those you recommend to: (1) terminate the series of counseling sessions in a normal time, (2) provide a sliding scale for those who cannot pay full fees, and (3) be up front about any insurance coverage available.

#### **7. Tracks with you theologically.**

To avoid damage to a counselee over biblical teachings, you should recommend a Christian counselor who agrees with, or is at least sensitive to, your theological position.

#### **8. Is diligent.**

Make sure that those you refer are treated with respect and that honest counseling and therapy are going on—the counseling sessions are well organized, good records are kept, and the purpose of the meetings is realized.

#### **9. Is a team player.**

The healing community (physicians, mental health professionals, Christian counselors, ministers, etc.) must work together. As a minister, you need a Christian counselor who will work with you, talk with you when permissible, and not be threatened by your input in your mutual parishioner/client relationship.

#### **10. Is faithfully available.**

All parties involved should be able to reach their counselor and expect a timely response. If someone is taking a counselor's calls, then the client should have knowledge of this and have a nonthreatening comfort level with the stand-in.

—Adapted from H.B. London, Jr., "What To Expect in a Christian Counselor,"  
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***Never permit  
yourself to be in  
a position with a  
member of the  
opposite sex that  
could appear  
compromising.***

guidance. If ministers move away from the goal of restoration in these cases, they will find themselves in trouble.

The need is great out there today. With society as warped, twisted, and confused as it is, ministers are going to have more and more need for counseling in the church.

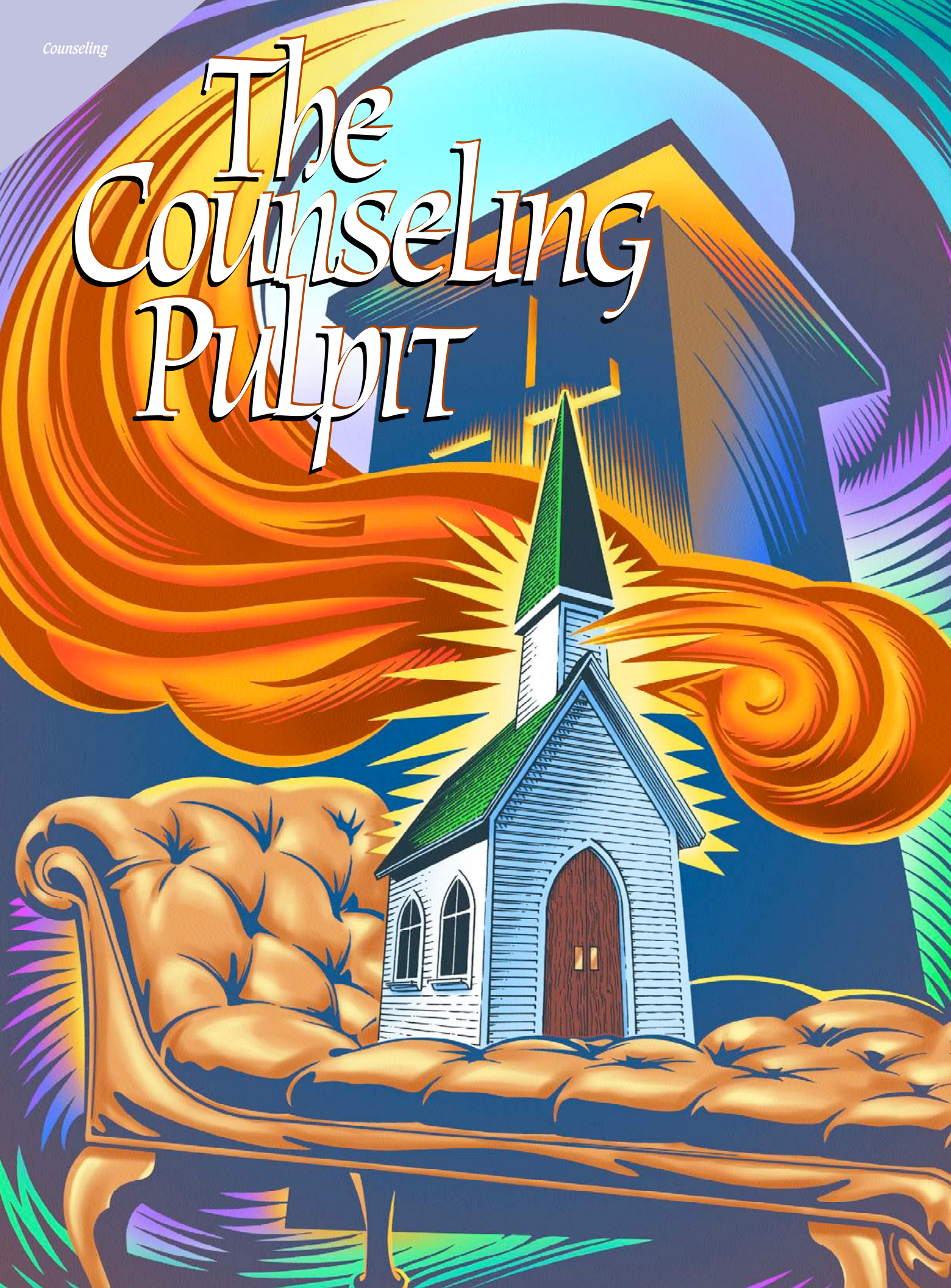
There's a counseling role for the pastor or Christian counselor to fulfill. But we must be very careful. The

greatest percentage of failures in the ministry start out innocently—with meaningful, pure motives. But then ministers are trapped and get caught, and it brings disaster to their lives, their homes, their churches, and to the kingdom of God. It also destroys the homes and lives of those that are being counseled.

Better to err on the side of judgment and wisdom than to err on the side of emotion and be caught in failure. 📌



# The Counseling Pulpit





BY PAUL L. WALKER

**T**he telephone rang at 2 a.m., and an excited voice exclaimed, "I just saw your television program, and your sermon saved my life!" After inquiry, I learned the person calling was a medical doctor who was addicted to alcohol and prescription drugs. His addictions had cost him his medical practice, his family, and almost his life.

In his words: "I was in a motel room ready to take my life when your television program came on. In desperation I decided to listen to your sermon. You talked about the keys to the Kingdom, and I felt like I was in a counseling session. I responded to your invitation to pray for Christ to become Lord of my life, and I feel like a brand-new person."

Now, 10 years later, this man's medical practice has been restored, and he has been reconciled to his family.

This illustrates the impact of counseling pulpits in every church where the Word is preached.

### THE COUNSELING PULPIT DEFINED

What is a counseling sermon? Is it any different from any other kind of pulpit message?

In a general sense, all sermons that touch people serve a counseling purpose. In a specific sense, the counseling pulpit helps people learn to expand their limits whenever possible and learn to live effectively within limits that cannot be changed.

*The counseling pulpit helps people learn to expand their limits whenever it is possible and learn to live effectively within limits that cannot be changed.*

The true power of the Word is exemplified in the words of the apostle Paul: "Therefore we do not lose heart" (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:8–10, 16–18<sup>1</sup>). This is the theme of the counseling pulpit: "We do

not lose heart." Rather, we deal with earthly issues through the eternal truth of the Bible.

### THE COUNSELING PULPIT FOCUSES ON NEEDS

Why do people have problems? Problems occur when basic needs are either deprived or pressured to the extent of chronic stress.

Every day we act in ways to meet our physical needs for air, water, food, appropriate temperature, bodily activity, and all of the biological functions necessary to maintain life. We also strive to satisfy our social needs: the desire for *being*—to feel significant, the desire for *belonging*—to feel accepted, and the desire for *doing*—to feel we are making a contribution. And we all have spiritual needs: the inner cry for redemption from sin, the need for reconciliation with God through Christ, and the need for ongoing relationship with the Father by the Holy Spirit.

The difficulty is that all our needs cannot be immediately gratified, which creates ambiguity and necessitates adjustment. Tension occurs when we strive to have our needs resolved. Barriers are imposed through the circumstances of life, and we are forced to delay and often deny gratification. Consequently, we suffer from stress—a chronic external pressure that cannot be satisfactorily relieved, resolved, or redirected. Unmet needs and external traumatic situations result in problems.

The key is learning to adjust appropriately. Our responses determine our attitudes, beliefs, and values. Response patterns decide our character, temperament, and mood. They shape the quality of our behavior, relationships, and prevailing lifestyle.

The apostle Peter offers the solution: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). The counseling pulpit focuses on the unmet needs and frayed nerves of a

stressed-out society and offers a Christ who cares.

### THE COUNSELING PULPIT OFFERS SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

Modern society has become adept at pinpointing problems. We all have to endure the paralysis of analysis. But where are the answers?

The counseling pulpit utilizes the Word as the one true source in providing coping power to handle stressful situations. It lifts up Christ as the life model to be internalized to meet every need. In Him is life and light for productive living (cf. John 1:1–4).

*This is the theme of the counseling pulpit: "We do not lose heart." Rather, we deal with earthly issues through the eternal truth of the Bible.*

He was the recourse in every situation. He ate with publicans and sinners, was attentive to the needs of a Syro-Phoenician mother, and was willing to talk with a Samaritan woman.<sup>2</sup> To Christ the *person* was more important than the *program*.

He related to people in spite of tradition. He treated a case of adultery with understanding and forgiveness, touched people who were diseased and dead, ignored such customs as the prescribed hand washings and customary fastings, and often broke the Sabbath.<sup>3</sup> To Christ the *treatment* was more important than *tradition*.

He responded to people in a therapeutic context. In fact, His entire ministry was characterized by love, compassion, concern, tenderness, noncoercion, and optimism.<sup>4</sup> In a word, Christ epitomized the counseling ministry of the Word in loving concern for His people. To Him *attitudes* were more important than *authority*.

Christ is still the source that is reflected by the preacher who ministers from the counseling pulpit. The theme of the counseling pulpit is that through the living Word revealed in the Bible we can internalize a spiritual process that stands up under the pressure of the flesh, the world, and Satan.

An alcoholic friend of mine found that this living Word is true.

Dear Pastor:

A miracle has taken place in my life. My addiction had become so great I was not able to function in speech or normal physical movements. My body shook constantly, and my mind was so twisted I could not make a simple decision. My marriage had fallen apart, and I had lost contact with my children. For years I had prayed for God's help to overcome my weakness. Now I know that He did answer them. I know now He had to let me go through the horrors and nightmares so that I could understand and appreciate what it means to enjoy the love and peace of mind that can be found only by accepting Christ as my Savior. I finally realized I had failed completely in trying to control my life. I asked God to take over my life.

Life today is great, and I am at peace with myself. My family and friends love me, and I even love myself. When I get upset, I remember to let go and let God take over. Faith in God will bring miracles.

Your Friend,  
Bill

through a positive mind-set.

- Balances *emotions* by maintaining harmony between thinking, feeling, and doing.

- Displays *optimism* by viewing problems as challenges for solution rather than causes for depression.

- Accepts *responsibility* for personal behavior by keeping commitments and preserving integrity in relationships.<sup>5</sup>

Those who suffer emotional pain often lapse into immature response patterns in dealing with life. This is when the counseling pulpit speaks the loudest. It provides resources on learning how to grow up.

The Bible says we should increase in the "fruits of righteousness," "go on to perfection," "increase and abound in love toward one another and all people," "desire the pure milk of the word" in order to grow, and to make every effort to add to our "faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love."<sup>6</sup>

This is the power of the counseling pulpit. Under the anointing of the Holy

Spirit, the preached Word through the counseling minister focuses on needs, offers spiritual resources, and motivates behavioral change. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1. Scripture references are from the New King James Version.
2. See Matthew 9:10; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 19:1-10; John 4:9,27.
3. See Mark 1:21,41; 2:18,23,27; 3:1; 5:13; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:8; 8:1-11; 9:14.
4. See Matthew 9:36; 13:58; Mark 9:24,25; 10:27; Luke 6:1-35; 13:34,35.
5. List is adapted from results of a 30-year study at Harvard and reported by Ronald Kotulak in "Defending Yourself Successfully" in *The Miami Herald*.
6. See Philippians 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13; Hebrews 6:1; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-9

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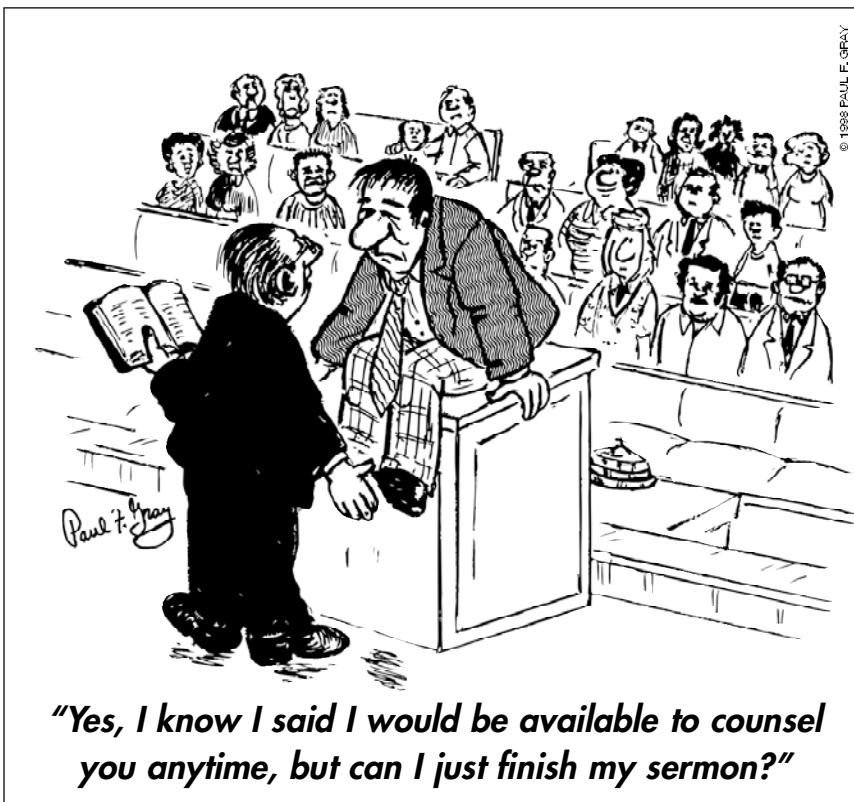
### THE COUNSELING PULPIT MOTIVATES BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

What is the goal of preaching? It should motivate people to move from a lower to a higher plane of living. And it should provide an anointed incentive for appropriate behavioral change in order to cope with stress.

The Bible talks about behavioral change as learning how to grow up in Christ. In our Christian walk we ought to be internalizing a process that makes us mature.

Research indicates that the mature person:

- Strives for *self-awareness* by minimizing weaknesses and maximizing strengths.
- Cultivates *objectivity* by accepting circumstances as they really are rather than what they should be, could be, or are wished to be.
- Promotes *adjustment* to the environment by coping with negative limitations











# *Hidden Feelings of the* HEART







Each of us has a reservoir of feelings rooted in significant relationships with people from our past—parents, grandparents, siblings, childhood friends, former sweethearts, and, occasionally, former spouses. The more closely people and circumstances in the present resemble people and circumstances from our past, the greater the likelihood that our present response will be colored by hidden feelings of the heart. Thus, totally objective responses to life are extremely rare. Interactions between ministers and laypeople can stimulate these historic patterns of emotional response.

### THE MINISTER-LAYPERSON RELATIONSHIP IS UNIQUE

The relationship between ministers and congregants is unique. In no other professional relationship does this same intensity of feelings exist. Physicians or therapists who experience this phenomenon are much more protected by (1) the more structured, professional nature of their relationship and (2) the limited amount of time they spend with each patient. Ministers, however, may be with church members as much as five times per week for church services, board and committee meetings, church social events, and personal moments of sharing.

Minister-layperson relationships resemble family relationships. Jesus spoke of the similarity between a person's natural family and his or her spiritual family (cf. Mark 3:31–35). Perhaps this explains why the pastor is often viewed as a substitute parent figure by many people.

When ministers and laypeople have had healthy family relationships, their relationships with each other are likely to be pleasant. But if they have experienced unhealthy family relationships, some potentially explosive situations exist in the church family.

### MINISTERS AS AUTHORITY FIGURES

Ministers who have not had healthy relationships with the authority figure in their natural families may have difficulty being healthy

authority figures in their churches. Some may abuse authority; some may not be able to take criticism; and others may be too timid to exercise ministerial authority, even at times when it is critical to the unity of the church.

Laypersons who were abused by authoritarian parents may be predisposed to resent any expression of ministerial authority, regardless of how healthy it may be. These people may lash out angrily at the pastor—venting anger they were never able to express toward their parents.

Those members who had a tendency to idolize their parents may also idolize their pastor.

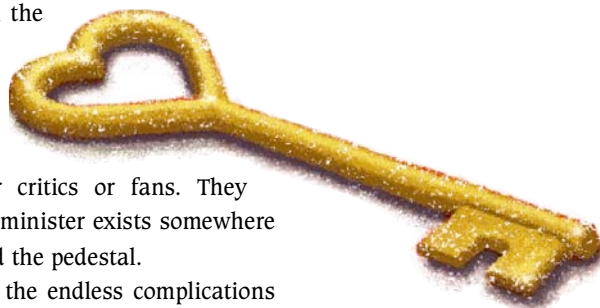
In the eyes of some members, the minister and his or her family can do no right. But in the eyes of others, they can do no wrong. Healthy ministers are not deceived by either critics or fans. They know that the real minister exists somewhere between the pit and the pedestal.

Only God knows the endless complications caused in the lives of sincere ministers, board members, and laypeople because of these hidden and misunderstood feelings of the heart (cf. Jeremiah 17:9; John 1:8).

### MINISTERS AS IDEALIZED SPOUSES OR LOVERS

Those who believe their own spouses are insensitive tend to see their pastor as possessing all the romantic and tender traits they find missing at home. But in most cases one frank conversation with the pastor's spouse would help them replace their view with a more realistic picture.

Another potentially dangerous situation occurs when those of the opposite sex seek counseling from their minister. Usually, they are suffering from abusive or broken love relationships and are seeing the minister at a vulnerable time in their lives. Regardless of the circumstances, ministers are legally and morally responsible for protecting themselves and their counselees from any breach of physical boundaries and from any amorous feelings they may experience in the course of the counseling sessions.



*The more closely people and circumstances in the present resemble people and circumstances from our past, the greater the likelihood that our present response will be colored by hidden feelings of the heart.*



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advantage of these  
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ministerial counselor.**

themselves and their counsees from inappropriate feelings they sense they are developing toward their counsees.

How do you go about doing this? You discipline yourself to take certain deliberate steps in preparing for each counseling session. When I first walk into my office in the morning, I begin to prepare myself, spiritually and mentally, for the people I am going to see.

I start by scanning my list of appointments and mentally noting the unique set of emotions each client's name triggers in me. Although I want the Lord to help me serve each of them equally well, I do not have the same feelings toward each of them.

If you are going to be honest and effective in a counseling situation, you cannot ignore the uniqueness of the person you are seeing and your particular reaction to him or her. Of course, you don't share this information with a counselee.

Occasionally, the name of an attractive and challenging female client appears on my list. My feelings are likely to immediately respond to the prospect of seeing her. Even though she may only be attracted to me in *my* fantasy and not hers, it is always *my* responsibility to make the session safe for her—and me.

Through the years the Lord has helped me define and observe a discipline of protection for female counsees and myself that has proven very effective. It consists of eight simple, commonsense steps:

1. Maintain a physical boundary of 3 to 5 feet from the counselee. Each of us needs from 2 to 3 feet around us to feel safe and secure.
2. Be prayerfully aware of your feelings in the counseling process.
3. Be prayerfully attentive to the feelings you sense from the counselee.
4. Understand that counseling is an engagement in spiritual warfare, fought over the urges, fantasies, and ideas from which the choices of the

Professional counselors refer to the feelings stirred up in counsees toward their counselors by memories of people and situations from their past as *transference*. Similarly, these same kinds of feelings that occur in the counselor's mind during the counseling relationship are referred to as *countertransference*.

Transference is the unconscious process whereby the counselee shifts onto the counselor those feelings and fantasies, positive and negative, rooted in reactions to significant people from the counselee's past.

Countertransference is the counselor's unconscious emotional responses to a counselee—responses which are likely to interfere with objectivity.

Satan takes advantage of these hidden feelings of the heart to frustrate the healing process and bring as much destruction as possible to both the counselee and the ministerial counselor. Wise ministers understand that any amorous feelings counsees may have toward them are not due to their irresistible physical attraction or charm. Such feelings grow out of admiration for and implicit trust in the minister as a person of God. Were they not ministers, such attractions would never develop.

Counsees can be "in love" with the ideal parent/spouse figure of their dreams—the representative of God who tries to explain divine love to them, not the flesh-and-blood person who sits across the counseling office.

### DEVELOPING AND APPLYING CONTROLS

Ministers must carefully guard each counselee's trust and take total responsibility for all emotional transactions during the counseling process. They must protect both vulnerable counsees and themselves from counsees' feelings toward them. They must also protect



## General Guidelines for Pastoral Counseling

1. *Maintain confidentiality.* The exception to this rule would be if there are ethical or legal reasons dictating the breaking of a confidence. It is imperative that ministers familiarize themselves with the laws in their state pertaining to privileged communications with the clergy and to the exceptions to confidentiality.
2. *Avoid manipulating the counselee.* Many persons in crisis who seek ministers out are vulnerable.
3. *Avoid making decisions for the person seeking help.* Many persons come to ministers expecting divinely revealed answers to their problems. The minister can be directive in his or her approach in counseling but should be careful about making decisions for the counselee.
4. *Do not inappropriately carry messages.* There are times in the ministry of reconciliation when interpreting the behavior or words of one person to another can be appropriate and healing. However, because the minister often has contact with the family or group the counselee may be in conflict with or alienated from, sometimes there is the desire or expectation on the part of the counselee that the minister act as a messenger. This is inappropriate.
5. *Do not be a voyeur.* The minister must be careful not to seek information that is not germane to the issue at hand. Seeking information for sexual titillation is inappropriate, unfair, and counterproductive.
6. *Never become romantically or sexually involved with a counselee.* A one-on-one counseling relationship with a person of the opposite sex can be powerfully seductive. Ministers should make sure someone else is in the office area if they are counseling someone of the opposite sex. They should also see a person for only three sessions.

—Adapted from Randolph K. Sanders, ed., *Christian Counseling Ethics: A Handbook for Therapists, Pastors & Counselors (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 83–84. Used by permission.*

counselee will come.

5. Realize the essential utilization of biblical truth and prayer in the counseling process.

6. Honor the counselee as a child of God and respect the sacredness of physical boundaries. (I never touch a woman counselee.)

7. Realize that at any given moment in the counseling session, your control over your life and the ministry God has given you is only as secure as the 3 to 5 feet of distance you maintain between yourself and the counselee.

8. Frequently remind yourself of what would happen to your spouse, your family, your ministry, your fellow ministers, and all those who put their trust in you if they learn you have damaged yourself and someone else by failing to control the physical boundaries of the counseling relationship.

Every year, I see several ministers who

have failed to discipline themselves in their relationship with counselees of the opposite sex. This is a zero-tolerance area. Such behavior tarnishes the image of Christ.

Seldom do these ministers think about the damage they have done not only to the counselees' families but to the ability of the rest of the church to trust another minister. More than once, an angry and disillusioned board member has said to me, "How am I supposed to explain to my children that the pastor can no longer be our pastor?" The congregation of the fallen pastor is a deeply wounded group of people.

### OTHER FEELINGS THAT CAN COMPLICATE RELATIONSHIPS

Sexual temptation is not the only way Satan uses the hidden feelings of the heart to disturb the peace of a congregation. Ministers must also guard their

relationships with board, committee, and church members.

They need to be aware of three underlying feelings that are likely to complicate church relationships unless they are recognized and dealt with.

#### 1. A minister's need to protect himself or herself from anger and rejection.

None of us like to feel that others reject us or are angry with us. Ministers are especially sensitive to these feelings when they perceive them in people whose agreement and approval they seek—or need—in order to be effective leaders of the church.

One of the healthiest things you can do about a situation where a board member may dislike or reject you is to normalize it; don't "catastrophize" it. Remember, if given an opportunity to express themselves, 15 to 20 percent of the people in any church are likely to indicate they would rather have someone else as their pastor.

Most ministers experience painful feelings of anger and rejection from a leader or two among the membership. Don't take these attacks personally. Absorb them in a way that will lessen their shock value in the meeting, and then place responsibility for them squarely where it belongs: on the owner who has just vented the feelings.

Realize that the one who is *trying* to inflict these feelings on you is often battling an unsanctified part of his or her history with authority figures.

Decide ahead of time that when these kinds of feelings are expressed in business or board meetings you will not react personally.

Respond nondefensively to such obviously prejudicial feelings by saying something like this: "Is Frank expressing the way everyone on the board feels or simply speaking for himself?" Encourage others to state their opinions of the issues under discussion.

Ministers cannot function at their best when they feel threatened by the anger and rejection of church leadership. One of the deep, hidden feelings in the hearts of ministers is the need to feel that others are

pleased and accepting of them.

The more aware you are of the complicated interactions of your own and others' feelings, the less likely they are to trigger painful—and unnecessary—situations among your church leadership.

### **2. A minister's need to be liked.**

Each of us needs to be liked. If ministers have an unusually strong need, they may presume that whenever a board member expresses even minor opposition to their ideas it is an indication that they are not liked.

Mature ministers understand that while it would be nice if everyone liked them, it is certainly not necessary. They know that most of the time their ideas about programs and policies of the church are not direct revelations from “on high.” This helps them not take it too personally when the normal flow of debate and deliberation includes opinions very different from their own.

### **3. A minister's need to be right.**

Pastors share another common characteristic with other leaders: the need to




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be right. Some board members have this need as well.

Develop enough humility of heart to be able to say to your board and committee members, “Folks, I could be wrong”—and mean it. Your ability to acknowledge this will inspire greater confidence in your leadership. Healthy people do not expect infallibility from ministers.

Get in touch with these hidden

feelings: not wanting others to be angry with you or reject you, wanting others to like you, and the need to be right. It will make you a wiser leader. And you will be less likely to act impulsively in response to such urges.

You will also discover that the vast majority of God's people are not going to be angry with you or reject you. Rather, they will like you and value the many good ideas your leadership brings to the policies and programs of the church. They will admire you for being in touch with your feelings. They will see you as a believable role model because you are willing to admit your shortcomings. They will respect you and have confidence in you and your ministry. 

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# WHEN GOOD PREACHING AND





I still have the picture, in a drawer someplace in my house. It shows a gangly adolescent—me, wearing a funny hat and a serious expression, talking to my pastor at a youth retreat. He had his hand on my shoulder, and to this day I remember what we were discussing.

It was time to make a decision about college. I wanted to go into ministry and was struggling about whether to

are counselors committed to using their training and expertise to treat the emotional and relational problems that entangle so many lives.

Clearly I'm enthusiastic, but I know questions persist in the minds of many Christian leaders: Does the church need Christian counselors? Isn't good preaching and discipleship enough? Isn't Christ sufficient to meet all human needs? Don't the Scriptures tell us that believers have "everything we need for life and godliness through our knowl-

helped people find forgiveness. He asked questions, listened carefully, and told stories that left people free to draw their own conclusions. When two of His followers were grappling with their grief and confusion on the road to Emmaus, He spent time with them, listened to them, and showed them what Scripture said about their uncertainties.

In the Early Church and throughout the New Testament, we see personal helping modeled and encouraged. Paul,

# DISCIPLESHIP AREN'T ENOUGH

go directly to Bible school or complete a university degree first. I chose the university route, and it was there that I first encountered psychology.

I was fascinated with what I discovered about human behavior, emotion, learning, mental illness, and counseling. As I took more courses, I began to see possibilities for using this new learning to bring honor to Christ and help to hurting people.

In those days few Christians seemed worried about psychology, and many were skeptical of counselors. I can see reasons for the skepticism that some Christians still have about counseling and especially psychology. Just as there can be bad theology, so there can be bad psychology. But I believe God led me into this field, and I know that every day He is using thousands of Christ-honoring counselors around the world to bring fresh hope, maturity, wholeness, inner peace, and healed relationships into shattered and struggling lives.

Numerous professional people helpers are Christ followers first, counselors second. Many are Spirit-led members of their local churches—individuals who seek to serve Christ and His church with their God-given insights and gifts of compassion. They

edge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness"? (2 Peter 1:3, NIV).

Does that leave room for Christian counselors? Why would the church need people like me?

## THE BIBLE ENCOURAGES COUNSELING

We must begin our answer by looking to God's Word. Jesus was a teacher and a preacher, but He was also an effective counselor. He talked one-on-one to the woman at the well. He counseled Martha about her busy lifestyle and

for example, gave sensitive guidance and mentoring to Timothy. Barnabas was a consistent encourager. The Epistles overflow with principles for living, guidelines for solving problems, and instructions for specific people with tension in their lives. More than 50 times we read "one another" passages: "Bear one another's burdens"; "encourage one another"; "care for one another"; "be kind to one another"; "serve one another."

Of course these words are not directed just to counselors. These instructions are for all Christians, but they are teachings that encourage the type of help, support, and caregiving that counselors have the calling, time, and special training to provide.

## MANY PEOPLE ARE HELPED BY COUNSELING

We've all heard the stories. George and Lynn—these are not their real names—started having trouble with their marriage almost from the beginning. Both were committed believers. Both were active in the church. Both wanted God's clear leading in their lives. But their personalities, attitudes, aspirations, and expectations for their marriage were different. Prayer didn't seem to help. Their pastor felt overwhelmed

*Most pastors would agree: the demands of ministry gulp up large quantities of time and leave few hours for the concentrated caregiving that counseling generally demands.*

talked tenderly to a woman caught in adultery. Late one night He helped Nicodemus with his spiritual struggles.

Jesus often talked with people privately, shared their hurts, gave encouragement, and guided as they coped with their problems. Sometimes He

by the depth of hostility and apparent incompatibility in their relationship.

Soon they began withdrawing from each other. George stayed late at work and immersed himself in church work so he could avoid the tensions at home. Lynn found herself attracted to a young man at the health club and wondered if she could resist his not-too-subtle overtures, knowing that she was flirting with sin.

***[God] is using thousands of Christ-honoring counselors around the world to bring fresh hope, maturity, wholeness, inner peace, and healed relationships into shattered and struggling lives.***

Finally, they went to a Christian marriage counselor. He took the time to listen carefully to their disappointments and disagreements. He helped them understand their disillusionments, taught them better ways to communicate, and guided them as they learned to rekindle their love for each other. The counselor modeled the love of Christ and helped the couple see how He could bring them together in ways they had never known.

Another couple was in despair over their 8-year-old son. He was boisterous in school, out of control, seemingly intent on creating problems, and disinterested in learning. An elder in the church reminded the parents of their responsibility to bring up children in ways that honored the Lord, but the parents were overwhelmed—at their wits' end.

Then a counselor discovered that the boy had learning problems, aggravated by attention deficit disorder. Medication helped with the disorder, providing the chemicals that his brain

lacked so he could calm down and focus attention on what the teacher said. Remedial education classes taught him how to read like the other kids and enabled him to succeed in school. His disruptive behavior disappeared, and after several years of thinking he was stupid, he learned to settle down and thrive in school and in life.

There are those who say counseling doesn't help. Sometimes it doesn't. But many people, maybe some in your church, can tell encouraging stories about ways in which they have been helped by counselors who are trained to understand problems. Counselors can teach communication skills, help people get along, and show how to deal with inner conflicts and pain left over from the past.

The best-trained counselors recognize the influence of biology and know the role that body chemicals play—body chemicals that can sometimes create havoc even in Christian homes and individual lives. Literally thousands of scientific research studies have examined the work of counselors and demonstrated their effectiveness.

When I was a seminary teacher, I always had a few professors who were skeptical and sometimes disapproving of my field. How their attitudes changed when Christian counseling helped a member of their own families!

Over the years I have seen hundreds of people helped. This includes pastors and some prominent church leaders, whose ministries today are more effective because they had the courage to face the problems, struggles, insecurities, burnout, lusts, addictive habits, and other secret issues that were making their lives miserable and hindering their service for Christ.

I don't deny that counselors sometimes do harm, but we don't reject a whole field because a few people are incompetent. Some doctors aren't very competent, and some pastors may do more harm than good, but we don't reject all of medicine or dismiss the

ministry because a minority are ineffective. Most have a Christ-honoring impact.

## **THE CHURCH IS STRENGTHENED BY COUNSELING**

Whatever Christians may think about counseling, they can all agree on this: God does not need counselors for the advancement of His kingdom. Neither does He need teachers, physicians, preachers, or anybody else. In His sovereign wisdom, however, He uses mortals like us to accomplish His purposes. He could give us instant knowledge of all truth and could bestow wisdom as He gave Solomon, but He chose instead to work most often through godly teachers. He could heal all our diseases in an instant and often He does, but for reasons that we don't fully comprehend, He brings most healing through the skillful hands of scientifically trained doctors and nurses. He could evangelize the world with the blink of an eye, but instead He has given this responsibility to evangelists, pastors, and faithful followers of Christ charged with the duty to go and make disciples. Instantaneously, God could wipe away all depression, anxiety, inner turmoil, and interpersonal conflicts, but He

***Sometimes it can be hard to share the intimate details of our lives with another busy church leader who may have limited time, energy, or inner resources to meet our needs.***

often works through compassionate human beings with the gifts of encouragement, discernment, and counseling.

## **HOW DO COUNSELORS STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH?**

*Christian counselors free pastors and other church leaders for the overall*

## *The ABCs of Counseling*

**Above** all, do no harm.

**Believe** in your counselee's ability to work through difficulties with God's help.

**Convey** God's love and forgiveness.

**Devise** creative solutions for your counselee's problems.

**Empower** your counselee through acceptance, empathy, and understanding.

**Follow** proven, successful counseling strategies.

**Give** full attention to your counselee's story.

**Hold** out realistic hope.

**Initiate** referrals when necessary.

**Join** with your counselee in empathy and understanding.

**Keep** counselee confidences. Tell God only.

**Listen** attentively to every counselee.

**Meet** your own personal and interpersonal needs outside counseling relationships.

**Nurture** your counselee's faith and commitment to growth and responsible behavior.

**Optimistically** believe your counselee can make positive changes with God's help.

**Pray** earnestly for your counselee.

**Question** your counselee's view of self as weak and inadequate.

**Recognize** that you can be the counselee's counselor, but not his or her Savior.

**Submit** to the authority and guidance of approved leaders.

**Teach** a problem-solving process as you counsel.

**Submit** your counselee's needs, dreams, and goals.

**View** all problems as opportunities for growth.

**Work** constantly to improve your counseling skills.

**X-ray** counselee problems with the truth and wisdom of God's Word.

**Yield** to the Holy Spirit's direction of you and the counselee.

**Zealously** promote counselee autonomy and responsibility.

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*work of the ministry.* Most pastors would agree: the demands of ministry gulp up large quantities of time and leave few hours for the concentrated caregiving that counseling generally demands. But no one person is called or equipped to do everything, not even the pastor. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 teach that members of the Body have different spiritual gifts and responsibilities.

My pastor is a warm, compassionate, people-sensitive man who has been gifted by God to lead our congregation. But he cannot deal with every marriage problem, ongoing depression, career decision, or inner conflict that the

members of his church might experience. Freely and gladly, he makes himself available to counsel with those who want to talk. But sometimes problems are complex, beyond his area of expertise, or likely to be time-consuming. Then he refers these members of his flock to a dedicated Christian professional counselor. In turn, the Christian counselor uses his or her training and special gifts to help the hurting. This frees the pastor for other ministry responsibilities.

*Counselors help pastors, missionaries, and other church leaders deal with difficulties in their own lives.* Recently I attended a large conference on church

leadership led by two prominent evangelical pastors. During their messages, both mentioned how Christian counselors had helped in times of special difficulty and rejuvenated their ministries as a result. One described how a counselor had helped when the demands of ministry almost destroyed his marriage. The other talked about the time he hit bottom, burned out emotionally, physically, and spiritually. With the support of his church board, he took time off, got help from a Christian therapist, and learned to pace himself for the effective ministry he has today.

When God's servants have problems, where do they go for help? Of course we go to the Lord who brings peace and help in times of need. But sometimes we need other people as well—just as Jesus wanted the disciples with Him in Gethsemane or Paul wanted his closest associates to come to him when he was in prison.

When church leaders need help, they may turn to other pastors, missionaries, or denominational leaders who are willing to give assistance. But sometimes it can be hard to share the intimate details of our lives with another busy church leader who may have limited time, energy, or inner resources to meet our needs.

What if a pastor or missionary is struggling with a failing marriage, uncontrollable kids, hostile criticism, or deep feelings of failure, insecurity, bitterness, or lust? Sometimes the best counselor is the person who can be objective and available—one who is trained to deal with the unique problems that may be draining energy, vitality, and effectiveness from God's chosen servants.

*Christian counselors have their own unique healing ministries that can strengthen the body of Christ.* Counselors have a ministry of rooting out and dealing with the aftermath of sin. In their in-depth training, counselors learn special helping skills and acquire knowledge about the nature of

## *A Biblical Perspective of Counseling*

One way to develop a biblical approach to counseling is to study the life of Jesus and His relationships with others. The way He ministered to others is a model for all who counsel.

### **Jesus:**

**Had compassion.** Jesus' compassion for others is expressed in Mark 8:2: "I have compassion on the multitude."

**Granted acceptance.** When Jesus first met people, He accepted them as they were and believed in them and what they would become.

**Gave people worth.** Jesus put people's needs before the rules and regulations that the religious leaders had constructed.

**Used discernment.** He saw the needs of people and spoke directly to them.

**Said the right words.** Sometimes Jesus spoke directly. Other times He was soft-spoken or conveyed His feelings nonverbally.

**Emphasized right behavior.** He said to the woman caught in adultery, "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

**Sought to have people accept responsibility.** Jesus sought to have people accept responsibility for turning from their present condition.

**Gave hope.** Jesus gave hope to other people: "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

**Gave encouragement.** Jesus encouraged people as He ministered to them: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (cf. Matthew 11:28–30).

**Emphasized peace of mind.** Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).

**Gave inspiration.** Inspiration provides the counselee with hope and with the desire to change and to receive.

**Reshaped people's thinking.** Jesus helped people redirect their attention from the unimportant things of life to the important (cf. Luke 12:22–27).

**Emphasized teaching.** Jesus often used direct statements in His teaching.

**Expressed authority.** He was not hesitant, backward, or bashful but was authoritative.

**Admonished and confronted.** Jesus said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 8:26).

—Adapted from *H. Norman Wright, Marriage Counseling* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995), 31–35. Used by permission.

common emotional problems such as depression and anxiety. They are familiar with the impact of biology on behavior and have expertise in handling faltering marriages and dealing with interpersonal conflict. Some suggest that counselors take a *paraclete* role—being used by the Holy Spirit to come alongside struggling people to bring comfort, guidance, encouragement, and sometimes confrontation.

When I talked to my pastor at that youth retreat many years ago, I told him of my desire to go into ministry. God led me in the following years, but He didn't lead me into the pastorate. He

led instead to a teaching, writing, and counseling ministry. I am grateful for my calling and honored that I can serve God and His church in the needed field of Christian counseling. 🇺🇸

*Gary R. Collins, Ph.D., is president of American Association of Christian Counseling, editor of Christian Counseling Today, and author of a number of books on counseling.*







I

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL J. MCMANUS

# Preparing Couples for Lifelong Marriages



*The crisis in American marriages is causing many churches to rethink the way they unite couples in matrimony. For too long clergy have spent time preparing couples for marriage ceremonies without preparing them for a life together. Churches across the nation are taking proactive steps to help couples build lifelong marriages.*

*Michael J. McManus, author of Marriage Savers, visited with Enrichment editors and shared his thoughts on this important subject.*

*In this interview he offers ministers strategies they can implement in the local church to help save marriages.*



## WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH?

There is a scandal in the American church. We have the highest percentage of religiously active people of any modern country. George Gallup, Jr., says 43 percent of the U.S. population is in church on Sunday compared to about 10 percent in Europe. Three-quarters of those who get married (74 percent) do so in a church. Yet we have a divorce rate that's double that of Europe.

Most churches are blessing machines or wedding factories. One mainline

***Pastors must have a strategy to consciously work at strengthening their own marriages and in turn work at nurturing the couples in the church.***

denominational pastor said, "Churches are ecclesiastical vending machines. You pop in \$300, and you can rent a church. A \$100 more you get the pastor. For \$50 more you get the organist." That's the way it's done. It's a mechanistic kind of approach to one of the most important life decisions anyone will ever make.

By contrast there are examples of churches—marriage savers—helping to prevent marriage breakup.

## ARE PASTORS PREACHING ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND COHABITATION?

In a room of 50 pastors, maybe 1 hand will go up on cohabitation. If I ask, "How many of you have preached on divorce?" maybe five hands will go up.

If you don't preach on this stuff, nothing is going to happen. The church has to have a vision of being a marriage saver. Marriage and the family is the first institution; it needs nourishment.

## HAS COHABITATION AFFECTED THE MARRIAGE RATE?

Divorce is down slightly, but the marriage rate has fallen 41 percent. No one is even talking about the marriage rate.

Cohabitation has gone from a half

million couples in the 70s to over 3.7 million couples annually in the 90s. But we only have 2.3 million marriages annually in this country. So we have almost twice as many people "living together" in a year as are getting married.

Results from a study by the University of Wisconsin indicate that 85 percent of these cohabitative relationships split up prior to marriage. We call it premarital divorce; it's all divorce.

What can we do? The answer is biblical. The apostle Paul said to test everything. Hold onto the good. Avoid every kind of evil. The couples who are living together, many of them children of divorce, are testing their relationship. It is right to test, but they are testing in the wrong way. Churches need to test relationships with inventories for couples prior to marriage and for couples already married.

## WHAT'S THE IMPACT OF PASTORS AND THEIR SPOUSES MODELING THEIR RELATIONSHIP BEFORE THE CONGREGATION?

There's really almost no impact or marriage role modeling. The pastor preaches, and the congregation congregates. People know who the pastor's spouse is, but they are rarely seen as a couple. They don't talk as a couple.

Studies by H.B. London indicate that 67 percent of pastors' spouses are unhappy. It's not because they don't love their spouses, but the church is so demanding of a pastor's time. Spouses can feel neglected and lonely but may put up with these feelings for years



because the persons they are married to are "doing God's work."

Pastors must have a strategy to consciously work at strengthening their own marriages and in turn work at nurturing the couples in the church.

That's why I recommend that pastors along with their spouses receive training together in the Marriage Savers program—in administering premarital inventories and sessions.<sup>1</sup> They should train with other mentoring couples and attend Marriage Encounter<sup>2</sup> so their own marriages are strengthened. Then they can help other couples nurture their marriages.

## WHAT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST STRUGGLES THAT COUPLES HAVE?

All of us take our marriages and spouses for granted. The greatest chasm in



our culture is between men and women. We speak the same language, but if we are going to make our marriages work, we need to know the differences between men and women in terms of our communication styles.

In two-thirds of the cases, the woman is the one who asks for the divorce. She feels she has tried to communicate with her husband, but her husband hasn't really listened. A woman doesn't necessarily want her husband to give her advice. She wants her husband to listen without making judgments and say, "Sweetie, I didn't realize.... You've really had a tough day." Most of the time if she starts to talk about her tough day at work, he says, "Get another job. You don't have to put up with that." Twenty-five cent advice.

Generally, men don't seek advice or communicate well with their spouses. Many hold their feelings in and have an I'm-in-charge attitude. Ephesians 5 is the main biblical passage on submission



After they took the marriage inventory, I assigned them to read together a chapter of Proverbs a day and then take a walk—so they were doing something together. They agreed. After several months they called us on Valentine's Day and thanked us for giving them back their marriage.

Now, how hard was that? We gave them the marriage inventory and then worked with them a couple of evenings. That small amount of time invested in another couple



### Sample of a Community Marriage Policy\*

Representing various faith communities, we share common concerns regarding marriage. God has established in Scripture the sanctity and companionship of marriage. We believe that God intends marriage and the bond of husband and wife to last a lifetime. As religious leaders, we have a responsibility to participate in and provide premarital preparation to improve the understanding and mutual commitment of those couples we marry. And as religious leaders, we have a responsibility to provide ongoing support to strengthen and nourish existing marriages. Therefore, we will expect a minimum of 4 months marriage preparation.

\*For more information, see Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995), 293–318.

—Michael J. McManus

in marriage. Verse 21 is the meat: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (NIV). Submitting to one another is the true context. If men are not loving their wives as Christ loved the Church, they are in sin.

#### WHAT ARE PRACTICAL THINGS PASTORS CAN DO TO HELP COUPLES STRENGTHEN THEIR MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP?

Marriage Encounter recommends that couples take at least 10 minutes a day to write to each other about their concerns or about issues of the day such as, "What about Johnny and his discipline problem?" or "Should we go out on a date tonight?" Or they can do as my wife and I and begin each day by reading the Bible and praying together. The marriage relationship has got to be nurtured. It takes an investment of time.

My wife and I worked with one couple.

helped them save their marriage.

Pastors and their spouses and other mentoring couples can do this too.

#### HOW CAN CHURCHES WORK TOGETHER IN A COMMUNITY TO STRENGTHEN MARRIAGES?

They can bind together in agreement and sign a policy that they are going to help strengthen marriages in their churches. (See sidebar for a sample Community Marriage Policy.)

It usually starts with a small group of pastors from the community that meet together. Often pastoral couples who have attended marriage seminars/retreats have been so transformed that they want to organize a community policy.

Once community pastors sign a policy, they then need to recruit mentoring

couples from within the church to work with engaged couples and those already married.

#### HOW CAN THE CHURCH REACH OUT AS AN ARM OF SUPPORT TO ENGAGED AND MARRIED COUPLES?

The church should provide intervention for engaged, newlywed, and midcourse married couples. They should provide or encourage:

- *Premarital counseling.* The premarital counseling process is rigorous. Engaged couples should meet 10 times in a class, 5 times in a home with a mentoring couple, and at least once privately with the pastor prior to marriage.

If you combine mentoring with the use of an inventory, you should see a 10 to 25 percent break off of engagements. We want those in weak relationships to discover in advance and either decide not to marry or to work at the relationship and strengthen it before they marry. The only way you can do that, really, is with a premarital inventory like PREPARE.<sup>3</sup> The inventory is 80 percent predictive of who will divorce. It's also 80 percent predictive of who will have a good marriage.

We have had a lot of couples who've had terrible scores but who loved each other. They successfully salvaged their relationship by talking through the issues with mentoring couples.

Of the 135 couples we worked with in a period of 5 years, 25 percent broke their engagement, but only 3 couples of those who married have separated. Using the inventory is not perfect, but it's as close to marriage insurance as we're going to get.

- *Mentoring couples.* Churches should train mature married couples to serve as mentors to engaged couples, newlyweds, midcourse married couples, and those experiencing marital difficulties.

Couples sit down with their mentors who have been married 15 to 45 years and hear how they have solved problems in their marriage. We've found that when mentoring couples are given this

responsibility, their own marriages are also strengthened.

One of the keys to helping those in troubled marriages is to assign them to a mentor couple who has been through marital hell and survived. A strong mentoring couple is often able to help troubled marriages better than the pastor or a paid counselor.

### *The marriage relationship has got to be nurtured. It takes an investment of time.*

(See side article on Steps in Creating a Couples Mentoring Program.)

- *Marriage retreats.* Engaged Encounter,<sup>4</sup> similar to Marriage Encounter, is geared for engaged couples. Couples spend a weekend writing and discussing their

responses to such questions as: What things do I talk to others about more easily than I do with you? What are the things that make me angry with you? What doubts do I have in marrying you? How is God working on our engagement? How will we reflect God's love to others after our wedding?

Because so many people have weak relationships, 10 percent of couples who go to Engaged Encounter break their engagement. If you do not have broken engagements as part of your marriage preparation process, you are not doing anything significant.

For a midcourse marriage correction, married couples should attend retreats, classes, and marriage enrichment opportunities, such as Marriage Encounter, designed to

## *Steps in Creating a Couples Mentoring Program*

### *1. Train clergy in PREPARE/ENRICH.*

Clergy interested in creating a couples mentoring program in their church should first be trained to administer PREPARE/ENRICH.\* PREPARE (Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation) is a premarital inventory now used by more than 30,000 clergy and counselors and administered to over 100,000 couples a year.

Six hours of required training is available in most states and prepares you to administer and discuss test results with engaged couples. During training you will also take the ENRICH inventory that is designed to diagnose marital problems.

PREPARE and ENRICH are both made up of 125 questions in 10 crucial areas that are asked separately of the male and female. Each inventory takes about 30 minutes and is computer-scored. Results offer an excellent couple profile that a pastor or counselor can interpret.

### *2. Select potential mentor couples.*

Invite a number of married couples with 15 to 45 years of marital experience to consider becoming mentor couples in your church. Potential couples should have strong marriages and be willing to train as volunteers in marriage preparation in the church.

### *3. Train mentor couples.*

As part of their training, your potential mentor couples should take the ENRICH inventory. This will give you a way of knowing that the couples chosen have good marriages. You will want to meet with each potential mentor couple privately to go over their inventory.

For a small fee we will send you a packet of materials to train mentor couples to administer and review the results of PREPARE with seriously dating or engaged couples.

Once the mentor couples have been selected, trained, and know how to administer an inventory, you are ready to begin.

*\*For more information contact Life Innovations, P.O. Box 190, Minneapolis, MN 55440-0190; 800-331-1661.*

*—Michael J. McManus*



build and strengthen marriages.

- *Stepfamily ministry.* One of the most important things a church can do is to create a stepfamily ministry.<sup>5</sup> Stepfamilies break up at a 65 percent rate. They are the most divorce prone in the country, and they

get the least help. The problem is structural. The children resent the fact that their parents got divorced in the first place, and they doubly resent the step-parent who is trying to substitute for their mother or father. To help those marriages work, they need to be

mentored by couples whose marriages have truly blended. [E](#)



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#### ENDNOTES

1. For more information on Marriage Savers, read Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and Family Avoid Divorce* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995).
2. Marriage Encounter is a weekend retreat designed to show participants the necessity of a God-centered relationship in marriage. For more information contact: Assemblies of God Marriage Encounter, Mark and Becky Rhoades, coordinators, 800-366-2104.
3. Life Innovations, P.O. Box, 190, Minneapolis, MN 55440-0190; 800-331-1661; 612-331-1731.
4. Engaged Encounter, 8699 Pinyon Street, Buena Park, CA 90620; 714-821-8680.
5. For more information contact Stepfamily Support Ministry, 814 Mimosa Blvd., Roswell, GA 30075; 770-594-0520; 770-587-1691.

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101

COUNSELOR

# Pitfalls





Counselors and ministers can slip into many potential pitfalls as they counsel people in marital crises. Some pitfalls are unique to ministers; some are not. If any of the following potential counseling problems applies personally, or is of concern to you, then further study into the area is recommended.

### RUSHING THE PROGRESS

One of the dangers in counseling involves rushing the progress and growth of the counselee. Because of the many responsibilities of the minister—preaching, visitation, administration—time availability is limited. Being too busy to listen and to give full attention can only bring premature conclusions and limited help. And if the counselee is perceptive and picks up the hurried attitude, feelings of rejection, guilt, and anger could occur on his or her part.

### NOT MAKING A REFERRAL

Unwillingness or not knowing when to make a referral is a common error for the counselor. People who have long-term maladjustments, psychotic conditions, severe sexual dysfunctions, or those who require medical or psychiatric assistance or intensive therapy need to be referred.

A minister or a counselor should never attempt to counsel above his or her training

- Do I have any negative, or positive, feelings that may interfere with the progress of this case?

Let counselees know immediately if you feel their difficulty could be helped by someone else who has more training and ability. Assure them that you will do whatever you can to help them, including referral. Before you make a referral, investigate the referral counselor thoroughly in terms of training, approach to counseling, theological beliefs, and any other issues important to you.

### WHEN TO TERMINATE COUNSELING

Counseling can be completed too soon so a relapse occurs; it can continue on too long; or the minister may not be aware of how to approach the subject.

At some point, raise the question of when the counseling experience will conclude, especially if you are going to work with couples longer than six to eight sessions. Often you can say: "It appears that many of the issues that brought you in have been resolved. What are your feelings at this time concerning future sessions together?"

I prefer to terminate a couple from counseling in a gradual manner—from meeting weekly to every other week to every third week to phone contact. In concluding sessions with a couple, I make sure they know that if they ever need to call or come in at any time in the future for a similar or totally different situation, they should never hesitate to do so.

# in Marriage Counseling

and ability. Other professionals—psychologists, psychiatrists, marriage counselors—have the expertise we may lack.

Ask yourself these questions to help you decide whether or not to make a referral:

- Do I have the training and experience necessary to assist this couple or individual?
- Do I have the time it may take to work with this case?
- Am I knowledgeable or can I quickly become knowledgeable about this problem?

### EXCESSIVE SILENCE

Some pastors or counselors believe they should remain silent most of the time and not probe or encourage the individual or couple to talk. Some counselees may see the pastor's silence as a lack of interest or rejection.

The amount of verbal activity needed by a minister will vary from session to session and couple to couple. If silence or pauses are too long, it could be an indication of resistance on the part of the counselee or

ineffectiveness on the part of the person doing the counseling.

### DOMINATING THE SESSION

A counterpart to excessive silence is excessive talking or dominating the session—offering too much advice or moving into action without hearing about the problem. This pitfall is characterized by interrupting, changing the subject, lecturing, arguing, or showing impatience.

### EXCESSIVE QUESTIONING

Excessive questioning limits the response of a couple. This usually occurs because the minister is not asking open-ended questions.

Questioning guides the direction of the counseling, but it limits the couple. Questions and statements must be balanced throughout the session.

### MINIMIZING PROBLEMS

From the minister's perspective, the counselee's difficulty may seem minor, but it needs to be seen through the eyes of the couple or individual. A small problem reflects a major one. Discounting it affects the larger problem as well. You will sometimes be tempted to think, *I've heard this problem before*. You may have, but the problem will still have unique factors.

### MAKING ABSTRACT STATEMENTS OR GENERALIZATIONS

All communication on the part of the counselor should be concrete and specific. Allowing the couple to make generalizations or abstractions—or making them yourself—only furthers confusion.

### PLAYING GOD

One common occurrence both ministers and full-time counselors fall into is playing God by dictating answers and solutions to the couple. Doing this creates a dependency pattern with the couple. Helping couples arrive at and discover their own solutions is healthier than telling them exactly what to do.

Many questions will be put to the minister by dependent counselees. Throwing the question back to the person or couple

can help in not allowing dependency to occur and to break it if it is already occurring.

### TAKING SIDES

At times you will side with the husband, and at other times you will side with the wife, but avoid a consistent coalition. Siding should be for a specific

*Being too busy to listen and to give full attention can only bring premature conclusions and limited help.*

beneficial purpose and not because of a counselor's own feeling or bias.

At the start of the initial counseling session, explain that on some occasions you will reinforce one or the other. Tell them you will be attempting to assist them as much as possible. Share with them that your objectivity will enable you to point out or clarify one person's behavior and its effect upon the marriage.

### LACK OF OBJECTIVITY

We are called upon to be empathetic and concerned with the people we counsel, but not to become immobilized by their burdens. We are to be conveyors of the love of God to people who are in need.

Our compassion is needed, but if we allow our emotional involvement too much freedom, we lose our objectivity. When this happens, our involvement has ceased to be an asset and becomes a liability.

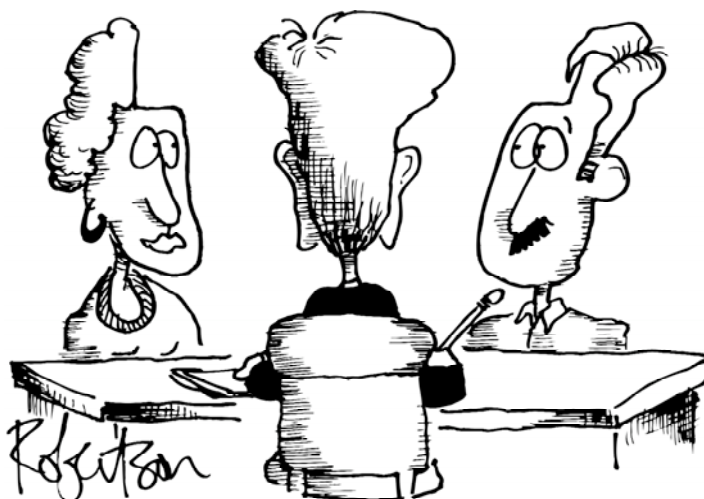
This loss of objectivity is subtle. Every minister needs to consider it an imminent possibility. A fine line exists between caring and being too emotionally involved to be helpful. This is where sexual involvement can occur. On the other hand, a fine line also exists between being indifferent and being objective. A wise minister will guard against these possibilities.

If ministers have continuing communication, sexual, financial, or parenting difficulties in their own lives, then perhaps when a couple raises some of the same issues, ministers could become judgmental or highly defensive.

Any minister or counselor has an effect upon the life of the counseling couple. It is essential for those who counsel to evaluate their own feelings about the couple and the process occurring between the counselor and couple.

As you listen to a tape recording of your session, evaluate your responses by considering the following questions:

- Was the question or statement made to satisfy the counselee's needs or my own?



*Pastor Bob was remarkable. It took only 5 minutes of counseling to determine the Bennett's marital problems were rooted in right- and left-brained thinking patterns.*

- Was I personally reacting to something when I made that response?
- What are my feelings about each person? Do I fantasize about either one between sessions?
- Why do I have the feelings I do?
- If I gave advice, what was the reason?
- At what point did I feel emotionally involved with them and why?
- In this session, did I talk more than 30 percent of the time?
- Do I want the person to think I know all the answers about marriage?
- Have I so identified with one partner that I reject the other without wanting to get any idea of how the other feels?
- Why do I ask questions the way I do? Am I curious about the counselee's intimate life, or do I want to avoid silences?<sup>1</sup>

## JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE

People who come for help need the freedom to be themselves and express themselves in any way necessary. We are not there to judge what they say or the words they select for expression.

Being judgmental and freely dispersing decisions is easier than counseling. It is also a way to avoid the struggle of thinking and being insightful. It can serve as a cover-up for the counselor's own unresolved marital dysfunctions.

## Ways To Work With Resistant Counselees

What can be done with resistances? You can respond in several ways:

### **Recognize and acknowledge the counselee's resistance or negative feelings.**

This unfearful acknowledgment on the part of the minister as opposed to a defensive stance creates an atmosphere in which the couple or person can deal openly with what is occurring in life. Encouraging counselees to explore this by suggesting that resistance is normal and helping them learn what it means can be beneficial. Showing concern that they are choosing to call a halt to progress and at the same time expressing a belief in their ability to continue to progress may be all that is needed.

**Join the resistance.** This technique means to ally yourself with resistant counselees and work with them until they begin to do what you have asked them to do.

**Bypass the resistance.** If the homework assignment is causing resistance, change it and give alternate suggestions. In some cases, a mild confrontation is needed, such as, "If you can't do the homework, I wonder if I can help you."

**Face resistance in advance.** You could say: "Often in counseling, even though a couple wants to change and grow, one or both may be resistant enough to sabotage the counseling or homework assignments. If this were to occur with you, what form of resistance would occur and what do you think would be the reason?" Anticipating difficulties may help to eliminate their future occurrence, or it may make dealing with them easier when they do occur.

—H. Norman Wight

Some couples will come expecting a minister to be judgmental because of their perception of his or her position. What will a counselor's spirit of judgment accomplish for the couple?

A passage I have found helpful is Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than

yourselves" (NIV). Underneath this verse, I have penciled in a reminder to myself: This is the counselor's attitude toward the counselee.

## AVOIDING CLOSENESS

Closeness is a problem unique to ministers. Because of a couple's involvement in the church, a minister may know them intimately. For most couples, this will not become an issue, especially if the minister is open, warm, trustworthy, and appears to be understanding.

In your preliminary discussion, clarify with the couple that when you see them outside of the counseling setting in social settings or at church meetings, you will not mention what occurs within the counseling session, and you would appreciate their not mentioning it either. It is also important that the individual or couple not go to friends or relatives and share what occurs in counseling or ask for additional advice. Too often, conflicting information could be shared, or others will misunderstand what is occurring in the counseling setting.

## CREATING DISTANCE

Putting distance between ourselves and



## Family Systems Counseling

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12, NIV).

To think systemically, the minister needs to consider the entire family as a functional system. When you counsel one member of a family, keep in mind that you are also indirectly counseling the entire family system. This foundational statement represents the essence of what is known as family systems counseling.

For illustrative purposes, reach over and touch just one leaf of a plant in your office. Notice that in simply touching just one portion, the entire plant moves. Similarly, a family is a system much like a body. When one member is hurting, discouraged, depressed, or angry, the entire family system is affected.

In some ways, just understanding this basic principle about systems is helpful. For in many instances, you may be counseling just a husband or just a wife when one's spouse refuses to attend a counseling session. It is important to realize that when you can influence a change in one of the marital partners, you will also be affecting change in the one who is not present as well.

Here are some of the principles to keep in mind when thinking systemically:

*Focus primarily on the communication patterns in the family system, both verbal and nonverbal.*

*Realize that sinful patterns of behavior are likely to be passed on from generation to generation.<sup>1</sup>*

- Take into consideration family-of-origin dynamics, rules that govern the family communication, power struggles, boundaries, etc.
- Work to help family members become more aware of the patterns of their relationship that are unhealthy and work to create healthier ways of communicating with one another. Once again God is way ahead of us as we are commanded to speak words that edify (e.g., Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:29).
- Be observant of a couple's body language and tone of voice as they interact in your office.
- Realize that rarely is only one member of the family system solely the problem.
- Keep in mind that you are working for the health of the entire family unit as well as for the benefit of each member.
- Realize that you are never just counseling the individual in your office; you are counseling the entire family system. A change in one part of the family reverberates through the entire family unit.

An understanding of family systems is also helpful in the larger sense of understanding the church as a body (cf. Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12). A change in any part of the church family will to some degree have an impact on the entire body of believers. To think systemically is to realize that we are one body in Christ yet members in particular. We have a responsibility to one another and to ourselves. The next time you water the plants in your office, think systems and thank God for the body of Christ.

### ENDNOTE

1. For a more complete discussion of how this process occurs, see Donald A. Lichi, "Character Formation in Children: Reversing the Effects of the 'Sin of the Fathers,'" *Enrichment* (Fall 1997): 114–16.

—Donald A. Lichi, Ph.D., is vice president and director of education for EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio.

the couple protects us from emotional involvement in the life of the couple. But distance is a problem because openness, trust, and genuine caring are blocked. Distance limits both the counseling and building up the body of Christ.

One way to create distance is to deny the expression of emotions. Such denial is either caused by a counselor's belief that certain emotions (such as anger or depression) are wrong or by discomfort with the outward expression of anger or crying. Such problems may cause the counselor to attempt to limit these expressions by the counselees.

Couples need to be able to share and express their feelings, especially within the safety of the counseling setting. Inexperienced counselors, or those who struggle with knowing what to say during the sessions, may tend to keep the topics in a safe area, shy away from emotions and conflicts, or channel the discussion to topics such as sports, news, or hobbies.

### OVERTALKING AND CONTROLLING BY ONE PARTNER

Sometimes pitfalls are created by the counselee. One common difficulty is overtalking and controlling by one partner. The more one spouse talks, the more silent the other becomes; the more silent one spouse is, the more agitated and talkative the other grows. This cycle must be spelled out to the couple by the therapist in terms they can grasp.<sup>2</sup>

It is also important to avoid extensive discussions concerning the past. As couples discuss situation after situation, debate over the details, and who said what and who was right, realize you are getting a biased and distorted picture. If this continues into an extensive quarrel, they may blame you. Past behaviors between the couple do affect the present relationship, but this kind of bickering is useless.

By the same token, philosophical and/or theological discussions have no place in the marital counseling process. Usually these are used as distractors or resistances. This is the time to guide the couple back to the pertinent issues. If,

however, husband-wife roles and Ephesians 5 is the issue, this should be discussed.

It is important to learn to turn questions back to the person or couple, especially when the questions are likely to entrap you. In most instances, the counselor should not serve as an “interpreter” for the couple. As soon as possible, the husband and wife need to talk with each other and answer their own questions and issues.

## CREATING RESISTANCE

Another difficulty the couple can create is that of resistance. On occasion, one or both will begin to resist the counseling process. Resistance is manifested in many ways.

In individuals, silence is a common manifestation of resistance, although it can occur with couples as well. The counterpart to silence occurs when one or both engage in a great deal of superficial talk or intellectualization. Even if

you try to direct the conversation toward more relevant topics or feelings, they may ignore this and move into safer areas. Overtalking to control the session and keep the minister away is another form of resistance commonly used.

*If silence or pauses are too long, it could be an indication of resistance on the part of the counselee or ineffectiveness on the part of the person doing the counseling.*


If fear or anger are involved in the resistance, a pattern of coming late for the appointments may occur. Or some individuals or couples will fail to do their homework for one reason or another. A variation of this is to disobey or change the actual assignment, although the instructions were explicit.

Why does resistance occur? It could

mean they are having difficulty relating to the counselor personally, or they may have difficulty relating to an authority figure. The resistance could occur because one partner is resisting the other. Because one spouse wants to grow and change, this is a way to express anger toward the other.

In some cases, toward the end of counseling, you may find the couple resists the final outcome. This could be because of a fear of the process of change or a fear that on their own they might not be able to function. This can prolong the counseling process. (See sidebar for ways to work with resistant counselees.)

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Maintaining a confidential relationship is essential. This can be a touchy issue, for we are all tempted to share our experiences in teaching or from the pulpit. Using fresh illustrations from counseling violates the counseling confidentiality and creates mistrust between a minister and the congregation. Couples need the confidence that what they share will go no further, neither as an illustration in a message nor sharing with a spouse. 

## ENDNOTES

1. Adapted from Corydon D. Hammond, Dean H. Hapworth and Veon G. Smith, *Improving Therapeutic Communication* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), 239.
2. R.V. Fitzgerald, M.D., *Conjoint Marital Therapy* (N.Y.: Jason Aronson Publishers, 1973), 37.

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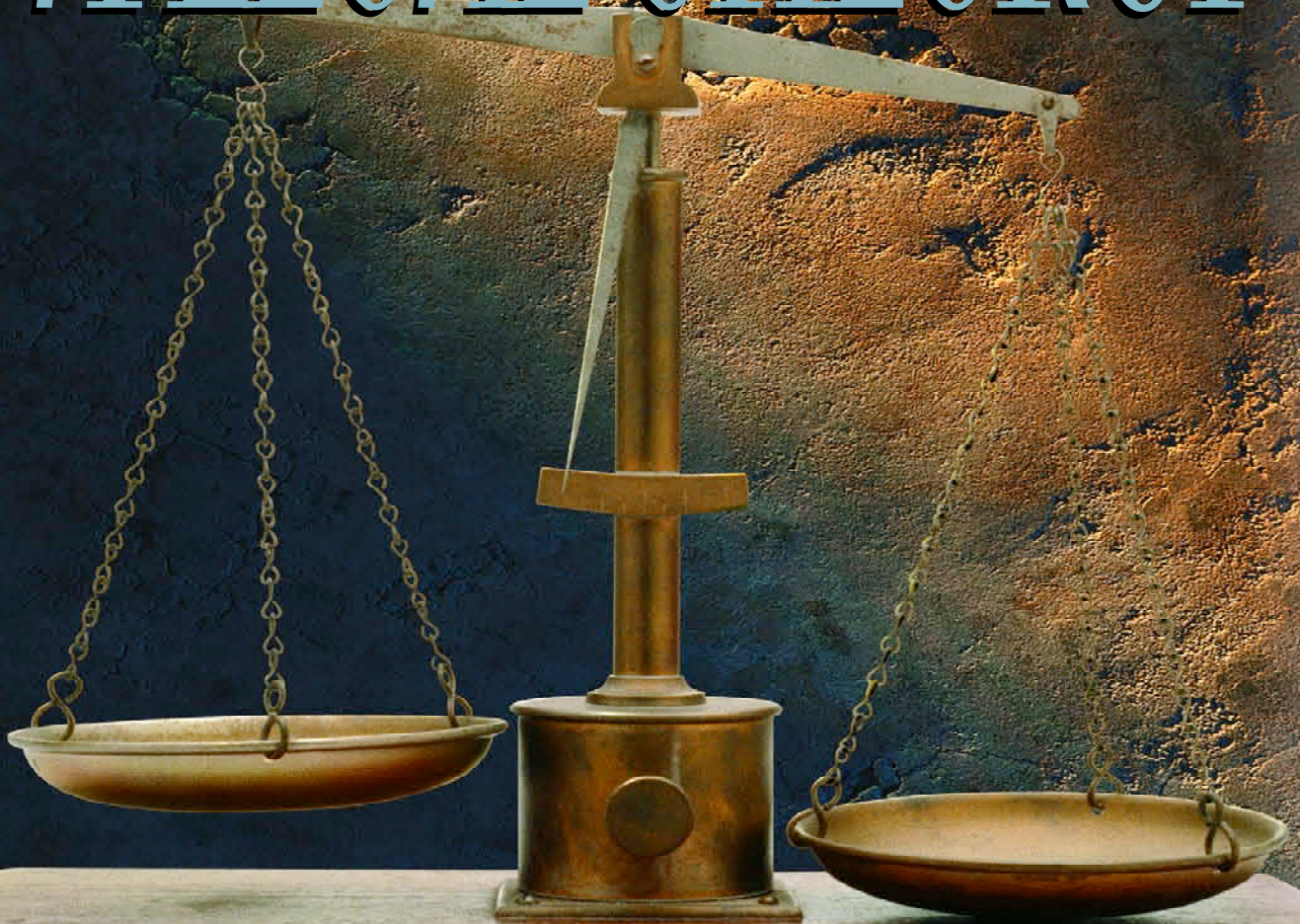
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*This article was adapted from H. Norman Wright, *Marriage Counseling* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995). Used by permission.*



# COUNSELING MINISTRIES: A LEGAL CHECKUP





A growing number of churches are offering counseling services. Some limit these services to members of the congregation. Others target the general public and promote their counseling ministry in the local media and telephone directory. Some churches use counselors or psychologists who are licensed by the state, while others use unlicensed laypersons with little if any professional training.

Counseling ministries can provide an excellent and needed service and represent a point of contact with the community. However, there are a number of important legal concerns that should be considered by any church that offers such services, or that is considering doing so in the future. The more important concerns are summarized in this article.

### NEGLIGENT COUNSELING

Negligent counseling is a legal risk associated with lay counseling programs. It can arise in a number of ways. Some persons may claim that their emotional problems were aggravated rather than helped by lay counseling. Others may claim that lay counselors have a legal duty to refer suicidal persons to medical professionals having the authority to involuntarily commit such persons, and that they are responsible for the suicide of a counselee who is not referred.

In 1988, the California Supreme Court ruled that nontherapist clergy do not have a duty to refer suicidal persons to medical professionals. *Nally v. Grace Community Church*, 253 Cal. Rptr. 97 (1988). However, the court emphasized that its ruling applied only to clergy who are not therapists.

The *Nally* ruling has been followed by courts in many other states. The key point is this: There is no assurance that lay counselors working on behalf of a church share the virtual immunity from liability enjoyed by nontherapist clergy counselors. This is so whether or not the lay counselors are licensed counselors or psychologists under state law.

### CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Counselors will occasionally receive confessions of child abuse or information giving

them a reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred. It is imperative for church leaders to obtain a copy of their state child abuse reporting statute and ensure that all counselors are aware of their reporting obligations, if any, under state law. Keep in mind that these statutes are amended frequently, so updated copies should be obtained at least annually.

Whether or not the child abuse reporting statute requires a church counselor to report known or reasonably suspected instances of abuse, the counselor (and perhaps the church) would risk potential civil liability for failing to report abuse.

For example, a minor who is being abused by a stepparent learns that a church counselor was aware of the abuse but did not report it. The minor may sue the counselor (and the church) arguing that the failure to report the abuse aggravated the injury. The statute of limitations on such claims does not even begin to run until the minor reaches the age of majority, meaning that contingent liability for such claims can persist for many years. Further, many states have enacted laws suspending the statute of limitations until an adult survivor of child abuse discovers that he or she was injured by the abuse. This can extend the statute of limitations for a significant amount of time.

At least nine states have permitted adults who were abused as children to sue clergy or other adults who were aware of the abuse but chose not to report it. This number will likely grow in the years ahead.

It is essential that church counselors be apprised of their legal obligations under state law with respect to this important issue.

### SEDUCTION OF COUNSELEES

There have been a number of lawsuits over the past few years brought by women who were seduced or sexually assaulted by male clergy or by mental health professionals. Often the misconduct occurred or started in the course of counseling sessions. As much as we would like to deny it, private counseling sessions involving dependent or emotionally vulnerable persons can present unique and sometimes formidable temptations. If inappropriate sexual contacts are initiated, there can be substantial damage to the victim and her family.

But this is not all. The costs of such behavior often devastate the counselor as well and



***Counseling ministries can provide an excellent and needed service and represent a point of contact with the community.***

lead to criminal charges, loss of professional credentials, future unemployment, and unavailability of any insurance coverage for either a legal defense or payment of damages. Clearly, steps must be taken to reduce or eliminate this risk.

There is another risk associated with counseling—the risk of false accusations of inappropriate behavior. Unfortunately, in some cases false accusations are brought against counselors by persons seeking a legal settlement or pursuing some other ulterior motive. It is imperative for counselors to recognize that a false accusation can be as devastating as a true one.

Because of the unique temptations that counseling can present and the possibility of false accusations, defensive measures should be taken by pastors and others who engage in counseling. There are two highly effective ways to deal with these risks.

#### **Method #1: The Third Person Rule**

One effective way to deal with these risks is to adopt a policy prohibiting any male minister or counselor on staff from counseling privately with an unaccompanied female (i.e., opposite sex counseling) *unless a third person is present*. The third person should be the minister's or counselor's spouse, another minister on staff, or a mature and trusted church employee (preferably female). The presence of a third person may negate the clergy-penitent privilege for clergy counselors, meaning that either the pastor or counselee can be compelled to answer questions in a court of law regarding the communications that occurred. In many cases the loss of the clergy-penitent privilege is a small price to pay for the reduced risk that will occur.

There have been no reported cases involving a claim of sexual seduction of a male counselee by a female counselor. As a result, churches using female counselors are reducing their risks significantly. Of course, there remains the possibility of an unstable male counselee making unfounded accusations against a female counselor, and as a result churches using female counsees may want to consider adopting the same



***There is no assurance that lay counselors working on behalf of a church share the virtual immunity from liability enjoyed by nontherapist clergy counselors.***

precautions that apply to male counselors.

#### **Method #2: Women Counsel Women**

Since the vast majority of cases of inappropriate sexual behavior involve male counselors and female counsees, churches can significantly reduce their risk by using women to counsel women.

Some have pointed to Titus 2:3–5 as biblical support for this view.

#### **Other Measures**

There are other defensive measures that some churches have tried, such as use of a window in the pastor's office making all counseling sessions clearly visible to office staff, or leaving the door to the counseling room open. Such practices can be effective in reducing risk, so long as there are other persons visible in the church office during all counseling sessions. Obviously, this may not be possible in all situations. For example, many smaller churches have no other office workers who can observe counseling sessions.

Some churches seek to reduce risk by imposing boundaries on the counseling ministry. For example, some churches: (1) require a third person to be present for any counseling occurring off of church premises; (2) allow one-on-one counseling on church premises only during office hours if other staff members are present and visible; (3) limit counseling sessions to 45 minutes; and

## **COUNSELING POLICY**

Churches that use unlicensed lay counselors should prepare a suitable brochure or statement clearly communicating to each counselee that the church considers counseling to be an essential aspect of its ministry, and that it is important for persons seeking counseling to recognize certain legal considerations that apply in the context of counseling. These may include many considerations, including the fact that the counselee understands and agrees that counseling is provided on the condition that:

1. The counselors are engaged solely in spiritual counseling based on their understanding of the Bible, and they are not engaged in the practice of psychology, professional counseling, or psychotherapy.
2. State law may require a counselor to report allegations of child abuse to civil authorities.
3. Statements made in confidence to a pastor in the course of counseling ordinarily are privileged, meaning that neither the counselee nor the pastor can be compelled to disclose in a court of law any statements made in the course of the counseling. However, the presence of a third party during a counseling session may jeopardize the privilege, since the counseling may no longer be considered confidential. To illustrate, statements made in the course of pastoral counseling may not be privileged if a counselee brings a friend along to the counseling session.
4. Any statements made in confidence in the course of counseling will be kept in strict confidence by the counselor. As noted above, the duty to maintain confidences may not apply in the context of child abuse. Further, the counselor may reserve the right to disclose confidential information in specified situations (such as threats of suicide or an intent to harm another person).

—Richard R. Hammar

(4) permit no more than five counseling sessions with the same person during a calendar year.

Churches that adopt these lesser measures must recognize that they are not reducing risk as much as if they applied the “third person rule” or required women to counsel women. It is absolutely imperative that churches adopting these lesser measures incorporate them into official church policy and strictly monitor them to prevent any deviations. Remember, windows or open doors are of no value if a counseling session extends beyond normal office hours and the church staff leaves.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Another very important consideration in church counseling is the concept of confidentiality. Counselors (and the church) can be sued if they intentionally or inadvertently disclose confidential information to third parties. Obviously, this can occur in several ways. For example, the counselor directly communicates the information, or the counselor’s counseling notes are accessible to church staff.

Counselors need to be strictly admonished to maintain the confidences shared with them. The one exception relates to child abuse reporting. A legal duty to report known or reasonably suspected cases of child abuse generally overrides the duty to maintain confidences (at least for persons who are required to report under state law).

### **NEGLIGENT HIRING**

The church should carefully screen any candidate for a lay counseling position to ensure, as much as possible, the suitability of the person for a counseling ministry. The screening process should include: (1) contacts with former churches with which the member has been affiliated or in which the counselor has worked in a counseling capacity; (2) an appropriate screening form; and (3) communication with a number of references. Of course, all of these contacts must be noted in writing and placed in a

confidential file.

In some cases, a criminal records check should be considered—for example, if an individual being considered for a counseling position has no background or there are unsubstantiated allegations involving prior misconduct. The important consideration is this: The church can be sued for injuries inflicted by a lay counselee if the church either knew or should have known of a dangerous propensity of the counselor.

Churches have been sued by victims of clergy sexual misconduct on the ground that they failed to do an adequate job of screening the minister at the time he or she was hired. Churches wanting to lower this risk will develop screening procedures for clergy applicants.

### **NEGLIGENT SUPERVISION**

The church should consider adopting mechanisms to ensure that unlicensed lay counselors are supervised by appropriately trained and licensed mental health professionals.

The church should also develop a counseling policy setting forth standards on dealing with such issues as suicidal counselees, counselees threatening harm to others, counselees who confess to criminal activities, and

counselees who are child abusers. (See side article on Counseling Policy.) Unlicensed lay counselors should understand clearly their responsibilities with regard to these kinds of crises. In most cases they should be advised to refer crisis cases immediately to a designated licensed mental health professional.

This does not mean that the church counselor must sever all ties with the individual. Quite to the contrary, the spiritual counseling offered by the church counselor may continue simultaneously with the counseling provided by the licensed professional.

It is also important for the counseling policy to prohibit lay counselors from engaging in controversial therapies such as repressed memories and diagnosis and treatment of multiple personality disorders.

### **FEES**


Some churches charge a prescribed fee for counseling services. Are such fees deductible as charitable contributions to the church? The answer is no. The Supreme Court has ruled that prescribed payments for prescribed services are never deductible as charitable contributions. *Hernandez v. Commissioner*, 109 S. Ct. 2136 (1989). If the counseling is provided free of



charge as a ministry of the church, voluntary payments made by counselees to the church probably could be deducted as charitable contributions. However, if the church establishes or even recommends a prescribed fee, I am certain that the IRS would not recognize such payments as

tax-deductible. To be deductible, the payments must in fact be voluntary; the counseling services must be available to all without a fixed or suggested charge; and those unable to pay must receive the same consideration as those who are able to pay for the counseling services.

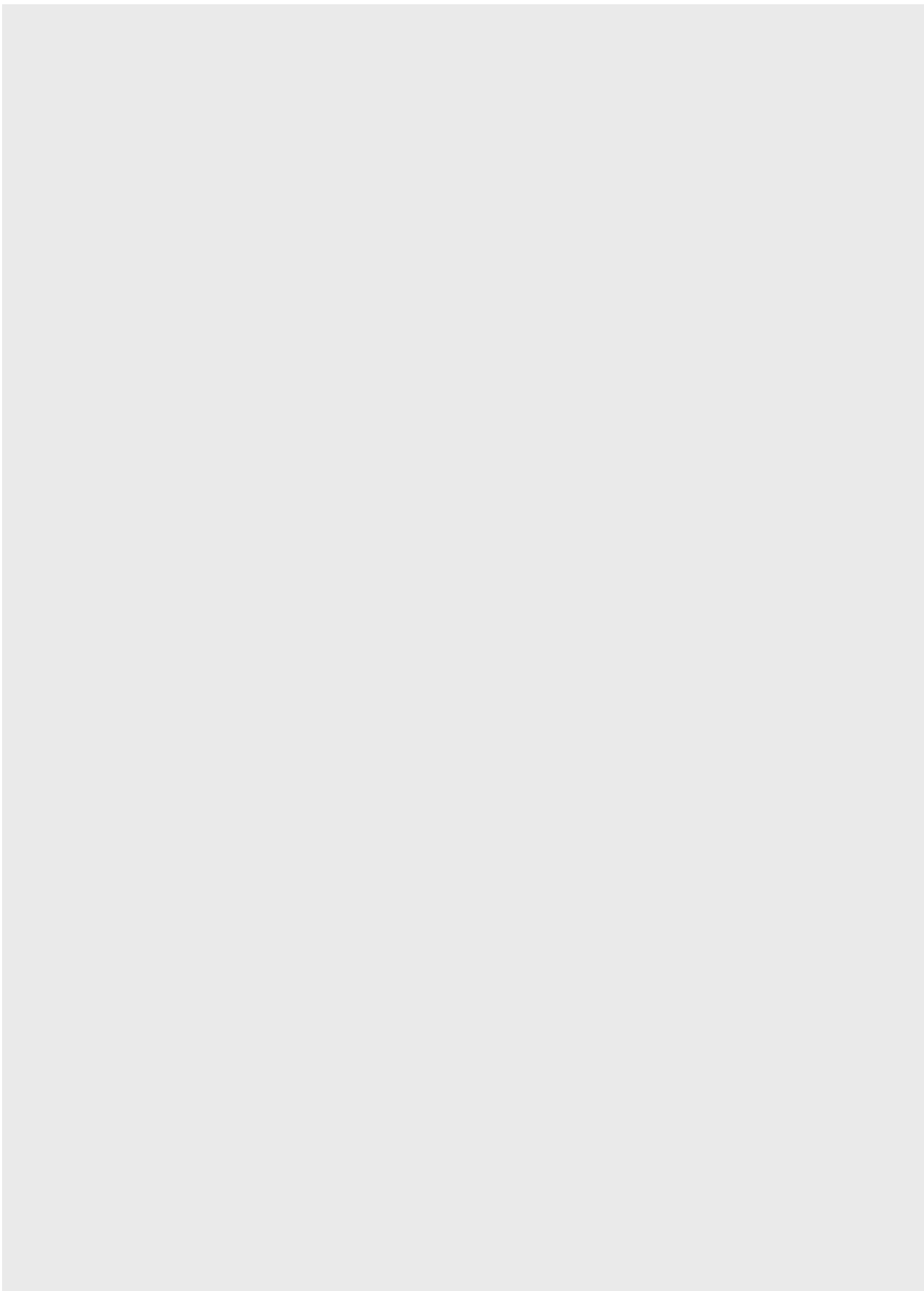
## CONCLUSION

These are some of the legal considerations that should be addressed before any counseling program is initiated. If conducted on a professional basis, with due regard to the legal environment in which we live, counseling ministries can serve a significant nurturing function. 

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# Referral: Safeguarding the Integrity of the Counseling Relationship



**P**eople looking for help with life's problems often turn to a minister as a source. One study showed that 80 percent of those with family and marital problems turned first to their pastors. People trust ministers to care about their concerns, to be honest with them, to keep their confidences, and to give them sound counsel that is consistent with God's Word.

Ministers are presented with a multitude of questions about the Bible, theology, ethics, personal and family relationships, God's will, medical problems, finances, real estate, vocational concerns, and legal issues. Yet most do not have the expertise to give competent counsel in all of these areas. Therefore, one of the wisest time investments is for ministers to develop and use a referral network of other professionals in the community.

## KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

Paul admonishes us to recognize our limitations: "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3, NASB). Paul goes on to explain that we are one body with many members. We are not expected to know it all or do it all, but we are to exercise our gifts and allow others to do the same.

To represent ourselves as having competence and expertise beyond our training or qualifications is dishonest, unethical, and illegal in most states. Thus, building a referral network of other competent professionals becomes an issue of good ethics and integrity. (See sidebar on Defining Competence.)

## WHY REFER?

A minister should make referrals for two

reasons: (1) to provide the church member or counselee with competent care and (2) to safeguard the ministerial relationship with the layperson.

We are all familiar with medical referrals and usually appreciate it when our physician refers us to a specialist, someone more qualified to diagnose and treat our condition. Personally, I would not care to be treated by physicians who did not understand the limits of their expertise and who viewed themselves as competent in every area of medicine.

In order to ensure that church attendees are receiving competent care, ministers should carefully assess their counseling competency and establish clear guidelines for what issues or problems they are qualified to counsel. A minister should ask: What qualifies me in this area? What training have I had that applies to this issue? It would be helpful to discuss this assessment with a licensed professional or with a trusted friend with whom the minister has established accountability.

A clear understanding of the minister's competencies and limitations helps safeguard the integrity and appropriateness of the counseling relationship and will likely spare the minister some frustration, pain, and even a lawsuit. It also allows the minister to more clearly define the kind of referral sources that need to be built.

The second reason for referrals is to protect the minister/layperson relationship. We do not pastor long before we experience the pain and frustration of having people leave the church because we have helped them through a crisis or problem and now know too much.

Ministers would be wise to consider whether counseling church members will leave them feeling too vulnerable and exposed to remain in the church.

## WHEN DO YOU REFER?

Professional ethics provide three circumstances that require making a referral: (See also side article on The Ethics of Referral.)

1. When a lack of expertise or training

results in an inability to provide professional assistance to a person.

2. When a dual relationship exists between the counselor and the counselee (e.g., close friends, family members, or employees over whom the counselor has an administrative or supervisory position).

3. When the counselee is no longer being helped by the counseling relationship.

***One of the wisest time investments is for ministers to develop and use a referral network of other professionals in the community.***

Some specific types of persons that warrant referral are persons

- who are suicidal or are a threat to others,
- who are unable to manage their lives and are no longer effective at home or on the job,
- who have addictions,
- whose thinking is confused, sluggish, or irrational,
- who are experiencing sexual dysfunction.

Ministers who have professional counseling training and expertise in managing these issues and who are confident that doing so will not harm the minister/layperson relationship may elect to counsel these problems.

It is important to remember that some emotional difficulties are caused by physical problems. It is sound judgment to refer those who have experienced a change in their emotional health to a physician for a complete physical.

## TO WHOM DO YOU REFER?

Developing a successful referral network requires an investment of time and energy on the part of the minister, but it is time and energy well invested. In addition to those who provide professional counseling services, the pastor's referral network should also include names of attorneys, physicians, real

## Defining Competence

Standards and credentials in the mental health disciplines vary, and much controversy surrounds any attempt to discuss boundaries of competence and limitations of technique.

To date, only one major Christian organization, the Christian Association for Psychological Studies, has a published statement.

Consider the relevant section from the CAPS *Ethical Guidelines*.\*

4.1. I pledge to be well trained and competent in providing services.

4.2. I will refrain from implying that I have qualifications, experiences, and capabilities which are in fact lacking.

4.3. I will comply with applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding competency in the psychological and pastoral professions.

4.4. I will avoid using any legal exemptions from professional competency afforded in certain states to churches and other nonprofit organizations as a means of providing services that are beyond my training and expertise.

4.5. I will diligently pursue additional education, experience, professional consultation, and spiritual growth in order to improve my effectiveness in serving persons in need.

On the matter of self-representations in the public sector:

6.1. I will advertise or promote my services by Christian and professional standards, rather than only commercial standards.

6.2. Personal aggrandizement will be omitted from advertising and promotional activities.

\*Taken from the CAPS *Ethical Guidelines*, 1993, 4-5.

—Adapted from Randolph K. Sanders, ed., *Christian Counseling Ethics: A Handbook for Therapists, Pastors & Counselors* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 58-59. Used by permission.

estate agents, and financial planners. The following are some practical ways to build a referral network:

1. Ask other professionals (pastors, school administrators, physicians) in your community about their referral sources. Ask laypeople about professionals who have helped them.

2. Meet other professionals and establish a rapport with them.

3. Ask counseling professionals if they will honor the client's Christian values.

4. Don't assume that all secular mental health professionals are anti-Christian and have wrong motives.

5. Become familiar with the services provided by community mental health agencies.

### HOW DO YOU REFER?

Explain to the layperson or counselee the reason for the referral and obtain consent for the referral. I used to tell those in my congregation, "Sometimes

being your counselor gets in the way of being your pastor. If I have to make a choice between being your counselor or being your pastor, I will choose to be your pastor. I can refer you to another for counseling, but I really don't want to refer you to another for pastoring." Or I have said, "I'm not qualified to give you

***When managed properly,  
referrals become a reflection  
of the minister's love  
and maturity.***

sound counsel about this. Let's find someone who is a specialist."

If a minister has been involved with counseling an individual, it is imperative to get signed permission from the counselee before sharing information with the referred professional. Provide the counselee with the name and phone number of the professional; instruct



***"That was a dynamite confession, Augustine.  
Have you ever thought of writing a book?"***

## The Ethics of Referral


It is important for ministers who counsel to be willing to refer their counselees to other professionals and know when and to whom a counselee should be referred. Some guidelines to follow are:

- *Ministers are responsible for knowing a variety of professionals to whom they might refer.* They need to know about the professional's reputation, training, experience, professional supervision, network of other professionals or hospitals to call on, and faith commitment or appreciation of such a commitment in the client.
- *Ministers have the responsibility to appropriately present the referral to their counselee.* They must interpret carefully why they are making the referral and why it is being made to the particular professional. They should explain their own limitations of time and/or training and explain the qualifications of the other professional, while being careful not to promise what the professional will do. Many clients fear that they are being referred to a mental health professional because they are crazy or about to lose their mind. Ministers should reassure their counselees at this point.
- *Ministers should explain how to get in touch with the professional referred to and what to expect from the sessions.*
- *Ministers should reassure their counselees about their relationship together.* Counselees need to know they are not being rejected and their minister will be in touch to talk things over and pray. Ministers need to be careful to continue to serve as the person's pastor but not as his or her therapist.
- *Ministers have the responsibility to maintain the pastoral relationship through phone calls, notes, visits, and prayer.*
- *Ministers need to maintain proper contact with the professional to whom the counselee has been referred.*

—Adapted from *Randolph K. Sanders, ed., Christian Counseling Ethics: A Handbook for Therapists, Pastors & Counselors (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 80–81. Used by permission.*

him or her to call for an appointment; check to make sure the appointment was made and kept; and later, check with the counselee to see if the referral was a good source of help.

Remember, the reason for making referrals is to ensure that people in your church get the best care possible. Referrals should not be viewed as limiting the pastor's ministry or hindering the fulfillment of the pastor's calling. When managed properly, referrals

become a reflection of the minister's love and maturity. They also allow the minister to focus more energy on specific ministry gifts. 

*Ronald Turner was a pastor for 16 years and is counseling services coordinator for EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio.*







# Dep

According to an article cited on the Internet, "It is estimated that in any given year, 17.6 million American adults, or 10 percent of the population, suffer from a depressive illness."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, depressive illnesses, or mood disorders, are not always easily recognizable. The purpose of this article is to inform and assist the caregiver in the task of

how to come to terms with it at some time in our life."<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, there is a plethora of definitive mental health information today to help us minister to those afflicted with depression.

The National Association for Mental Health defines depression as "an emotional state of dejection and sadness, ranging from mild discouragement and downheartedness to feelings of utter hopelessness and despair."<sup>4</sup>

Those in caring professions need to be able to recognize the symptoms of

1. Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day.

2. Marked, diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day.

3. Significant weight loss or weight gain when not dieting.

4. Too little or too much sleep, nearly every day.

5. Observable behavioral restlessness or listlessness.

6. Fatigue or loss of energy, nearly every day.

7. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive inappropriate guilt.

8. Diminished ability to think or concentrate, nearly every day.

9. Recurrent thoughts of death, recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, a suicide attempt, or a specific plan for committing suicide.<sup>5</sup>

When caregivers are aware of the symptoms and problems associated with depression, they can encourage the seriously depressed to seek treatment. Most individuals will improve and find relief within a matter of weeks with appropriate treatment.

Within the various types of depressive disorders, both symptoms and the level of depression can vary. A mood rating scale of 1–10 is helpful when assessing depression. A rating of 1 indicates the most depressed level; 10 indicates not feeling depressed at all.

This should be followed by asking

# DISCERNING depression IN THE BELIEVER

discerning when an illness is serious enough to be called a clinical depression.

## WHAT CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW

Depression is an illness that at times is so severe that even some believers cannot deal with it within the context of their spiritual life, for they feel too distant from God. In a severe, clinical depression, one's perception of reality becomes so blighted and blurred that recovery from the typical sense of purposelessness, powerlessness, and hopelessness does not seem possible.

Major depression can destroy family life as well as the lives of persons suffering from it. In addition to severely impairing and immobilizing the ability of afflicted persons to function, major depression will cause much pain and suffering for those who care about them.

Archibald Hart has stated that "most people with depression don't get appropriate treatment because they don't recognize their symptoms."<sup>2</sup>

Richard Dobbins of EMERGE Ministries writes: "As common as depression is, most of us will experience it and have to learn

depression and know what to do when faced with those who are crippled or immobilized because of this illness.

When five or more of the following symptoms have been present during the same 2-week period and represent a change from previous functioning, and at least one of the symptoms is either a depressed mood or a loss of interest in pleasure, a major depression is indicated.

## CHECKLIST FOR DIAGNOSING DEPRESSION

### ABLE TO FUNCTION

1. Feeling pretty good
2. Down, listless, out of sorts
3. Decreased energy and interest in normal activities

### MILD

### DECREASED ABILITY TO FUNCTION

4. Most fun activities don't help
5. Can't motivate; can't maintain concentration
6. Broken sleep, decreased appetite
7. Physically slowed down; don't care anymore

### MODERATE

### INABILITY TO FUNCTION

8. Guilty ruminations, everything black
9. Suicidal thoughts, early morning
10. Suicidal plans, completely hopeless, stupor

### SEVERE

—Carl L. Miller



## WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

When illogical thinking, irrational ideas, and delusional behavior prevail, an individual has become mentally ill.

Mental illness, a disease of the brain, is medically diagnosable and treatable and should not be seen as a spiritual disorder. Mental illness can be the result of generational sin (e.g., alcoholism, drug addiction). It may also be genetic. Generally viewed, mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, major depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder are considered to be caused by a variety of biological and environmental factors.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is likely to be an underlying organic or biologic basis for mental illness, the emotional, mental, or behavioral disorders characterized by disturbed patterns of thought, feelings, or actions are generally nonorganic and nonbiologic in origin. They are more likely the result of faulty or inadequately learned or developed capacities for coping with the normal stresses of life. These tendencies can also be the results of generational patterns.

A biblically healthy state of well-being is characterized by the ability to: face reality squarely, use logic correctly, have realistic levels of aspirations, accurately estimate the likelihood of outcomes, and effectively plan for the future.<sup>2</sup> This pattern is supported in 2 Timothy 1:7.

Redemptively, we want to alleviate and remediate the debilitating and crippling effects of a mental illness. While the general effect of the Fall cannot be ignored, a mental illness should not be seen as a lack of character or integrity.

No one can limit the supernatural power of God to penetrate the maze of neurological, biochemical, and psychological confusion of the emotionally disturbed or the mentally ill with the impact of His mercy, compassion, and redemptive love. A healthy integration of biblical counseling and medication can often be the means by which God is able to bring much-needed and desperately sought relief and total healing.

—Carl L. Miller

### ENDNOTES

1. The American Psychiatric Association has published several editions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The most recent edition, *DSM-IV*, provides specific diagnostic criteria to help establish whether someone is experiencing mental illness or a mental disorder.

2. Frank J. Bruno, *The Family Mental Health Encyclopedia* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1989), 238.

depressed persons if the rating is characteristic of how they typically feel. If their rating is between 1 and 3, a major depression is indicated. They should be asked how long it has been since they felt any better than this, or when their mood was any higher. By giving a time frame, the counselor can refer back to the identifiable symptoms characteristic of a major depression.

Clinical depression is not to be confused with certain behaviors or emotional expressions denoting brief mood fluctuations, feelings of sadness, disappointment, or frustrations which are simply a part of life. Depression is more than the ordinary "down" times. It is more than feeling grief after losing a loved one. The depressed mood warranting clinical evaluation persists over time.

The illness of depression is a whole-body illness, involving one's physical body, mood, and thoughts. A clinical depression is more than a matter of pulling oneself together to get better. There is a cluster of symptoms in the severely depressed person's life that warrants the concern of those around him or her.

Moderately to severely depressed people feel sad much of the time. They feel guilty, devalue themselves, and express no self-confidence. There is a meaninglessness to life; for them, nothing good is going to happen again. Emptiness and hopelessness prevail. Pleasure in the ordinary things of life—music, sports, friends, having fun—has diminished, if not disappeared. Solitude is preferred to any attempt at or risk of social contact or interaction.

Clinically depressed persons find it difficult

to make up their minds; they forget and find it hard to concentrate. Irritability is easily triggered, and self-control is lost for no particular reason. The tendency to overreact is more likely than the capacity to respond reasonably. Normal sleeping and eating habits are disrupted.

Restlessness and fatigue become the rule of the day for depressed people. Thoughts of death come into the mind; talk of suicide finds a way of expression.

Marilyn Sargent describes manic depression: "The bipolar disorder, another type of major depression, is characterized by extreme behavior at either end of the mood cycle."<sup>6</sup>

In manic phases of the illness, depressed people feel as high as a kite and have unrealistic, exaggerated feelings about themselves. They are a "nonstop party," constantly running around. Thoughts are racing. Judgment is impaired. Unwise and unhealthy choices are made. Far-reaching consequences are ignored.

Generally, clinical depression is not without its clues. Whether the person is at either end of the mood continuum in a bipolar disorder or at the low end of a major depression, it is important to listen to what is being said and observe what is happening to the person.

The depressed person has (1) a negative concept of self, (2) a negative interpretation of life experiences, and (3) a hopeless view of the future.

When depression is suspected, it is important to listen for the negative and distorted thinking behind the conversation of a depressed person: "I'm sad because I am worthless. I have no future. I've lost everything. My family is gone. I have nobody. Life has nothing for me."<sup>7</sup>

Psychologist David J. McKay describes depression as an "emotional wet blanket." Even at the expense of extinguishing any possibility for positive feelings, the depressed person will use this blanket of depression to put out the uncomfortable emotional fires of life. The by-products of those choices are feelings of sadness, discouragement, boredom, loneliness, guilt, worthlessness, and hopelessness.<sup>8</sup>

The severely depressed person's emotional



battery needs a total recharge. Mere jump-starting won't be enough. The process involves a major emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual overhaul.

### WHAT CAREGIVERS CAN DO


If a caregiver suspects a depressive disorder, then there are things he or she can do.

1. *Be as supportive as possible.*
2. *If appropriate, assist the person in making an appointment with a qualified professional to receive diagnosis and treatment.*
3. *Engage the depressed person in conversation.* Learn to "listen between the lines" to discern a depressed person's complaints. Point out realities and offer hope. Try to draw the depressed person out of that pattern of expressive despair, hopelessness, and self-deprecation, which is so often symptomatic of major depression.
4. *Encourage the person to walk, exercise, attend church-related social activities, and participate in other forms of recreation.* When met with resistance, be gently insistent.

5. *Encourage healthy diversion and healthy company.*

6. *Pray with the person.* The thoughts and plans of the Father for those in major depression are for physical, mental, and emotional sustenance and hope (cf. Jeremiah 29:11,12).

7. *Encourage reading the Bible and inspirational guides to overcoming depression.*<sup>9</sup>

8. *Let the severely depressed person know that prescribed medication and rest are essential components for giving needed relief.* 

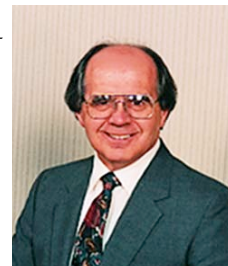
### ENDNOTES

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Carl L. Miller is vice president and director of Clinical Ministries to Ministers and Missionaries, EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio.





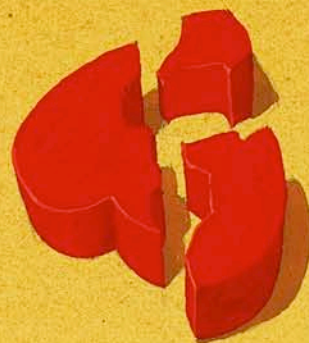


# Healing the Broken

BY RUTH HETZENDORFER

**A**s I watched Susan,<sup>1</sup> I saw a once strong Christian leader now living in complete despair and depression. Life, according to her, was over. The saddest part was that she didn't even know how she got there. She said, "I have not only failed at the relationship with my husband, but I have failed God and the church."

As she continued, I realized that her utter despair with life was not just from her husband being unfaithful to her, but from impending judgment pronounced upon her by Christians.





"I'm supposed to do everything right," she said. "If I had known what I did wrong, I would have changed. I've been a pillar in the church. I am a Bible college graduate. And worse, I'm a preacher's kid."

Her question to me was, "Why has the church abandoned me and not reached out to me?"

My thoughts were: *Where did we go wrong as a body of believers that we failed to reach out? If Susan's husband had died, would we have acted differently? Did Jesus come to heal all those who are in despair, all those who hurt and mourn? Are the divorced included?*

Divorce in the church has always been a challenge because we are afraid of what we don't know. We are afraid that if we reach out a helping hand, people might think we are condoning or even supporting divorce. Yet doesn't Scripture

you can grasp the feelings associated with devastation and hopelessness, you are on your way to understanding the inner world of the divorced.

Jesus was our example of how to treat hurting people. He never turned anyone away, and He was moved with compassion for the hurting. We can follow in His steps by applying His Word. The steps are outlined for us in Isaiah 61:1–3.

### **"PREACH GOOD NEWS"**

The good news in the issue of divorce is that there is hope for healing and a way to get through the trauma. But before we can share the good news with the divorced, we must first examine our own hearts.

Before we can help, we must be free of preconditioned ideas that the divorced person did something to make his or her

committed Christian's spouse can leave. The good news is: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done" (Genesis 50:20).

### **"BIND UP THE BROKENHEARTED"**

"Bind" denotes a commitment to defend or oversee a broken heart, not put a bandage on it. A bandage simply says to the hurting, "Oh, I hope things get better. I will pray for you." What we need to give the divorced is a safeguard: "I may not understand, but I support you. You can trust me to help you through this. I will not abandon you."

It means more than words, however (cf. James 2:16). It means phone calls, visits, and listening to the same story time and time again. It may mean helping with repairs or helping with a finan-

# HEART of Divorce

***We are afraid that if we reach out a helping hand, people might think we are condoning or even supporting divorce.***

say, "The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down" (Psalm 145:14)?<sup>2</sup>

Since divorce is everywhere, we cannot close our eyes to it. We must educate not only those who are in our churches but those who are soon to be our leaders (cf. Hosea 4:6).

As a counselor in the church and at a Bible college, I have learned that the keys to helping counselees are to: (1) genuinely care about them; (2) rely on the Holy Spirit for discernment; and (3) have knowledge of their problems and understanding of their inner world. If

spouse leave. There are too many reasons why a person leaves. People are less willing to tolerate an unsatisfactory marriage than ever before. The ideology of marriage has become increasingly hedonistic, focusing on what brings pleasure rather than faithfulness and commitment. With the availability of pornographic material, there are more and more people who are looking for another high and are finding it outside their own marriage.

It is time to stop pronouncing judgment on those who are experiencing divorce and recognize that even a

cial need. "Binding up the brokenhearted" means faith in action.

### **"PROCLAIM FREEDOM FOR THE CAPTIVES"**

"Freedom" does not necessarily mean freedom from an ex-spouse or freedom to love again. It means freedom from the bondage that failure brings. Those in the church who have spouses leave them not only feel they have failed in the relationship but feel they have failed God and the church. They feel they will never again be a whole person—one who is free from his or her past.



## Why Marriages Fail

Here are four usually unidentified reasons that marriages dissolve.

1. *One or both persons fail to understand the stages and changes of individual development—the seasons of their lives—and how these affect their marriage.* Many men and women experience an identity transition around 30 and experience a midlife transition in their late 30s or early 40s.

2. *People have an inadequate basis upon which they build their personal identity and security.* Too many build their identity on performance, perfectionism, or appearance, and these eventually fade. The best basis for marriage comes from the one who instituted marriage in the first place; but for too many, the teachings of God's Word have not been incorporated in depth into their lives, transforming both their identity and their security.

3. *People come to marriage with unresolved issues between them and their parents, or they come from dysfunctional families.* Either can intrude upon their marriage.

4. *Some marriages dissolve because the partners were never prepared for marriage, and their expectations were totally unrealistic.*

—Adapted from H. Norman Wright, *The Premarital Counseling Handbook* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1992), 12. Used by permission.

God forgives. So why do well-meaning Christians feel they must remind the divorced of their past? We must ask ourselves if we have extended acceptance and positive regard to the divorced.

### “COMFORT ALL WHO MOURN”

There is no grief quite like the grief of those who go through divorce. Their grief is not only for the loss of a person and the death of dreams for the future, but it is a loss of trust, loss of belief in marriage, and often a loss of friends. “Comfort” indicates a strengthening and uplifting of the spirit.

Those who have lost a spouse need a time to mourn. It takes about 1 year to go through the grieving process before divorced people can go on with life. We must be patient with them as they go through emotional ups and downs.

Dealing with anger and unforgiveness are all part of this process. Forgiveness may take 9 to 12 months, even with daily prayer for those who have caused hurt. Time does not always bring healing. Choosing to forgive and bless those that hurt us will bring change. Our job is to pray, guide, and be patient with the hurting.

### “BESTOW ON THEM A CROWN OF BEAUTY INSTEAD OF ASHES”

“Ashes” signify being covered with grief. Yet this verse says we are to bestow “a crown of beauty” to the hurting.

Wearing a crown of beauty depicts giving value and honor to someone, especially after all feelings of worth have been ripped away. We need not be afraid that this step endorses divorce. If God is no respecter of persons, why are we?

The phrase I often repeat is: “The only thing that matters in life is how we treat people.” How often we forget.

### “BESTOW ON THEM A GARMENT OF PRAISE INSTEAD OF A SPIRIT OF DESPAIR”

“Despair” pictures a depth of suffering that many of us will never encounter. The remorse and regret of things not done seem to bring a pervasive spirit of depression. What a complete opposite we see when someone is clothed in praise. We must guide hurting people to praise and worship God, regardless of their feelings. Praising God wins the battle and moves us out of despair (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:17–22).

We must encourage the divorced to make choices that will move them

step-by-step to complete healing. Encouraging is modeling optimism in what God can and will do. It is never giving up on someone. Are we willing to provide strength and hope for the hurting?


### “THEY WILL BE CALLED OAKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

If people truly heal from life-changing traumas, they can be a source of strength to the church. No one can provide hope to the divorced more than one who has already been through the suffering and has not only survived but has learned to live full of the joy of the Lord.

Thankfully, Susan experienced true healing. Her life that was once uprooted and devoid of all hope is now restored. She has sunk her roots deep into the Lord and has become a compassionate counselor, a source of strength to all those who hurt. She is truly an “oak of righteousness,” one displaying a life of complete stability.

How did she do it? She found a body of believers who reached out to her with compassion, and she claimed Genesis 50:20 and never gave up.

Susan's story proves the truth of the comforting ministry. If we will stop expecting less from those who have experienced pain and instead encourage them to reach for their potential, they will find the untapped inner strength that will minister to others.

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). 

### ENDNOTES

1. Not actual name.
2. Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

Ruth Hetzendorfer, Ed.D., is a counselor and associate professor at Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Waxahachie, Texas.




















*The minister is  
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# Selecting a Counseling Training Program

BY DONALD A. LICH

**A**s a minister you are well aware that people often seek your help in managing life's difficulties. Research by E.L. Worthington concluded that "pastors do much of the mental health work in the United States (probably more than psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers combined)."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the minister is confronted with a similar magnitude and complexity of problems as those seen generally by mental health professionals.

To minister effectively to those attempting to cope with the rigors of daily living, many churches employ a Christian counselor on their staffs. In other instances, ministers seek formal training in biblical counseling.

You are not alone if you are contemplating additional education to fulfill your role as counselor. Research I conducted in 1996 revealed that nearly 90 percent of sampled Assemblies of God pastors felt that formal training in counseling as part of preparation for the ministry was important.<sup>2</sup> Most pastors desire additional training in counseling, have read books on counseling, and have attended seminars or workshops related to counseling.

The purpose of this article is to provide practical guidelines to help you determine which counseling training program is best for you.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Simply relying on the title of a program to tell you what a particular school teaches and how it integrates Scripture and the behavioral sciences can be confusing at best and misleading at worst. The term *Christian psychology* frequently refers to psychology courses taught in Christian colleges and graduate schools. Biblical counseling or pastoral care majors are typically offered at seminaries rather than at the undergraduate

level. Many seminaries also offer majors in biblical psychology and pastoral counseling.

Confused? The terms *biblical counseling*, *Christian counseling*, and *biblical psychology* aren't used in the same way by every institution. Since every school has a slightly different definition of what constitutes Christian psychology, your investigation needs to proceed beyond a program's name.

At its core, biblical counseling should be comprised of a comprehensive study of human behavior, pursued under the discipline of Scripture. Its findings should be able to be expressed in terms that are meaningful to both the theological and psychological/counseling communities. Below are some suggestions that may help.

## A DELICATE COMBINATION

If you are considering graduate school or seminary training in Christian counseling, you should carefully investigate each school's approach to integrating theology and psychology. Be sure that the school doesn't overemphasize one area to the disadvantage of the other.

For instance, some Christians who are interested in becoming lay counselors within the church find themselves receiving more training in the behavioral sciences than in theology and Scripture. These programs tend to approach the integration of psychology and theology by tacking a few Bible verses on otherwise secular philosophies and then consider this to be *Christian* counseling. They do not subject their counseling procedures and techniques to examination in the light of Scripture.

Conversely, many seminarians receive excellent training in theological issues but are ill-prepared to adequately help people cope with life's overwhelming problems.

We need to avoid these extremes. Our goal should be to have a better understanding of human behavior as defined by God's Word.

*At its core, biblical counseling should be comprised of a comprehensive study of human behavior, pursued under the discipline of Scripture.*

**Remember, the primary evangelistic mission of the church is the saving of the lost. The primary pastoral mission of the church is the healing of the saved.**

A Christian perspective on the study of the behavioral sciences aspires to train the student to be a seeker after truth and bring discovered truth under the authority of scriptural principles. Training for this kind of ministry requires a combination of thorough training in the Scriptures along with a theistic approach to the behavioral sciences.

## TEN QUESTIONS

As a prospective counseling student, you should ask the following questions about the counseling training programs you are considering.

1. *Is introducing people to Jesus Christ emphasized as the main purpose of counseling?* Does prayer play an important role in the change/healing process?

2. *Are people shown God's forgiveness as the source of relief from guilt and anxiety?*

3. *Is the student's devotional life considered an integral part of training?* Through daily exposure to the Word of God, students find affirmation or correction of their scientific understanding of human behavior.

4. *Are courses available on the sciences of learning, memory, and the developmental process?* These are useful in preparing preventive programs in mental and spiritual health.

5. *Does the program offer practical how-tos for biblical ought-tos?* Most believers know that they ought to repent, confess, forgive, and lay aside bitterness. But they often lack the practical skills to accomplish this on a day-to-day basis. A well-trained Christian counselor must know how to provide these how-tos.

6. *Does the program emphasize critical thinking in the search for truth? Is there an understanding that all truth is God's truth?* A quality counseling program will encourage students to be more than mere consumers of the information they read in journals and behavioral science texts.

7. *Does the training program teach how to help God's people become whole in Christ?* A comprehensive counseling program recognizes that people are influenced by the complex interaction of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual factors. Look for a program that acknowledges the interactive nature of sin and eternal life on one's affect, behavior, and cognition (cf. Ephesians 6:12).

8. *Does the program employ the study of*

*the behavioral sciences to better understand human nature as God created it, as well as how sin and redemption have affected it?*


9. *Does the course work specifically present a comprehensive model for integrating psychology and theology?* Is the model clearly articulated in the school's prospectus and/or explained in the interview process?

10. *Is the program accredited?* By whom? Does the program lead to licensure to counsel independent of the church within your state?

## A WELL-TRAINED MIND... A HOLY-SPIRIT GOVERNED HEART

Remember, the primary evangelistic mission of the church is the saving of the lost. The primary pastoral mission of the church is the healing of the saved. Thus, the purpose of biblically based counseling is applied sanctification that seeks to save as much of the Christian's Kingdom potential as possible.

Christ's mission as Counselor (Isaiah 9:6) was and is to heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free (Luke 4:18). Similarly, the Christian counselor is a vital member of the church's healing team. It is the unique task of the Christian counselor to help people learn healthy ways of thinking about and living for our loving God.

As you seek to answer the call to an effective counseling ministry, keep the preceding questions in mind. I am confident that the training provided by our Assemblies of God colleges and universities and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary meet the above standards of biblical integrity and academic rigor. May God bless you as you pursue training in Christian counseling. 

## ENDNOTES

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Donald A. Lichi, Ph.D., is vice president and director of education for EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio.







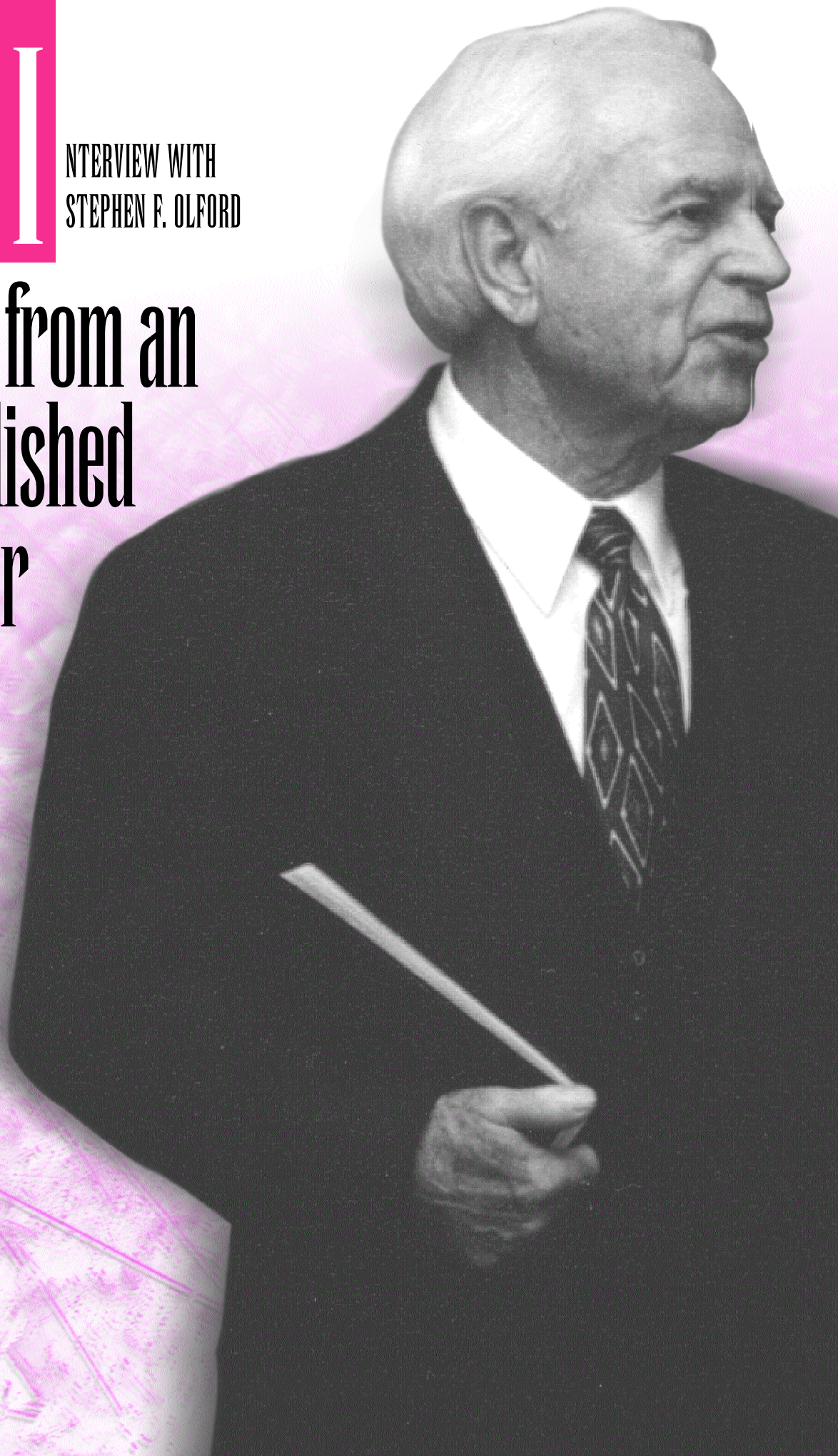


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INTERVIEW WITH  
STEPHEN F. OLFORD

# Insights from an Accomplished Preacher

*The moment we  
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**E**nrichment Executive Editor Wayde I. Goodall recently met with Stephen F. Olford to discuss his views on preaching, the ministry, and revival. Dr. Olford, considered by many to be one of the greatest expository preachers of our time, is founder of The Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching, Memphis, Tennessee, and will be hosting the second Assemblies of God Preaching School June 1–4, 1998.

#### AS YOU LOOK AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND ARE WATCHING PREACHERS WORLDWIDE, WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR CONCERNS?

Three of my concerns are:

1. *Ministers need to return to expository preaching of the Word.* Many have drifted far away from expository preaching and the power of the Holy Spirit. The history of revival has shown that when the Word of God has

***If ministers know the people at home are behind them and supporting them, they can maintain their strength in ministry.***

been exalted in the pulpit, the Holy Spirit has answered that Word and moved among us.

2. *A new soul has to come back into our seminary training.* Many denominational seminaries are teaching only objective truth. They deal with the biblical languages and the doctrines of faith, but somehow the soul of our seminaries seems to have died. I know of young people I have recommended to a number of seminaries that went glowing with a flame for God and have come back cynical, dry, and dead. This is not true of all seminaries, but it is prevalent.

3. *Our seminaries should be producing not only pastors and missionaries but evangelists.* We should be receiving from our seminaries back into the church community evangelists who are expositors on fire for the Lord. Evangelists

are often hesitant to move into advanced training for fear of losing their zeal.

#### HOW WOULD YOU COUNSEL MINISTERS CONCERNING THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE?

• *Put your walk with God first and foremost.* My own personal experience and the experience of years with preachers is that the moment we move away from our devotional life with God—that disciplined quiet time—we begin to drift. It has a corrosive effect. It's when moral breakdowns can occur.

• *Get to the heart of expository preaching and the power of the Holy Spirit.* Obtain the training necessary to become an expository preacher.

• *Learn how to study and manage your time.*

• *Be solid in your theology, philosophy, and methodology, and communicate it to the church before you are voted on.* What often happens is a pastor comes into a new situation and is faced with a brick wall. As many as 300 pastors a week are being ejected from their churches. Many did not communicate their goals and beliefs before they came. Problems and differences can often be worked through before the new minister comes to a church.

#### HOW CAN MINISTERS PREVENT BURNOUT AND MAINTAIN THEIR STRENGTH IN THE MINISTRY?

Ministers can deal with burnout through a holistic approach to the ministry. They need to:

• *Build their personal relationship with the Lord.* Daily devotions restore the soul.

• *Build their relationship with their children and spouse.* Half the battle is won if the minister's

***The history of revival has shown that when the Word of God has been exalted in the pulpit, the Holy Spirit has answered that Word and moved among us.***

family is happy and united. If ministers know the people at home are behind them and supporting them, they can maintain their strength in ministry. But if their home is split or broken, it can tear their ministry apart.



- *Learn to manage their time.* Most ministers can work through the day without any type of plan or strategy as to how to maximize their time. They deal with all kinds of needs and find themselves in a whirl—a yo-yo experience of up and down, up and down.

***We must stop thinking of repentance in terms of the unsaved. I believe the entire church needs to repent.***

- *Learn how to relax.* Too many ministers are uptight. They cannot even enjoy a meal and sit back and relax.

- *Keep their bodies healthy and fit.* I hear of many young ministers having heart attacks simply because they have not adopted any kind of method for maintaining their health. After all, the temple of our bodies is the very dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. We need to keep ourselves in tip-top condition.

#### **DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN DURING THE NEW MILLENNIUM?**

I feel deeply that the signs of the time are a portrait of the Lord's imminent return. Outside of that, I sense a heaven-sent revival—a revival that's going to leap the oceans and leap the continents—the greatest revival we've had for a long time. And it's only through the preaching of the Word of God and the ministry of prayer that we will see a heaven-sent revival. Participating in that revival is my anticipation and would be my greatest fulfillment.

#### **HOW SHOULD TODAY'S DENOMINATIONAL LEADERS PRAY?**

We should all be praying for revival in its deepest meaning—not just for a series of evangelistic meetings. And we need to pray for repentance. That's the lost note in our preaching today. Even our prayer and fasting

***Get to the heart of expository preaching and the power of the Holy Spirit.***

can be a gimmick if it's minus repentance. Only when people humble themselves—come under judgment, come under the sense of God's wrath against sin with brokenness and

then seek Him by faith—will they hear from heaven.

Out of the seven churches in Revelation, five of them were told to repent. Repentance begins in the church. We must stop thinking of repentance in terms of the unsaved. I believe the entire church needs to repent.

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STEPHEN OLFORD PREACHING SCHOOL?**

Our stated purpose is to edify and encourage pastors and lay leaders in the art of expository preaching and exemplary living in the power of the Holy Spirit so that the church may be revived and the world will hear the saving voice of Christ.

#### **SHARE SOME COMMENTS YOU HAVE RECEIVED ABOUT YOUR PREACHING SCHOOL?**

Gary Grogan from Urbana, Illinois, said: "The preaching school was refreshing, exciting, informative, a happening event, good variety—all those things wrapped up in a few days."

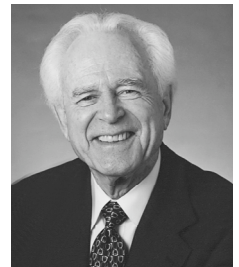
Evangelist Sam Farina from Wisconsin said: "His [Dr. Olford's] passion for souls, the lost, and discipleship came through in every message. He made teaching literally dance. Stephen Olford has God-driven insight into

***Even our prayer and fasting can be a gimmick if it's minus repentance.***

the anointing and the responsibility of ministry. He offered a new refreshing approach to what God wants us and expects us to do as pastors and evangelists. He gave us the equipment for sound preaching."

Jeff Bogaczyk, youth pastor from Evangel Heights Assembly of God, Sarver, Pennsylvania: "What a blessing this institute has been for me just to learn more about preaching the Word and the art of communication. The institute was a great inspiration. It was life changing." ■

*Dr. Stephen F. Olford is founder of The Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching, Memphis, Tennessee.*



# PASTORS AND FRINGE BENEFITS

BY JOHN C. LARUE, JR.

Benefits are a vital part of any employee's compensation package. A recent nationwide survey takes a look at how many pastors receive benefits and what kinds of benefits their churches provide.

## THE HAVES AND HAVE NOTS

Previous studies in 1991 showed that senior pastors who serve in churches with other paid ministry staff usually earn more than solo pastors. New research shows that senior pastors are also more likely to receive various fringe benefits than solo pastors (see Graph 1). In every category but one, churches offer more fringe benefits to senior pastors than solo pastors (see Graph 2). But churches also contribute an average of \$500 more per year for health insurance for solo pastors than for senior pastors.

In addition, more churches are providing pastors with various benefits. The most dramatic increases have been in providing reimbursements for professional, entertainment, and hospitality expenses. Fifty to 100 percent more pastors

have obtained coverage for those expenses than those surveyed in 1991.

## INSURANCE COVERAGE

Pastors are more likely to receive health insurance than any other benefit. For a pastor's medical coverage, the median annual amount churches pay is \$4,400. One-fourth of churches spend \$2,500 or less, while another 25 percent spend \$5,950 or more.

Twenty to 30 percent of pastors serve at churches that pay for life and disability insurance. Premiums for the majority of those policies range from \$150 to \$1,000. The study did not indicate what kind of coverage was included.

## PROFESSIONAL REIMBURSEMENTS

More than 7 of 10 pastors have their auto expenses reimbursed, adding up to a median annual amount of almost \$2,400. One-fourth of the pastors receive \$1,200 or less for auto expenses, and 25 percent receive \$3,300 or more. The survey did not ask how many pastors use a church-owned vehicle.

Almost 7 of 10 pastors are compensated for conventions and/or continuing

education. Twenty-five percent are allotted \$1,100 a year for that, and 25 percent, \$500. The median amount is \$600.

The majority (51 percent) of full-time pastors are reimbursed for professional books, magazines, and memberships, which cost between \$225 and \$1,000 a year. The median amount is \$500.

Though the numbers have grown significantly since the early 1990s, only one quarter of churches reimburse their pastors for entertainment and hospitality expenses. Typical annual expenses total \$325. A fourth of the pastors spend more than \$1,000 a year, and a fourth spend less than \$126.

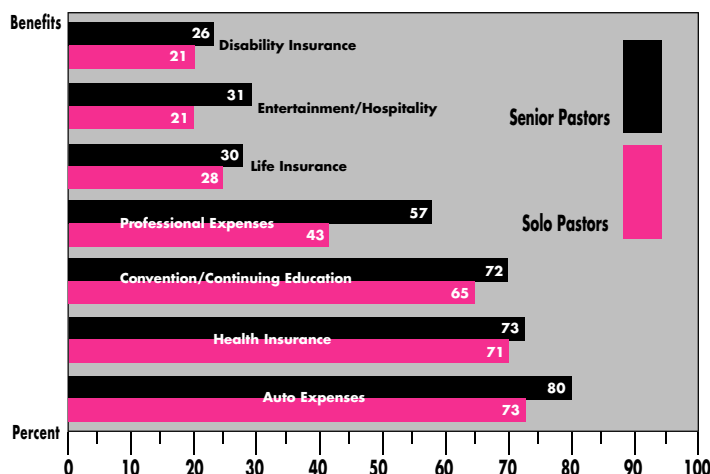
## THE STUDIES

For this study 1,200 surveys were mailed, and 594 were returned, for a response rate of 52 percent. Results are considered accurate to within plus or minus 2 and 4 percentage points. ■

*John C. La Rue, Jr., is vice president of research and development for Christianity Today, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois. This article is adapted from Your Church, January/February 1998, 96. Used by permission.*

GRAPH 1

FRINGE BENEFITS OF SENIOR AND SOLO PASTORS



GRAPH 2

MEDIAN ANNUAL AMOUNT OF FRINGE BENEFITS

DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSES	SENIOR PASTOR	SOLO PASTOR
Health Insurance	\$4,000	\$4,500
Auto Expenses	\$2,400	\$2,112
Convention/Cont. Education	\$1,000	\$500
Life Insurance	\$600	\$276
Entertainment/Hospitality	\$600	\$200
Professional Expenses	\$500	\$400
Disability Insurance	\$500	\$248

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INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK,  
CHARLES T. CRABTREE, AND CHARLES E. HACKETT

# Harvest 2000: Reaching Every Home for Christ

*Not only is this millennium coming to a close, but the coming of Christ is near at hand. There is a new sense of urgency in Christians to tell people the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

—Trask



## WHAT IS HARVEST 2000?

**TRASK:** It is the last giant effort of the Assemblies of God in the Decade of Harvest. It is our response to the Celebrate Jesus 2000 movement which is a coalition of Pentecostal/evangelical churches and ministries whose

goal is to pray for every person in America by name and to share a meaningful witness of Christ to every person in the U.S. by the end of the year 2000.

**CRABTREE:** At the last Celebrate Jesus 2000 committee meeting, over 60 denominations, 240 independent ministries, and approximately 150,000 churches were represented. Their goal is the fulfillment of the Great Commission in America.

There are an estimated 100 million dwellings in America, and we want to mobilize the Church to make certain every lost soul will have a chance to know the Savior.

**HACKETT:** I don't ever remember an effort of these proportions happening in my lifetime—this many Christians working together for one common purpose. It's time we unite together to do something to reach our nation for God. It's time to stop criticizing one another and start encouraging one another.

I appreciate the unity and spirit of cooperation that has been generated and will continue to be generated among our churches of all evangelical denominations.

## WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION OF THESE KIND OF EVANGELISM EFFORTS AROUND THE WORLD?

**HACKETT:** The turning of a new millennium is

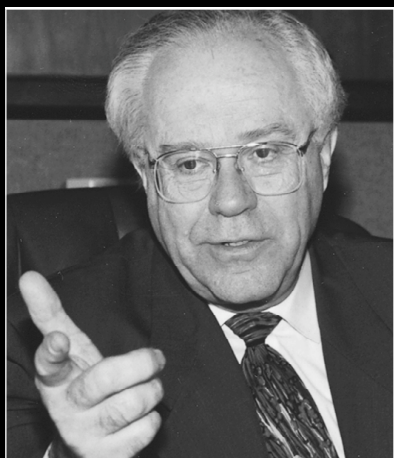
*We really believe if pastors will open their hearts to God concerning this vision, they will be impressed by the Spirit to be involved in some way.*

—Crabtree



***Harvest 2000 involves the heart of the vision God gave our Movement in 1987 for the Decade of Harvest—it involves prayer and evangelism.***

***—Crabtree***



the “talk of the town.” The year 2000 is a wonderful time for denominations and religious organizations to unite to present the gospel.

**TRASK:** The Church is keenly aware that we are living in the last days. Not only is this millennium coming to a close, but the coming of Christ is near at hand. There is a new sense of urgency in Christians to tell people the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**CRABTREE:** The year 2000 is especially unique in that it’s also the end of the Decade of Harvest for the Assemblies of God. Without question the Lord of the Harvest is wanting us to do our part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

**HOW DOES CELEBRATE JESUS 2000 TIE IN WITH OUR DECADE OF HARVEST? ARE THE GOALS SIMILAR?**

**TRASK:** We want to use the tools of the Decade of Harvest to make Harvest 2000 a reality to the glory of God. As a result of this evangelism outreach, we pray that the goals of the Decade of Harvest can also be realized.

**HACKETT:** You see, many of the goals are

similar, particularly when it comes to presenting the gospel and getting people saved.

**CRABTREE:** Harvest 2000 involves the heart of the vision God gave our Movement in 1987 for the Decade of Harvest—it involves prayer and evangelism. We are joining our vision with others who have similar goals.

**DOES HARVEST 2000 FIT INTO THE MISSION OF OUR FELLOWSHIP?**

**CRABTREE:** As you know, the mission of the Assemblies of God is threefold: to build up the church of Jesus Christ, to glorify God, and to reach the lost. I can’t think of a greater way to fulfill our mission and divine responsibility. Just think what God is going to do through the lives of participants. They will grow spiritually as they fast and intercede in prayer for the people in their neighborhoods and then reach out and witness to those in their targeted areas.

**TRASK:** We want to bring a new awareness to every Christian to be a witness to the men and women they live among and around.

**CRABTREE:** This is not only in line with the mission of the Assemblies of God, it is more importantly in line with the Great Commission.

The genius of this whole thing is that even if a person is scared to death to witness, they

***This project is a wonderful prod to the Assemblies of God to get back to evangelism.***

***—Hackett***

***It is time we unite together to do something to reach our nation for God.***

***—Hackett***





**As a result of this evangelism outreach, we pray that the goals of the Decade of Harvest can also be realized.**

**—Trask**

***We want to bring a new awareness to every Christian to be a witness to the men and women they live among and around.***

**—Trask**



can put their outreach materials on the door-knob and run. Or if they're braver, they can stand there and talk with the people who come to the door.

**HACKETT:** This project is a wonderful prod to the Assemblies of God to get back to evangelism.

**HOW CAN LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS AND THEIR CONGREGATIONS BE INVOLVED IN HARVEST 2000?**

**TRASK:** First, pastors can contact the Decade of Harvest office. The Assemblies of God has already joined ranks with the Celebrate Jesus 2000 movement, and materials are available that have been tailor-made to fit the Assemblies of God. They can also become members of the Harvest 2000 effort and will be given information and materials that will help them carry out the strategy of touching the nation with the gospel.

Then after pastors receive their packets of information, they can plug leaders in from their congregation to carry the witness to their community.

**HACKETT:** This project can't possibly work without local churches and pastors. With local pastors and their laypeople involved they will be

able to reach their community by distributing printed materials, Bibles, and the *Jesus* video.

**CRABTREE:** That's correct. We will be providing pastors with various options. We are going to concentrate on distributing the *Jesus* video and a special evangelistic edition of the *Pentecostal Evangel* adapted just for Harvest 2000. For churches that don't have the money to spend on the videos, they can at least order the special edition *Evangels* to distribute as they go house to house.

We really believe if pastors will open their hearts to God concerning this vision, they will be impressed by the Spirit to be involved in some way.

We are going to offer pastors three levels of involvement.

(1) *Prayer.* During 1998 and 1999 we will ask pastors to at least encourage their people to target their neighborhood—to become acquainted and friendly with their neighbors—not initially for the purpose of evangelism but to just begin to pray for people. It's important, even if they don't participate any further, to at least get their neighbors' names and lift them before God.

***There are an estimated 100 million dwellings in America, and we want to bring a loving, meaningful witness of Christ to every household by the end of 2000.***

**—Crabtree**





***I appreciate the unity and spirit of cooperation that has been generated and will continue to be generated among our churches of all evangelical denominations.***

**—Hackett**



(2) *Planning and training.* In 1999 we'll ask pastors to move to the next level of involvement: to decide on the areas of their city they will target to reach in 2000. They will pray for their "mission field" and train their laypeople in 1999.

(3) *Evangelism outreach.* The third level of involvement is to actually complete the evangelism outreach in 2000 by door-to-door distribution of gospel materials.

#### **HOW WILL CHURCHES KNOW WHAT AREAS TO TARGET?**

**CRABTREE:** To help churches choose the areas they will cover they will be involved with the mapping of the zip codes or areas they want to cover. There's an electronic evangelism mapping center in Kansas City, Missouri, that all the churches involved in Harvest 2000 can use. We will be giving information later in 1998 and 1999 how pastors can get into this electronic mapping through a kit that will be available. It will identify everyone in a church's chosen zip code and break it down into neighborhoods. It will also provide socioeconomic factors and the ethnicity concentrations in their targeted areas.

Using this technology, the entire country

can be covered, if we all cooperate. It will also cut down on duplication by the over 300 different groups participating in this great effort.

#### **WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?**

**HACKETT:** People in the local churches are the greatest resource. Hopefully, Harvest 2000 will give them the training and momentum to get involved in witnessing to their neighborhoods and communities.

**CRABTREE:** Every local church can be involved and use any of the outreach resource materials available. Plus, the Assemblies of God We Build People resources will be a valuable tool after we reap this harvest.

We will be giving pastors plenty of lead time on this project. Right now we are just introducing Harvest 2000—giving the goals and asking people to begin to pray. Throughout 1998 we will be acquainting people with this vision. Then in 1999, we will be giving them all of the tools for prayer and training. And then prior to 2000, we'll be giving them all the resources for evangelism.

#### **CAN THE GOALS OF HARVEST 2000 BE MET?**

**CRABTREE:** At the last planning meeting, all those gathered were gripped in a Pentecostal atmosphere. I saw reserved Evangelicals with their hands raised in worship.

It is exciting to know that beyond our own expectation of the majority of Assemblies of God churches participating in Harvest 2000, over 100,000 other evangelical churches will be combining efforts in the same vision. And with all the technological tools available, this job is not only doable, it will be easy.

Just think about it, the United States Post Office touches every dwelling in America every day. And with one giant effort over the period of a year, we can bring Christ to this nation in 2000. **E**

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*Charles T. Crabtree is assistant general superintendent of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.*

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

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**—Crabtree**



# The Pentecostal Pulpit of the 21st Century

*Pentecostal preaching is not about sermons; it's about communicating God's Word to people in order to inform and change them.*

BY GEORGE O. WOOD

**W**e already know what the Pentecostal pulpit of the 21st century looks like, and I'm not talking about whether it's wood, Plexiglas, a simple lectern, or an ornate work of art. It's the same pulpit photographed in Acts 2:14–41—the model for *all* Pentecostal preaching.

The Pentecostal pulpit is built from the materials of preparation, proclamation, and provocation.

## **PREPARATION—ACTS 2:14**

God makes the person before He makes the sermon. The preparation of the preacher takes far longer than the preparation of the sermon. Look at the four stages in Peter's preparation preceding the sermon that launched the Church.

1. *"Then Peter stood up..."*<sup>1</sup> He had not always done so, neither have you.

In the Gospels we find Peter in all sorts of predicaments: sinking (Matthew 14:30), second-guessing (Mark 8:32), sleeping (Mark 14:37), slashing out (John 18:10), slinking away (Mark 14:50) and swearing (Mark 14:71). Would he ever become the "rock"

Christ called him to be? (Matthew 16:18).

As He did with Peter, Jesus is at work pulling us to stand up. Before God makes the message, He makes the man or woman.

Peter's comeback is kin to the story from the 1929 Rose Bowl when Roy Riegels snatched up a fumbled ball in the first half, wheeled about, and ran 75 yards for his own goal line. His teammate finally tackled him 1 foot short of the opposite goal. Riegels was too crestfallen for words.

What strikes me about the story is not the long wrong-way run, but Riegels' coach started Roy Riegels in the second half. It is reported that Riegels sat in a corner of the locker room, put his face in his hands, and cried like a baby. Coach Price came over to him, put his hands on Riegels' shoulders, and said, "Roy, get up and go on back. The game is only half over."

How often the failure of Peter and Riegels describes us. We take the ball and run in the wrong direction. We stumble and fall and are so ashamed of ourselves that we never want to try again. But God comes to us, bends over us, and in the person of Jesus says, "Get up. Go on back. The game is only half over."

That is the gospel of God's grace. He uses unworthy people.

Behind every sermon is the life of the preacher. Our messages are fashioned out of the matrix of our own life in Christ. There is no Pentecostal pulpit unless there is first a Pentecostal person to fill it. Our sermons will never be more full of the Spirit than our lives. And we will never stand up unless Jesus pulls us up, unless we also tarry and receive the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Peter does not stand up to preach out of an empty relationship with God. He's emerged from 40 thrilling days of meeting the Risen Jesus, 10 days of praying, and a few hours of being overwhelmed in the Spirit. Would that all of us would stand up to preach fresh from such encounters with the living God!

2. *"with the Eleven..."* Why not stand up by himself? Because the content of his sermon did not contain doctrine unique to himself. All the apostles could have preached the same sermon.

In our quest for individualism and distinctive styles, we preachers may neglect the basic themes of the Christian faith and go off on personal revelation side trails.

A well-intentioned fellow pastor once

asked me, "What's the Lord been saying to you lately?"

I answered mischievously, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.... Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37,39).

Now there's nothing wrong with a desire to be fresh in our preaching or to have a distinctive personal style. Let's just make sure that we keep our content based on the main things and the plain things of Scripture (cf. 2 Peter 1:20,21).

3. *"raised his voice..."* Pentecostal preachers do that!

For Peter, it was a practical matter that required him to speak loudly to be heard by a crowd of thousands. But the raising of the preacher's voice also represents passion.

Pentecostal preachers need to be careful, however, not to confuse tone of voice with anointing. Early Assemblies of God minister Burt McCafferty understood this when he gave "A Few Hints to Preachers" in 1917:

"Do not get excited too soon.... Do not bawl and scream. Too much water stops mill wheels, and too much noise drowns sense. If you have lightning, you can afford to thunder; but do not try to thunder out of an empty cloud."<sup>2</sup>

Great advice for 1917 or 1998!

4. *"and addressed the crowd."* Peter connected with his audience.

The audience was concerned about the behavior of the 120. So Peter began with what they were interested in, continued with what they needed to know and do, and ended with a decisive call for commitment. Pentecostal preaching is not about sermons; it's about communicating God's Word to people in order to inform and change them.

How about you? Do the children and youth in your congregation love to hear you preach? Are you using language and stories that reach them while touching the adults as well? It's so vital that we desire to preach to our audience rather than simply getting a sermon ready and delivering it (cf. Acts 10:33; Romans 1:11).

## PROCLAMATION—ACTS 2:14-35

Francis of Assisi said, "Preach Jesus at all times, and whenever necessary use words."

How we live provides credibility to what we preach. But example alone is not sufficient to communicate clearly all God's truth. On the Day of Pentecost the apostles brimmed with the experience of the fullness of the Spirit, but the impact on others came as a result of Peter's sermon. Here's what we learn from him in regard to Pentecostal proclamation.

**Pentecostal proclamation flows out from our own experience with Christ.**

As the first Pentecostal preacher, Peter began with the experience of the 120: "These men are not drunk as you suppose" (verse 15).

Pentecostals have often been accused of basing theology and preaching on their own experience. That's not a completely bad indictment. Better to have an experience with God than to lack one. The late English Methodist preacher and author

*Let's just make sure that we keep our content based on the main things and the plain things of Scripture.*

W.E. Sangster once delivered a sermon entitled "Drunk and Mad" based on Acts 2:15; 26:25. Sangster said:

"Consider the record of history. Whenever this fount of living water breaks fresh from the rock, it bestows this glad exuberance. The first Christians were accused of being drunk. The first Franciscans had to be reprov'd for laughing in church because they were so happy.... The first Methodists stole some of their hymn tunes from operas and set the songs of Zion to dance music. The first Salvationists jumped with joy....

"It is so easy to hear these stories and feel rather superior. It is not a bit hard to purse the lips and think, if not to say, that exuberance and devotion cannot belong together. They can. Church history is witness. It is when the fires in the individual heart, or in the denomination, are dying down that convention frowns on exuberance, and an air of superiority is affected towards those who cannot restrain the primitive joy."

Let's come to the pulpit fresh from an experience with God!

The Church promises joy, peace, love, but is this what people find? Author Jess Moody noted that it's not the slogans we use nor the name on the church door that sells; it's the product which determines peoples' response.<sup>3</sup> It's not the name Pentecost that makes the Pentecostal or the Pentecostal sermon; it's the reality in the experience that lies behind the name.

**Pentecostal proclamation has a sense that this is God's hour and that God's day is coming.**

Peter explained Spirit baptism from the Word, quoting Joel extensively to establish urgency in all Pentecostal preaching: time is short because the Day of the Lord is coming, and this is the hour of the Holy Spirit's visitation.

Peter preached, as did Joel, truths beyond his own ability to apprehend. He could not have realized that the last days have now stretched onward 20 centuries. We know now that the Pentecostal outpouring was the a.m. of the last days, and the "sun to darkness and the moon to blood" is the p.m. (cf. Acts 2:20). But do we feel the same urgency as did Peter: "God is pouring out His Spirit upon us right now, and He's about to wrap things up!"

In the present moment, sons and daughters are prophesying; young men are seeing visions; and old men are dreaming dreams. A Pentecostal church will never be speechless, visionless, or dreamless.

These are the last days; they are the only days we have. We always live at the end of time. As preachers, do we have a sense that it's business as usual or that this is God's hour? Pentecostal preachers must get into the heart of the matter that this is the hour of God's visitation in their lives, their homes, their churches, their towns.

**Pentecostal proclamation is founded upon God's written Word.**

Peter's sermon is full of Scripture. He explained Pentecost from Joel 2:28-32. He quoted Psalms 16:8-11; 110:1; 132:11 to establish how God fulfilled His promises in raising Jesus from the dead.

No sermon should be preached that is not full of the Bible. When our preaching is

powerless and pointless, it's because we're not immersed and impregnated by the inspired Word itself.

In a recent large charismatic meeting, the speaker repeatedly told the audience not to question but to accept. Such an approach is not Pentecostal. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter appealed to Scripture to validate the experience of the 120, then again to Scripture to validate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If we cannot accept Jesus' work without finding it based on the written Word, how much more should we not accept anything that is not written? The Lord himself resisted the evil one by saying, "It is written."

The Azusa Street revival unabashedly proclaimed that the sure plumb line of truth was God's revealed and written Word. Elder Seymour stated: "We are measuring everything by the Word; every experience must measure up with the Bible."<sup>4</sup>

I want to also caution that we must be careful in this hour that we are not worship rich and Word poor. Pentecostal worship is wonderful, but the Holy Spirit never intended it to displace the proclamation of the Word. Preach the Word!

#### **Pentecostal proclamation is centered on Jesus.**

Jesus is the heart of Peter's Pentecost sermon. The bulk of his sermon focused on the Living Word (Acts 2:22-35).

*Jesus' life and death (verses 22,23).* Peter was unafraid to confront: "You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."

If the gospel is going to be truly preached, it must be preached with truth. We have to risk offending someone. The Holy Spirit is out to reverse the unjust verdict against Jesus.

But confrontation must be tempered by the grace of God: "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge." The Cross belongs to the eternal plan of God. It was not an emergency measure flung out by God when everything else failed. He did not intervene in the Crucifixion, nor prevent the Cross. He wondrously reversed the unjust verdict of men. The Cross is part of the very life of God. My sin required the death of Jesus. I cannot

come before a holy God on my own merit.

This message flies in the face of contemporary culture. It is not politically correct. All roads do not lead to God. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

*Jesus' resurrection from the dead (verses 24-32).* Based on the historical fact of the Resurrection, Jesus is someone we meet, know, and experience. He is not a figure in a book who lived and died. The last thing you read about any mortal is, "He died." Not so with Jesus. He died and now lives!

When the disciples preached the centrality of the Resurrection, they argued from experience and validated that experience by Scripture. After the Cross they were broken and bewildered, dreams gone and lives shattered. "We had hoped" said the Emmaus two (Luke 24:21). The Cross had slain their hope but not their love. The Resurrection changed everything.

Pentecostal preachers want to shout, and the shout has content! Don't you want to shout? He's risen! He's alive!

*Jesus' exaltation (verses 33-35).* Peter tied Jesus' ministry in heaven with what is now happening on earth. He is the One

responsible for what is going on in His church. He is the One pouring out the promised Spirit that He received from His Father.

This pouring out was not a one-time downpour. The literal text of Acts 2:1 says, "And in the filling up of the day of Pentecost." Pentecost, as a day, refers to the entire period of time from the birth of the Church until the Second Coming. The *Day of Pentecost* is, therefore, a synonym for *the last days*. The Day of Pentecost is *still filling up* because the Spirit in the last days is *still being poured out*.

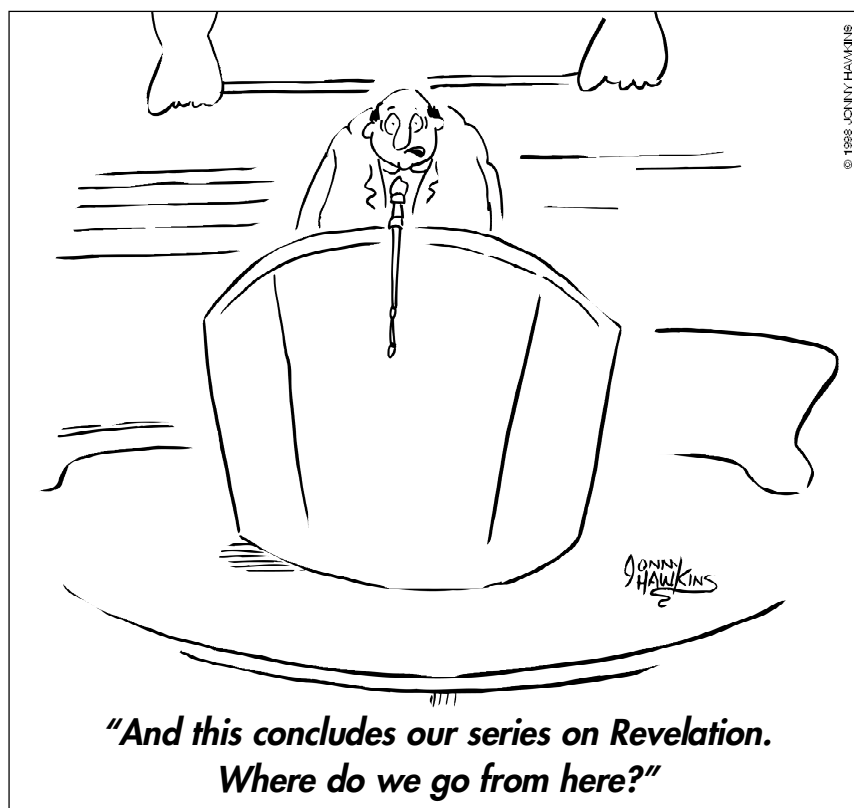
And while the Spirit is being poured out on earth, the Lord Jesus has taken His seat in heaven, waiting for the last enemy to be put under His feet.

Let's preach these great truths about Jesus.

#### **PROVOCATION—ACTS 2:36-41**

*Provocation* means to call forth, to arouse a feeling or an action. The Pentecostal pulpit searches for a response. That's why we have altar calls.

Preaching can warm the heart and inform the mind, but it must appeal to the will or it falls short of its purpose. It's





never enough to only sway emotion or satisfy intellectual curiosity.

Peter drew his sermon to a close with: "Therefore [every sermon should be blessed by having a therefore] let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (verse 36). Peter passed from explanation to application.

Preaching that presents the lordship of Jesus Christ produces conviction. Numerous times through Acts, the reaction to apostolic preaching was to cry out. Have we lost that response to our preaching? Have we succumbed to a cold and numbing spirit of boredom, decorum, tedium, and lifelessness?

A sermon that generates applause is a sermon that has convicted no one. Applause says, "I already agree with you"; rather than, "I need to change, to repent." The crowd at the first Pentecostal sermon did not applaud the preacher, for they were concerned about themselves. They were not pleased; they were pierced. They were not gratified; they were convicted: "When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' " (verse 37).

Pentecostal experience may draw a crowd—a crowd who will be amazed, perplexed, or mocking (cf. verses 12,13)—but Pentecostal preaching makes people cry out to be saved, to be changed.

Pentecostal preaching, in the unction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, "cuts to the heart." This phrase is used in the New Testament only in verse 37. It is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament passage of Genesis 34:7 when the sons of Jacob discovered their sister Dinah had been raped by Shechem: "They were cut to the heart." Literally the word means *to give a sharp pain associated with anxiety or remorse*.

Peter the preacher must have had something to do with the effect. He had just received the Holy Spirit. An inspired doctrine demands an inspired ministry.

The Pentecostal pulpit has a clear answer for what people should do when they are cut to the heart:

- "*Repent.*" Take responsibility. Quit the blame game. Change your mind.

- "*Be baptized in the name of Jesus.*" The forgiveness of sins comes with inner and outer obedience, a readiness to publicly identify with the Lord.

- "*You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" Why? Because God promised. He doesn't intend believers who weren't in the original 120 to be second-class citizens.

The first Pentecostal sermon contained an extended altar call: "With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation' " (verse

### ***Our messages are fashioned out of the matrix of our own life in Christ.***

40). The King James Version more accurately says "crooked generation." The Greek word for crooked is *skolias* meaning *to be out of the right path or bent*. When a generation is being branded as crooked, it does not mean that everything in it is crooked or that every person is a crook. What it means is that the direction of the generation is crooked, and as a whole it is moving toward death and not life. Its morals, ethics, and beliefs do not line up straight with God's ways (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9,10).

A modern congregation would expect to hear: "Save this crooked generation." But the apostolic appeal is: "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." Picture a house on fire and someone desperately looking out the second-floor window for rescue. The house is too far gone. It cannot be saved. Don't waste time trying to save the house. Tell the person to get out, jump into the safety of Christ, and let the old life go.

The Church should be encouraged to be salt and light on society, but we should spend our primary energy getting people out of the burning house.

The altar call was one in which Peter "warned and pleaded." We may have a mental picture of 3,000 people immediately stepping forward; rather, we should see people as coming in waves. Some began, others started coming, then others, and finally, when the altar call was

finished many minutes later, 3,000 had responded.


There's no telling the long-range implications of one Spirit-filled sermon. Did the church at Rome owe its very origin to this altar call? (note the "visitors from Rome," verse 10). How can you ever gauge the impact for time and eternity of just one Spirit-anointed sermon?

## **CONCLUSION**

What shall we say then about the Pentecostal pulpit of the 21st century? There will be no Pentecostal pulpit in the 21st century without the same preparation, proclamation, and provocation that marked the pulpit of the first century.

There will be no Pentecostal pulpit:

- if there is no Pentecost,
- if there is not a Pentecostal person in the pulpit,
- unless its message is based on God's written Word,
- unless its message is centered on Jesus as Lord and Christ,
- unless opportunity is given for people to respond to the message preached.

But if Jesus tarries, there is going to be a Pentecostal pulpit in the 21st century. We know that because He has promised, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17, KJV). The choice is ours as to whether we want our own flesh included in that fulfillment. 

## **ENDNOTES**

1. Except where noted, Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.
2. Burt McCafferty, "A Few Hints to Preachers," *The Weekly Evangel*, 27 January 1917 (predecessor to the *Pentecostal Evangel*).
3. Jess Moody, *A Drink at Joel's Place* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1967), 22.
4. Taken from the September 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*.

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BAPTISM OF THE

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HOLY GHOST AND FIRE!

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THE REVIVAL LEGACY OF

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MINNIE F. ABRAMS OF INDIA

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Rushing to the quarters of Minnie F. Abrams at 3:30 a.m. on June 29, 1905, the matron of a girls' dormitory at the Mukti Mission in India told her that one of the girls had suddenly awakened "with the fire coming down upon her."<sup>1</sup> Having prayed before going to sleep that she might receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost, the girl now screamed with fright as the others watched the flames. The matron related how she "saw the fire, and ran across the room for a pail of water, and was about to pour it on her when I discovered that she was not on fire." Becoming one of the most celebrated events of the great revival in India (1905–1907), this "case of the 'burning bush' " prompted confessions of sins and repentance.

Though few evangelicals and Pentecostals would recognize her name today, Christians in India and America hailed Minnie Abrams as a leader in revival and evangelism.

Born in Wisconsin in 1859, Abrams grew up in Mapleton, Minnesota. Desiring to become a teacher, she graduated from Mankato Normal School and then studied for 2 years at the University of Minnesota. Inspired by the life of Fidelia Fiske, an early 19th-century missionary educator, she committed her life to foreign missions.

In pursuit of her calling, Minnie moved to Illinois in 1885 to enroll in the first class of the Chicago Training School for City, Home, and Foreign Missions. Lucy Rider Meyer, a leading figure in the new Methodist deaconess movement, had founded the school to offer theological and practical training for young women.

### PREPARATION FOR MISSION

While there, Minnie realized her need to live the "faith life" exemplified by J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, and others who trusted in God alone for their provisions. Living on half of her meager income in Chicago, she gave the rest to "help India." After graduation, the Minneapolis Branch of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society commissioned her as a Methodist "deaconess-missionary." She left for India in October 1887.

Arriving in Bombay, she immediately began working at a boarding school designed to provide religious instruction for the daughters of church members. Her hope was to eventually "labor among their heathen friends." For Minnie and many other women missionaries, ministry in a foreign land centered on educational and charitable ministries.

Before long the protective walls around the compound seemed confining. Etched in her memory was her ride through the streets shortly after her ship reached port. On her way to the school, she saw masses of people living in heartbreaking conditions. Under the cover of night, she also made her way to opium dens and witnessed the emaciated bodies of people



Staff members at Mukti Mission

of all ages enslaved by their addictions.

"Oh, how my heart cried out," she recounted, "and how I longed to be able to bring the message of life to these people in all their darkness.... Oh, how it stirred me on to learn the language in order that I might give out the message of life to at least as many as my voice would reach."

For the next 2 years Minnie tried to find time to learn the Marathi language while working as director of three schools. Leisure time hardly existed since, in addition to being house-mother, teacher, physician, seamstress, and financial manager, she provided spiritual guidance for the children.

Minnie could not rest until she gained permission to engage in direct evangelism. Despite the presence of missionaries among the millions in Bombay, she knew "they couldn't reach

**Shortly after revival began at Mukti in 1905, Minnie Abrams began taking "praying bands" of young women with her to hold services at missions stations.**



the thousandth part of the people with the sound of the gospel.” After 10 years of waiting, mission officials gave her permission to become a full-time evangelist. And when her colleague Florence Sterling married, Minnie continued preaching, accompanied only by native workers.



*Pandita Ramabai*

***Ramabai, a high caste Brahmin, had converted to Christianity in 1883.***

In 1898, the famous Indian Christian Pandita Ramabai invited Abrams to assist her in administering the Mukti (Salvation) Mission at Kedgaon, about 100 miles southeast of Bombay. Ramabai, a high caste Brahmin, had converted to Christianity in 1883. Having already established a school, she added a home for child-widows and developed a ministry to famine victims. Minnie flourished in this new environment since it afforded her the opportunity to train young women for ministry.

## EVANGELISM IN THE LAST DAYS

**T**he burden to evangelize the world weighed heavily on the minds of Ramabai, Abrams, and other radical evangelicals whose clocks ticked ever closer to the midnight hour when Christ would return. Given the immensity of the mission task in India, the saints at the 1898 Keswick Convention in England responded to the personal appeal of Ramabai and earnestly prayed that God would raise up 200,000 Indian evangelists “to go up and down the land proclaiming the gospel of Christ.” Indeed, many ardently prayed for a spiritual harvest on India’s “stony ground.” Mukti would play a pivotal role in preparing laborers for the harvest.

Before the end of the 19th century, the popularity of Wesleyan-holiness and Keswickian (Higher Life) teachings had promoted widespread interest in the baptism and gifts of the Spirit. In conferences for Indian college and university students in the mid-1890s, Robert P. Wilder, a Presbyterian and traveling secretary of the Indian YMCA, accentuated the Higher Life view of Spirit baptism. He challenged his hearers to seek for “power from on high” (Luke 24:49), the kind that provides “divine enablement for ministry distinctive from...regeneration.”

Ramabai and Abrams joined with others in praying for the restoration of apostolic power. Minnie pleaded, “Oh God, in this coming revival I am a candidate for service. Whatever You need done, get me ready, please, to do it, and I will conform to all that You want me to do.”

Hearing that R.A. Torrey and Charles Alexander had held crusades in Australia in 1903 and revival followed, Ramabai decided to send her daughter, Manoramabai, and Minnie to investigate. Arriving just as Torrey was leaving, they inquired about the causes of the revival—“finally we got to the bottom of it.” The community of missionaries and believers at Mukti eagerly heard their reports which intensified their prayers for the promised end-times outpouring of the Spirit.

## NEWS FROM WALES

When word of the Welsh revival (1904–1905) with its unusual spiritual phenomena and remarkable number of conversions reached India, revival began among tribal peoples in

PHOTO: FLOWER PENTECOSTAL HERITAGE CENTER



*Indian women evangelists*

the Khassia Hills in March 1905. At stations staffed by Welsh Presbyterian missionaries, believers began confessing their sins in “prayer-storms”—hours spent in fervent and loud prayer that pushed aside the traditional order of worship. The “fire” fell in June at the Mukti Mission in South India.

**M**ission publications soon carried stories of unusual happenings across the subcontinent, including those of believers feeling the “burning” sensation of the “baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.” Revival encompassed a wide spectrum of Christians, from Anglicans, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians, to members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, London Missionary Society, and the Young Men’s and Women’s Christian Associations.

Along with confessions of sin and prayer storms, other uncommon events captured attention: visions of Jesus, angelic visitations, dreams, reception of the “burning”

work of the Spirit (sometimes visible “tongues of fire”), writhing on the ground “unable to bear the burden of their sins,” shaking, and dancing before the Lord to the playing of musical instruments. To these were added laughter, miraculous provisions of food, and young people prophesying.

Bewildered, missionaries sometimes reprimanded believers for “emotional excesses,” only to see revival abruptly end at their mission stations. Others, however, moved beyond their ethnocentrism and were sympathetic to the cross-cultural differences in the makeup and worldview of Indian believers.

J.E. Robinson, a Methodist bishop, relating the events of a district conference in the fall of 1905 said: “So powerful was the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit that it would not have surprised me had I seen tongues of fire descend upon the disciples present, or had I heard them ‘speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.’ ” Within 6 months stories of believers speaking in tongues began to circulate before they learned that a Pentecostal movement had also

***God used [Minnie] to train hundreds of Indian women evangelists.***



**Minnie penned the first edition of her influential *Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire* to encourage believers to seek for the postconversionary experience of Spirit baptism for purity of life and power to evangelize.**



*Minnie Abrams (right) with Jivubai, an Indian woman.*

begun in the United States.

Shortly after revival began at Mukti in 1905, Minnie Abrams began taking “praying bands” of young women with her to hold services at mission stations. News of her activities appeared in two major Christian newspapers in India, the *Bombay Guardian* and the *Christian Patriot*. The Methodist periodical *The Indian Witness* also tracked her ministry. In the spring of 1906, Minnie penned the first edition of her influential *Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire* to encourage believers to seek for the postconversionary experience of Spirit baptism for purity of life and power to evangelize.

#### **VIEW FROM AMERICA**

The Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California, that began in 1906 and triggered many subsequent revivals around the world

is now considered the foremost revival of the century in terms of global impact. In looking back at the events that led up to it, eyewitness Frank Bartleman announced that the “revival was rocked in the cradle of little Wales...‘brought up’ in India” and then became “full grown” at Azusa Street.

To the Pentecostal saints in America, news of speaking in tongues and the manifestations of the Spirit’s gifts in India confirmed that what the Old Testament prophet Joel had foretold about the end-times outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28,29) was being fulfilled simultaneously in other parts of the world. Indeed, if the predicted cloud-burst was drenching America, they were heartened in knowing that the rain was falling on the other side of the world as well.

#### **SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

While Pentecostal phenomena (e.g., visions, prophecy) had been present from the early months of the revival, occurrences of speaking in tongues came later. Incidents were reported 2 and 3 months subsequent to a conference at an Anglican mission station in Aurangabad where Abrams had been the featured

speaker. One participant returned home to the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission orphanage at Manmad and gave his testimony. This led to a revival beginning there in June with one or two girls speaking in tongues.

**T**he best known episode, however, took place in early July after several girls returned from Aurangabad to an Anglican boarding school in Bombay. Their accounts stirred the other students to prayer and confession of sins. Three or four spoke in tongues. One of them, a 9-year-old named Sarah, prayed in tongues, “pleading with God for [the conversion of] Libya.”

Undoubtedly this event (and probably others) pressed Maud Wiest to editorialize in the September 1906 issue of the *India Alliance*



(Christian and Missionary Alliance): “Some of the gifts which have been scarcely heard of in the church for many centuries are now being given by the Holy Ghost to simple, unlearned members of the body of Christ, and communities are being stirred and transformed by the wonderful grace of God. Healings, the gift of tongues, visions and dreams, discernment of spirits, the power to prophesy and to pray the prayer of faith, all have a place in the present revival.”

Some have credited the Calcutta revival in January 1907 led by A.G. Garr, newly arrived from Azusa Street, as the “first general outpouring of the Spirit” in India. Nevertheless, speaking in tongues had already commenced in Manmad in the preceding June, Bombay in July, and at Mukti in December. After reading about the Los Angeles revival in the pages of the *Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), Ramabai and Abrams acknowledged that “the deeper fullness of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost accompanied by the gift of tongues...had not yet been received” at Mukti and encouraged believers to “tarry” anew (Luke 24:49).

Xenolalia (i.e., known tongues [languages] recognized by hearers) reportedly followed with some speaking for the first time in English, Kanarese, and Sanscrit. Glossolalia (“unknown” tongues) could also be heard. Several girls reported receiving the gift of interpretation and others that of healing.

Commenting on tongues 9 months later, Ramabai said they “were given for a sign for unbelievers among us, that they may see and hear of God’s wonderful works and repent of their hardness of heart.” Consequently, “the girls who have received...are not using them for delivering Scripture messages, except those who have received the gift of interpretation. They pray and praise God, and sometimes sing hymns unknown, and sometimes in known tongues.”

For preaching, some exercised the gift of prophecy (preaching in one’s own language) “so that they could give God’s messages in very clear language, taught by the Holy Spirit. The believers and unbelievers were moved alike by these messages, and a deep spiritual work began in our midst.” This explains why the second edition of Minnie’s *Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire*, which refers to the restoration of tongues, makes no

reference to their use for preaching. Instead, if spoken publicly, their value depended on someone present who either knew the language or had the gift of interpretation.

Given the international reputation of Ramabai and the respect accorded to Abrams, some observers accepted the phenomena at Mukti as genuine or politely restrained their comments. Others, however, sharply protested what appeared to be emotional excesses. In this respect they faced the same criticisms endured by American Pentecostals.

In response Ramabai lamented, “It is sad beyond all expression that God’s children, who have been praying for years for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit,...should now, when God is beginning to answer their prayer, be so hasty in judging and picking their fellow Christians to pieces.”

## THE “PHILLIPUS” CLASS

Leaving India in 1908 with Manoramabai for a promotional tour in the United States, Abrams preached at many important centers of Pentecostal activity including Carrie Judd Montgomery’s Home of Peace in Oakland, California, Upper Room Mission in Los Angeles, Stone Church in Chicago, the regional camp meeting at Homestead, Pennsylvania, and the headquarters of the Christian Workers Union in Massachusetts.

On her visits around the country, Minnie recruited six single women to accompany her back for frontline evangelism among unreached peoples in North India. Once again, she wanted to move beyond the constraint of institutional responsibilities and go to the “regions beyond” (2 Corinthians 10:16). Like other holiness and Pentecostal women ministers, she believed that the “promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4) gave them equal opportunity with men in preaching and evangelism. While visiting St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1910 before returning to India, she attended the national Laymen’s Missionary Convention where she was disappointed to hear that “the evangelization of the world was a man’s job.” Notwithstanding, Minnie knew that the immensity of the global task of evangelism required women as well as men.

*“Oh, how my heart  
cried out, and how I  
longed to be able to  
bring the message of  
life to these people in  
all their darkness.”*

*— Minnie Abrams*

**R**ecalling her move to the Mukti Mission, she said that the Lord “wanted me to have a little part in answering my own prayers in preparing some of these native women to go out and evangelize their own people. Then the great outpouring of the Spirit came upon us, and today we have 400 Spirit-filled young women, and they are saying, ‘Here I am; send me,’ and the Lord has opened their lips and He has filled their mouths with a testimony that cannot be gainsaid, and that testimony is backed by a daily self-crucified life.”

Minnie returned to India with her new associates—“all baptized in the Spirit” and committed to evangelism: Edith Baugh, Blanche Cunningham, Lillian Doll, Minnie Houck, “Miss Bristol,” and “Miss Dempster.” Ramabai called them the “Phillipus Class” because “like the daughters of Philip, they are to be evangelists” (Acts

missionary society. (Several members eventually joined or worked with the Assemblies of God.)

With North India especially resistant to the gospel message, intense opposition faced them. Added to this were the difficulties of travel, the heat, and other trying circumstances. The toll soon became evident on Abrams who eventually became ill with blackwater fever. Before leaving the States, she had a premonition that in 2 years her labors would be ended. Minnie died on

December 2, 1912, 2 years to the day she had disembarked in Bombay on her return trip.

### **ONE LITTLE WOMAN**

Reflecting back on her ministry, Minnie said, “I was only one little woman.” Yet God used her to train hundreds of Indian women evangelists who, in turn, contributed to the proclamation of the gospel in that vast country. She recognized that God never intended revival to be an end in itself.

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21:9). While two remained at Mukti, the others traveled north to the city of Uska Bazar near the border of Nepal. Other women from the United States, including Bernice Lee and Jennie Kirkland, joined them later. Minnie organized the endeavor as the Bezaleel Evangelistic Mission (Exodus 31:2,3), the only known Pentecostal women's

Without its energies being invested in evangelism, the Great Commission would not be achieved. In line with this concern, her last book *Prayer Warfare* may have been the first Pentecostal exposition on intercessory prayer for the evangelization of the world in “signs and wonders.”

Minnie’s influence extended to South America when she sent a copy of *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire* to Willis and May Hoover, Methodist missionaries in Valparaiso, Chile. (May had

been a schoolmate with Minnie at the Chicago Training School.) Minnie’s account of the revival, striking claims about the baptism of fire, and report of miracles added to the tinder that sparked “Pentecostal Methodism” in that country.

This “one little woman” became a pioneer missionary evangelist by refusing to accept the status quo—the “men are preachers\women are teachers” mentality. Following her death a leading Protestant mission

periodical paid tribute to “Minnie F. Abrams of India” as “a woman of unusual ability and force of character. When she realized a course of action to be right she followed it without questioning; she was also a woman of faith, and it was this rather than her strength of character and will, which enabled her to accomplish [her] work.” Decades would pass before other Pentecostal missionaries would be so eulogized in the Protestant missionary movement. **E**

#### ENDNOTE

1. Quoted material throughout the article was taken from primary sources. For more information on Minnie Abrams, see the Recommended Reading list.

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#### RECOMMENDED READING

##### By Minnie F. Abrams:

*The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire*, 2nd ed. Kedgaon, India: Mukti Mission Press, 1906.

“How the Recent Revival Was Brought About in India,” *Latter Rain Evangel*, July 1909, 6–13.

##### About Minnie F. Abrams:

Helen S. Dyer. *Pandita Ramabai: Her Vision, Her Mission and Triumph of Faith*, 2nd ed. London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.

Effie G. Lindsay. *Missionaries of the Minneapolis Branch of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church*. Minneapolis: By the Author, 1904.

“Minnie F. Abrams of India,” *Missionary Review of the World* 26 (February 1913): 156.

Dana L. Robert. *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996.





# Awesome

BY WILLIAM D.  
BJORAKER

**The fear of the Lord is  
the quintessence of  
biblical religion.**

*Nor'a* (pronounced *no-rah*) is the transliteration of the Hebrew word which means *awesome*. It has become popular in modern slang and vernacular, both in Israel and the U.S. We exclaim that the mountains, a concert, or new clothes are awesome. Israelis use *nor'a* more to mean terrible or awful as in a terrible (bad) day (*yom nor'a*). This is a trivialization of the biblical phenomenon of awe.

The Hebrew noun *yir'ah* derived from the root *yr'* means fear, awe, dread, terror. The compounded phrase *yir'at 'elohim*, the fear of God, or *yir'at 'adonai*, the fear of the Lord, is used over 130 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is used 14 times in Proverbs alone. The *fear of the Lord* is the quintessence of biblical religion. God is the most *awesome* being or reality in the universe. Scripture variously describes the response of those who truly encounter Him as one of awe, fright, terror, dread, and trembling.

How unfortunate that the traditional evangelical rendering of the concept of *fear of God* is a mere *reverence* for God. This fails to convey the meaning of the Hebrew. King David said, "My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments" (Psalm 119:120, NRSV). Jesus said, "Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell" (Luke 12:5, NIV).

**Just as fire has both saving and  
destructive power, so God, who "is a  
consuming fire," will ultimately save  
or destroy people depending on their  
relationship to Him.**

The same word is used for being afraid of danger or something deadly (a destructive fear) and the fear of God (a wholesome fear). When Uzzah, who steadied the ark, and Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, it is recorded that the people were afraid and

awestruck (Acts 5:5).

What is the difference between destructive fear and the fear of God? The difference is not found in the words but in the object of the fear and one's relationship to that object. Just as fire has both saving and destructive power, so God, who "is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29), will ultimately save or destroy people depending on their relationship to Him. What you fear most is your God because what you fear, you give power or control over you.

When the people of Israel were at the foot of Mt. Sinai, they saw the thunder, lightning, and smoke on the mountain and were terrified (Exodus 20:18–20, NIV). They said to Moses, "Do not have God speak to us or we will die" (verse 19). Moses said, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning" (verse 20). Destructive fear is fearing the thunder rather than the One who made the thunder.

Does this seem unbalanced? What about the love of God? "The Lord confides in [is intimate with] those who fear Him" (Psalm 25:14, NIV). Later, when Israel feared *Yahweh's* power at the Red Sea, they put their trust in Him (Exodus 14:31). It is precisely this faith response—the fear of God—that brings humans into a relationship with Him; a relationship in which we also experience His love and compassion as our Father, revealed in Jesus.

The heart that both fears and loves God is united in a single faith response to Him: "Unite my heart to fear Your name" (Psalm 86:11, NKJV). Both fear and love are rooted in trust—faith in His threats, causing one to fear and faith in His promises, causing one to love. Israel was commanded: "And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God...to love him...with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12, NIV). As John Newton put it in his song "Amazing Grace": "Twas grace

that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.”

The message of Proverbs is that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (9:10). In the Greek tradition, the intellect is the path to the good life. In the Hebrew tradition, wisdom is never merely factual information; it is the ability to see life from God’s point of view, which results in character formation. It is fundamentally moral and motivates to righteous living: “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (8:13). It is an awe that leads to action. It is to be fleshed out in daily practical living and interpersonal relationships. Wisdom’s domain is the whole of life.

***The awareness that God watches  
all and will bring every thought,  
word, and deed into judgment and  
expose every secret is the fear of  
God. Now, that’s awesome!***

Joel spoke of “the great and awesome day of the Lord” (*yom Yahweh haggadol vehannor’a*, Joel 2:31, NKJV). The awareness that God watches all and will bring every thought,

word, and deed into judgment and expose every secret is the fear of God. Now, that’s awesome!

Says Koheleth: “The conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Says the Talmud: “All is in the hands of heaven but the fear of heaven.”

That’s awesome! 

*This word study is adapted from Hebrew Nuggets, a series of Hebrew word studies by William D. Bjoraker.*

*William D. Bjoraker is an Assemblies of God home missionary to the Israeli Jewish emigres of greater Los Angeles, Operation Ezekiel.*

***The heart that both  
fears and loves God is  
united in a single faith  
response to Him.***



# Filled with the Spirit

## PART 1: Hermeneutics, Old Testament Promises, and Alternate Terminology

BY ANTHONY D.  
PALMA

*It is legitimate to make an inductive study of the Acts incidents to determine the cumulative theological lesson(s) of those narratives.*

This series of essays will explore aspects of Pentecostal teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It will deal with the two related issues of the experience as subsequent to salvation and its accompaniment by speaking in tongues. Part 1 covers basic hermeneutical considerations, the Old Testament promise of the Spirit, and alternate terminology for Spirit baptism.<sup>1</sup>

### HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hermeneutical matters must be given serious attention as they relate to the doctrine of Spirit baptism, for two reasons: (1) The burgeoning Pentecostal/charismatic/third wave movement is not unified in its understanding of Spirit baptism. (2) Serious challenges from three sources have been directed at the doctrine from a hermeneutical standpoint: (a) cessationists, who argue for the discontinuation of extraordinary gifts after the first century; (b) noncessationists (continuationists) who are not part of the movement, who allow for the continuation of extraordinary gifts, but who reject the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism; (c) some exegetes within the movement who question the hermeneutical validity of the doctrine.

The following presuppositions and key hermeneutical points have guided the writing of this series. They are given briefly to provide a background and framework for understanding the remainder of the series.<sup>2</sup> The points are not necessarily listed in order of importance or in a strictly logical order. There is some overlapping and shading of one into another.

1. *All Scripture is divinely inspired.* The Holy Spirit, the divine Author, will not contradict himself in Scripture. Therefore, one biblical writing or writer will not contradict another.

2. *A proper understanding of the discipline*

*of biblical theology must control the exegesis of Scripture.* The definition of biblical theology may vary, but its essence is that teachings must emerge from the biblical text and not be read into it.

3. *A specific biblical writer must be understood on his own terms.* A Pauline grid must not be superimposed on Luke, nor Luke's on Paul. Since the Bible is not a work on dogmatic or systematic theology, different biblical writers may sometimes use similar terminology but with varying meanings. Illustration: *Receiving the Spirit* may have different nuances in Luke, Paul, John. What does each one mean by his use of the term?

4. *Different biblical writers often have different emphases.* John's Gospel, for example, highlights the deity of Christ; Paul emphasizes justification by faith; Luke (both his Gospel and the Book of Acts) concentrates on the dynamic aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry. Since Luke focuses on this aspect of the Spirit's work, it is important to understand what *he* says about the matter.

5. *After a biblical writer is first understood in his own right, then his teachings should be related to those of other writers and the whole of Scripture.*

6. *Complementariness, not competition or contradiction, usually characterizes seemingly irreconcilable differences.* What is the perspective of the particular writer? For example, does James really contradict Paul on the relationship between faith and works? Or are his statements guided by his reason for writing on the matter and so need to be interpreted in that light? Do Paul and Luke really contradict each other on the Spirit's ministry?

7. *Luke's writings belong to the literary genre of history.* But the Book of Acts is more than a history of the Early Church. Recent scholarship, especially, credits Luke with being



a theologian in his own right, as well as a historian. He uses history as the medium for presenting his theology.

8. *Within the framework of the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture, the discipline called redaction criticism has gained wide acceptance in recent years.* Its basic premise is that the biblical writer is an editor, and his writing presents his theology. He may take the material he has at hand and shape it in a way that will present predetermined, theological agenda. In its basic form, redaction criticism is a legitimate and necessary enterprise. But in its more radical form, it allows for the author to *alter* facts and even to *create* a story and present it as factual, in order to advance his theological purposes. To illustrate how this might function: Paul could not have asked the Ephesian men, “Having believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?” (Acts 19:2; translation mine), because he teaches in his letters that the person who believes receives the Spirit at that time. Luke, therefore, either created the incident or else altered Paul’s actual words, in order for the narrative to reflect his (Luke’s) understanding of the Spirit’s work. This radical form of redaction criticism is unacceptable to those who hold a high view of the divine inspiration of Scripture. The superintending Holy Spirit would not permit a biblical writer to present as fact something that did not actually happen.

9. *By nature the writing of history is selective and subjective, being influenced by the viewpoint and predilections of the writer.* It is so with the Book of Acts but with the proviso that Luke’s historiography is ultimately not his own but that of the Holy Spirit.

10. *Narrative theology is a relatively recent approach to hermeneutics.* One aspect of it is called *narrative analogy*. By utilizing it, the author invites the reader to make a comparative study of similar stories to discover any patterns or echoes, such as repeated themes or phrases.<sup>3</sup> This analogy aspect of narrative theology is closely related to the traditional Pentecostal approach of understanding the baptism in the Spirit in terms of Acts narratives.

11. *One objection to the Pentecostal under-*

*standing of Spirit baptism is that it is based on historical precedent, which, it is said, cannot be used to establish doctrine.*

According to this view, it may be true that Luke records an experience of the Spirit subsequent to His work in regeneration and even that the experience includes glossolalia, but it is improper to formulate doctrine from this. In other words, the narratives are descriptive, not prescriptive, since there is no propositional statement that says the disciples’ experiences are for all believers.

Induction, however, is a legitimate form of logic. It is the forming of a general conclusion from the study of particular incidents or statements. How else can one justify the doctrine of the Trinity or of the hypostatic union—that Christ is both fully human and fully God, yet one person. The New Testament has no propositional statement about either of these doctrines. Therefore, it is legitimate to make an inductive study of the Acts incidents to determine the cumulative theological lesson(s) of those narratives.

One objection often raised by critics is that if we insist on historical precedent for a postconversion experience of the Spirit, we should consistently follow historical precedent by, for example, pooling all our financial resources or casting lots to make decisions. But nowhere was the Early Church told by God or actuated by Him to do these things, nor is there even a recurring pattern of them. They were activities thought by and done by the people on their own. But Jesus did command the disciples to wait until they were filled with the Spirit. Furthermore, being filled with the Spirit is a divine, not a human, activity.

12. *Another objection to the Pentecostal position is based on authorial intent.* The question is raised: What was Luke’s purpose/intent in writing Acts? The answer given is that it was to record the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman world; it was not to teach Spirit baptism. Yet how can the spread of the gospel be understood apart from the impetus behind it—the power of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8 is an encapsulation of the Book of Acts. The two main clauses in the verse are interrelated and cannot be divorced from each other: “You shall receive power” and “You shall be My witnesses.”<sup>4</sup> If the

*On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit”; they were not regenerated by that experience.*

*The descent of the Spirit upon Him at that time, together with the Spirit's activity through Him through His earthly ministry... serves as a model for all believers....*

mandate “Go into all the world” still holds true, then the enablement to do so will be the same as what Jesus promised.

13. *Related to the previous objection is the idea that only **representative groups** in Acts had a special experience of the Spirit, to show the spread and inclusiveness of the gospel*—Jews in Jerusalem (chapter 2), Samaritans (chapter 8), Gentiles (chapter 10), disciples of John the Baptist (chapter 19). There are several criticisms of this position: (1) Very often Paul’s postconversion, personal experience (9:17) of being filled with the Spirit is ignored or overlooked. It was not part of a group experience. (2) Did the early preachers not encounter any of John the Baptist’s disciples during the 20-year interim between Acts 2 and Acts 19? (3) Furthermore, were those men really disciples of John? Or were they disciples of Jesus needing further instruction?<sup>5</sup>

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT**

The Old Testament is an indispensable prelude to a discussion of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The events of the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) were the climax of God’s promises made centuries before about the institution of the new covenant, which would also inaugurate the age of the Spirit. Two passages are prominent: Ezekiel 36:25–27 and Joel 2:28,29.

The Ezekiel passage speaks about being sprinkled with clean water and so being cleansed from all spiritual filthiness. It goes on to say the Lord will remove the heart of stone from His people and give them “a new heart” and also put within them “a new spirit.” The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the means by which this will take place: “I will put My Spirit within you” (verse 27). The result is that they will “walk in My statutes” and “will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

The promise is clearly related to the New Testament concept of regeneration. Paul speaks about “the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5), echoing Jesus’ statement about the need to be “born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). The transformation that takes place with the new birth results in an altered lifestyle, made

possible by the indwelling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells within all believers (Romans 8:9,14–16; 1 Corinthians 6:19). Therefore, the idea of a believer without the Holy Spirit is a contradiction in terms.

Joel’s prophecy is quite different from Ezekiel’s. It does not talk about inner transformation, a changed lifestyle, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Instead, the Lord says, “I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind.” The result will be dramatic; the recipients will prophesy, dream, and see visions. This prophecy recalls Moses’ intense wish: “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them” (Numbers 11:29). The parallels between Joel’s prophecy and Moses’ wish are unmistakable. In distinction from Ezekiel’s prophecy, here the results of the Spirit’s activity are quite different; they are dramatic and charismatic in nature. The Spirit comes upon God’s people primarily to empower them to prophesy. This is evident in Peter’s quotation of Joel in his Pentecost address (Acts 2:16–21). Peter inserts, “And they shall prophesy” (verse 18) in the middle of the quotation, repeating and underscoring that “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (verse 17). On the Day of Pentecost the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit”; they were not regenerated by that experience.

Must we conclude, then, that there were to be two separate historical comings of the Holy Spirit, given the substantial difference between Ezekiel’s and Joel’s prophecies? The answer must be no. It is better to speak of one overall promise of the Spirit that includes both His indwelling and empowering/filling God’s people. They are two aspects of the promised Holy Spirit’s work in the new age.

The promise of the Spirit was not completely fulfilled until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). But the virginal conception of Jesus by the power of the Spirit was the dawning of the new age. The descent of the Spirit upon Him at that time, together with the Spirit’s activity through Him throughout His earthly ministry (Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18,19; Acts 10:38,39), serves as a model for all believers to whom the Lord in the Old Testament promised the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

## TERMINOLOGY FOR SPIRIT BAPTISM

The Book of Acts contains over 70 references to the Holy Spirit. Since it records the coming of the Spirit and gives examples of the Spirit's encounters with people, it is natural to turn to this book for specific terminology for Spirit baptism. The following expressions are used interchangeably:

- *Baptized in the Spirit* (1:5; 11:16);
- *Spirit coming, or falling, upon* (1:8; 8:16; 10:44; 11:15; 19:6);
- *Spirit poured out* (2:17,18; 10:45);
- *Promise of the Father* (1:4)—the Father gave the promise;
- *Promise of the Spirit* (2:33,39)—the Spirit is the promise;
- *Gift of the Spirit* (2:38; 10:45; 11:17)—the Spirit is the gift;
- *Gift of God* (8:20)—the gift is from God;
- *Receiving the Spirit* (8:15–20; 10:47; 19:2);
- *Filled with the Spirit* (2:4; 9:17).

From the standpoint of frequency, the expression *baptized in the Holy Spirit* is used most often and occurs in each of the Gospels (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). *Filled with the Spirit* occurs frequently but has a more inclusive meaning, which will be discussed later in this series.

*Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, the noun equivalent of the verbal *baptized in the Holy Spirit*, does not occur in the New Testament, but for ease of expression and identification, it is often used in its place. The term *Spirit baptism* also serves a useful purpose.

No one term fully conveys all that is involved in the experience. The terms should not be pressed literally; they are simply attempts by the biblical writers to help us understand better the meaning of the experience. Expressions such as *baptized*, *filled*, and *poured out*, for instance, emphasize that it is an experience in which the believer is thoroughly dominated or overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit. Among other things, the experience heightens and intensifies the work of the already indwelling Holy Spirit.

## BAPTIZED BY AND IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Does the New Testament distinguish between

being baptized *by* the Holy Spirit and being baptized *in* the Holy Spirit? Seven passages contain both the verb *baptize* and the noun *Holy Spirit* or *Spirit*. Do all these verses teach the same thing about the relationship between the two terms?

**No Baptism of the Spirit.** The New Testament writers never speak about a baptism *of* the Holy Spirit. The term is ambivalent and could be used for either of two experiences of the Spirit. One is a baptism *by* the Spirit which incorporates one into the body of Christ. The other is a baptism *in* the Spirit which empowers one for service.

**Baptized in the Spirit.** The Pentecostal experience is properly spoken of as being “baptized *in* the Holy Spirit” (Greek preposition *en*; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; see also Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). This rendering most clearly translates the Greek and most adequately conveys the meaning of the experience. It is preferable for two reasons.

First, the preposition *en* is the most versatile preposition in the New Testament and may be variously translated *in*, *with*, *by*, *among*, *within*, depending on the context. We may eliminate the last two as not suitable at all in any of the passages we are discussing. We may also eliminate *by* in the Gospels and Acts passages since Jesus, not the Holy Spirit, is the One who baptizes. It is a baptism *by* Jesus *in* the Holy Spirit.

Second, *in* is preferable to *with* because it conveys the imagery of baptism. The verb *baptizo* means to immerse or to dip. It would be awkward to say, “He shall immerse (or dip) you *with* the Holy Spirit.” The more natural rendering is “*in* the Holy Spirit.” The preference for “*in* the Holy Spirit” is strengthened by the analogy with water baptism, which takes place *in* water.

A preference for *in* as the correct translation of the Gospels and Acts passages involves more than semantic hairsplitting. It reflects a correct understanding of the nature of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, emphasizing that it is an experience in which a believer is totally immersed in the Spirit.

**Baptized by the Spirit.** Being baptized *in* the Holy Spirit should be distinguished from being baptized *by* the Spirit *into* the body of

*It is better to speak of one overall promise of the Spirit that includes both His indwelling and empowering/filling God's people.*



**Among other things,  
the experience  
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Holy Spirit.**

Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).<sup>6</sup> The same preposition *en* occurs in this verse; the first part of which reads, “For by [*en*] one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” *By* designates the Holy Spirit as the means or the instrument by which this baptism takes place. The experience Paul speaks of is different from the experience mentioned by John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter in the other six passages.


The two groups of passages we are discussing (the six in the Gospels and Acts, the one in 1 Corinthians) have a few similar terms. But it is questionable to insist that because certain combinations of words occur in different passages, their translation and meaning must be the same in all. Apart from the similarities, the two groups of passages have little in common. For instance, Paul mentions *one* Spirit. He does not use the full two-word designation “Holy Spirit”; he talks about being baptized “into one body.” Furthermore, the prepositional phrase “*en* the one Spirit” precedes the verb *baptize*. In all the other passages it follows the verb (the one exception is Acts 1:5 where, curious to some, it comes between *Spirit* and *Holy*).

Context often determines one’s choice in translating a word or expression. Therefore, we need to see how Paul uses expressions similar or identical to “*en* the one Spirit.” The immediate context, containing four such phrases, should be determinative.

First Corinthians 12:3 reads, “No one speaking by [*en*] the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed’; and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by [*en*] the Holy Spirit.” Verse 9, which continues Paul’s list of spiritual gifts, reads, “To another faith by [*en*] the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by [*en*] the one Spirit.” This last phrase is identical to the one in verse 13; the only exception being that the Greek text contains the word *the*. In all these occurrences in the immediate context where *en* is linked with the Holy Spirit, the translation *by* comes much more easily and is more readily understood than any other translation. Furthermore, the entire chapter talks about the activity of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the reading “by one Spirit” is preferable.

This concept is mentioned in a slightly different way in Romans 6:3, which speaks about being “baptized into Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:27 also speaks about being “baptized into Christ.” This baptism is different from the baptism mentioned by John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter in the Gospels and in Acts. According to John the Baptist, it is Jesus who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. According to Paul, it is the Holy Spirit who baptizes into Christ, or into the body of Christ. If this distinction is not maintained, we have the strange idea that Christ baptizes into Christ!

**Summary.** The distinction between being baptized *by* the Spirit and being baptized *in* the Spirit is not attributable to a Pentecostal hermeneutical bias. A comparison of the translation of *en* in 1 Corinthians 12:13 in major versions shows a decided preference even by non-Pentecostal scholars for the rendering *by*. The following major Bible versions and translations have the word *by*: King James Version, New King James Version, *New American Standard Bible*, New International Version, Revised Standard Version, *The Living Bible*, Today's English Version, *The New Testament in Modern English*.

There is a clear distinction in the purpose of each of the baptisms. Incorporation, or baptism, into Christ or the body of Christ is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13. This differs from the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the primary purpose of which is the receiving of power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). 

#### ENDNOTES

1. Part 2 will deal with the question of subsequence. Part 3 will address the issue of

tongues as a necessary accompaniment. Part 4 will discuss the purposes of Spirit baptism and also the inclusive terminology of being filled with, or full of, the Holy Spirit.

2. Scholars within the classical Pentecostal tradition have written well and at length in this area. I mention a few: French L. Arrington, Donald A. Johns, Robert F. Menzies, William W. Menzies, Douglas A. Oss, Roger Stronstad.
3. For further discussion of narrative theology, see Douglas A. Oss, "A Pentecostal/Charismatic View," in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* ed. Wayne A. Grudem, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 1996), 260–262; and Donald A. Johns, "New Directions in Hermeneutics," *Initial Evidence*, ed. Gary B. McGee, (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishing, 1991), 153–156.
4. Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.
5. This point will be covered in Part 2.
6. Some respected scholars in the classical Pentecostal tradition prefer the translation *in* and interpret the clause to mean the Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit.

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***The Pentecostal experience is properly spoken of as being "baptized in the Holy Spirit."***

# Pastoral Counseling: 10 Key Principles

BY WAYDE I.  
GOODALL

*The majority of people in our communities turn to a pastor or priest when they have a crisis or counseling need.*

When I read of those who had negative behavioral patterns (sins) that Paul listed for the Corinthian church, it reminds me of people in our culture today—the sexually immoral (adulterers, prostitutes, homosexuals), idolaters, thieves, swindlers, and those who do not control negative conversation about others (slanderers). But then Paul said, “And that is what some of you were” (1 Corinthians 6:11, NIV). When these people came to Christ, He not only saved them, but they were delivered from the sins that bound them. They came out of a world controlled by the devil and became a part of a healthy community. In spite of the Corinthian’s problems, it was still a church body full of Spirit-filled people who ministered to one another.

The majority of people in our communities turn to a pastor or priest when they have a crisis or counseling need. Robert Morgan wrote: “Pastoral counseling is best done by a pastor—not a professional counselor or psychotherapist. Good professional biblical counselors certainly play an important role when the complexities of mental illness are involved, but they are allies of the pastor, not substitutes for him.” Morgan listed several advantages pastors have in counseling.<sup>1</sup>

*At times, part of the care we offer people is helping them find a competent Christian mental health professional.*

• *Friendship.* Those who need help are counseling with a friend, not just a professional.

• *Prior relationship.* In many cases, there has been an ongoing relationship between the person and the pastor. The pastor often knows the family’s history, spiritual maturity, and past crisis experiences.

• *Preaching.* Preaching can include biblical

counseling from the pulpit.<sup>2</sup>

• *Biblical advice.* People want to know what the Bible says about their particular need.

*My rule of thumb has always been that if I sense mental illness, serious depression, or suicidal thinking, I automatically refer to a Christian mental health professional.*

• *Availability.* Typically, pastors are much more accessible to their parishioners.

It is important for people who have lived in destructive behavioral patterns to become a part of a caring church, pastored by a caring pastor. This kind of community is healthy and is an encouragement to those coming out of spiritually or physically harmful lifestyles.

At times, part of the care we offer people is helping them find a competent Christian mental health professional. My rule of thumb has always been that if I sense mental illness, serious depression, or suicidal thinking, I automatically refer to a Christian mental health professional. I remain their pastor. Even for those I refer, I still pray for them and meet with them for pastoral counseling. However, I believe that the professional has the expertise to handle the complicated and delicate issues that come up with these types of difficulties.

Remember these 10 key principles when you are involved in pastoral counseling.<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Scripture is always right.* The Bible covers a myriad of problems, difficulties, and issues that people face every day. We can know how God feels about divorce, adultery, substance abuse, dishonesty, and numerous other harmful behaviors. Scripture is clear about God’s desire to set people free, forgive them of their sins, and restore their lives. The Bible is our blueprint for living and should be every pastor’s counseling manual.



2. *The counselee is always responsible to do what is right.* None of us can blame others for our personal choices in life. It is the counselee's choice whether to make the right or wrong decision. You can pray for and encourage those who come for counseling, but in the end it is their choice.

3. *There is always a biblical, Christ-honoring response that the counselee is capable of choosing.* What is the right thing to do when a person has wronged you? Every issue a person faces in life has a Christ-honoring response. It might be confrontation, a gentle rebuke, or forgiveness.

4. *Listen carefully. What is said and what is meant may be different.* Often people will hint at their situation but never clearly spell it out. As you listen to

***You can pray for and encourage those who come for counseling, but in the end it is their choice.***

people, try to hear what they are really saying and ask them questions such as: "Am I hearing you say...?" or "Is there something else you want to talk about." This type of question often prompts the person to bring out the real issues.

5. *Don't be afraid to ask about*

*willful sin.* If you suspect sinful behavior, ask about it at the appropriate time. You could say: "Have you been seeing someone else?" or "What behaviors have you been involved in that you know God would not approve of?"

6. *The counselee is a person of worth, made in the image of God.* No matter

***Just saying to counsees that they need to stop a certain behavior is not good enough.***

what people have done, they are important to God and should be important to us. God can cleanse, redeem, and restore anyone who comes to Him for help.

7. *Counseling advice should be specific and doable.* When you give people advice about how to overcome their problems, be specific about how to do it. Write out a "road map" for them. Just saying to counsees that they need to stop a certain behavior is not good enough. They often know they need to stop, but they don't know how. You can help them find the "how."

8. *Remain hopeful, but realize there are no instant cures to life's problems.* The habit that has lasted years will often take months or years to overcome. A bad marriage doesn't become a good

***No matter what people have done, they are important to God and should be important to us.***

marriage overnight. Those who have grown up in an abusive home could have similar challenges with their family. Be patient with people, and remain hopeful. Be an encourager to counsees that God will get them through.

9. *Know that God can use you. Take charge.* There are a variety of people and problems you will face in ministry. Help, in some way, those who cross your path. It might be through counseling, or it could be through referral to a Christian mental health professional or medical doctor. God will help you work with the people He has placed under your care.

10. *You are a person talking to a person. Counseling is a relationship.* Let people know that God has helped you with your difficulties and challenges. This gives people hope and lets them know that you are also working out your salvation with "fear and trembling."

Counseling is a part of every pastor's life. We counsel after a tragedy, at a funeral, during a marriage difficulty, or in a premarriage counseling session. We counsel in the church foyer, during visitation, or before a critical surgery. Whenever it occurs, remember these 10 key pastoral counseling principles. **E**

#### ENDNOTES

1. Robert Morgan, "Why Pastors Make Great Counselors," *Leadership*, Spring 1997, 29-31
2. Using an illustration from one of your counseling sessions is not ethically correct. Counselors must protect the confidentiality of those they counsel.
3. Larry Crabb has used a variation of these points in his books and counseling seminars.

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***"Pastor, I don't feel that you're taking our problem seriously."***

# Managing Church Conflict Creatively

## PART 2: Deliberation

BY RICHARD D.  
DOBBINS

**Provide prominence  
without power, trusting  
that the people of God  
will keep leadership  
where it belongs:  
in the hands of  
responsible, mature  
believers.**

Part 1 of this series (see *Enrichment* Spring 98) examined how the apostles used three stages of conflict management—desensitization, deliberation, decision—to handle the first major conflict in the Early Church (cf. Acts 6:1–7). We discussed the desensitization process and began looking at the deliberation phase. Part 2 continues with the deliberation stage: working with difficult people in your church.

### PARANOID PEOPLE

Paranoid people want prominence and power. Allowing them to have both will be disastrous for them and the church. God loves them and wants to help them, and pastors can help them best by allowing them to have prominence—without power.

What positions would most likely fit this description in your church? Soloists? Choir members? Hostesses? Ushers? Such positions have legitimate tasks that need to be done in every congregation. Put paranoid people in places where they're out in the public—where they're seen and feel important. However, God help you if they get on your board or become your worship leader or Christian education director!

Why put them in positions of prominence? Because if you can find them a position of prominence without power, your congregation will see what you see, and the disruptive efforts of the paranoid people in your church will be contained. They won't be making decisions or sitting on committees.

Remember, though, even people who recognize such people for who they are will resent you if you attack paranoid members. Why? Because the *position* of pastor is supposed to be above that kind of behavior. Ask God to help you separate your feelings from your

sense of responsibility in these situations. This will enable you to act from your *position* as pastor and spiritual leader of the congregation, instead of from your *personal* feelings.

Provide prominence without power, trusting that the people of God will keep leadership where it belongs: in the hands of responsible, mature believers. At the same time, help your congregation love disruptive people enough to allow the body of Christ to provide what therapy can be accomplished in their hearts and minds.

If certain people have only caused *you* difficulty, you may be the one who needs to change. Check with other pastors who've had to work with them, and see if they caused problems in other churches. Find out how they functioned in previous situations of leadership and power. This is one way fellow pastors can cooperate and help each other.

One of the things I learned when I was building a church staff is that you aren't really pulling off such a coup when you hire a staff person from another church without first talking to that senior pastor. You may simply be answering his or her prayers for deliverance!

### DISRUPTIVE, MANIPULATIVE PEOPLE

When you have to deal with a disruptive, manipulative person on your staff or in your church, remember that such a person will see your kindness as stupidity. He or she will try to make your attempts at reason and reconciliation look like evidence of weakness. And your prolonged patience will be seen as an extended opportunity to manipulate and exploit the circumstances.

If you find yourself caught in the throes of a person's critical attempt to disrupt the

church, it's important to keep your program going as though nothing had happened—including those justifiable features which may be under irresponsible attack. Don't publicize conflict. The truth will "out," eventually.

Mature members of the church will, in time, see the wisdom of what Paul admonished the church at Rome to do: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple [innocent]" (Romans 16:17,18).

By your words and deeds teach your people what good leadership looks like. And keep your hand on all levels of the leadership-selection process in your church. This is how you sustain—and at the same time contain—those unhealthy people in your congregation. Pray that exposure to the properly functioning body of Christ will bring healing to them before they can damage the cause of Christ.

If you are *for* something, a person like this will be *ag'in* it. They will be against enough things that the people in the congregation will observe it and still love the person, but they will have better sense than to elect the disruptive, manipulative person to a position of leadership in the church.

## DISRUPTIVE, ARGUMENTATIVE PEOPLE

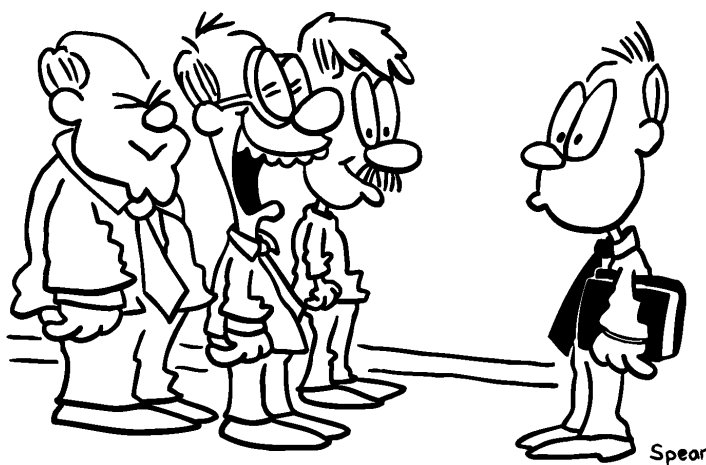
Disruptive, argumentative people will make your board or committee meetings even more difficult than they would otherwise be. They will want to override every other point of view during your times of deliberation and control the decisions you reach as a group. Save yourself a headache by keeping these kinds of people in positions of prominence—without power.

During your deliberation of conflict-laden church business, encourage free discussion of the issues with all parties involved. In your board meetings and in your departmental and committee meetings, encourage differing viewpoints. You can do this easily by being careful how you respond to someone who has given an opposing point of view. Say to this person in the group meeting, "Thank you for sharing from your standpoint. Now, let's hear from someone else."

Try not to move into any planning meeting with such tightly defined and preconceived plans that there is no room for other opinions. Have the understanding with your board and your department heads that these meetings are the place and the time when different viewpoints should be aired and explored for whatever creative advantage they may have over the plan as initially presented.

Others present may have valid opinions that need to be heard. Remember, you are looking for the best plan. When there are honest differences, let them be expressed in these kinds

*Help your congregation love disruptive people enough to allow the body of Christ to provide what therapy can be accomplished in their hearts and minds.*



*"We don't want to build a new sanctuary.  
Can't you preach seven sermons a day?"*



of meetings, to help the group reach a decision that represents the maximum Kingdom potential.

## TIMID LAYPEOPLE

Laypeople with honest convictions are prone to sit too quietly in departmental planning meetings and on church boards, whether because of their own timidity or because of overpowering leadership. They often leave without expressing their real feelings during the meeting. What do they do? When they

get out of the meeting, they are likely to say, "I didn't really agree with what the board decided." In trying to avoid the momentary discomfort of an honest difference of opinion, they have created a longer, deeper discomfort by saying the wrong thing to the wrong person at the wrong time in the wrong place and in the wrong way.

## CONCLUSION

Somehow we get deceived into believing that God can't be in an honest confrontation or difference of opinion; God can only be in peace and tranquillity. Churches can suffer from such mismanagement of conflict.

Mismanagement of conflict in difficult situations also occurs at higher levels of leadership because people hesitate to speak up. We need to avoid this trap at every level of the church.

Remember, the devil doesn't fear a big church. He fears a united church. Only when differences can be expressed in an

atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance can a truly church-unifying point of view be discovered and defined. Mastering this process is leadership at its best.

In Part 3 we will discuss how to achieve clarity of communication in meetings—arriving at the *decision* stage of conflict management. Our communication is often clouded by our feelings, making us blind both to how we sound and to the possibility of any legitimate difference of opinion. We'll discuss ways to insure that the real winner in conflict resolution is the kingdom of God.

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# Lord, Are You Sure?

BY LINDA F.  
HORNE

***It is worth giving our lives in full-time ministry to help people come to the Lord, to lend an encouraging word to those in need, to be an example of what a godly woman, wife, and mother ought to be—not being perfect, just striving to become the best we can be for God.***

Who, me? a preacher's wife? Is this a high calling or just a bad dream?

*Wake up!* I said to myself, breaking out in a cold sweat as I felt the Lord say, "I want you to be a preacher's wife." I was 15 at the time and screamed out, "I can't!" I was already a preacher's kid. At that moment, all I remembered were the struggles and challenges my parents had encountered in their ministry.

I was willing to pursue full-time ministry but on my terms. Being able to travel in a singing group sounded exciting. "So how about that, God?" The Lord continued calling me to be a preacher's wife, and I continued to say, "No way. This must be a bad dream."

The Lord worked on me until I felt His peace and realized I must do His will. I eventually married a man who was called to be a minister, and God reconfirmed what He had planned for my life.

Now as I sit in church every Sunday quickly scanning the congregation of "God's wonderful people," with their various expectations of me, I wonder if it is possible to be a happy preacher's wife. *Can I be myself? Can I enjoy God's will for my life?*

I'd say most of us have answered: "No way!" and "I can't." But as we have spent time in prayer and allowed God to show us His will, we have put our anxiety aside and relied on Proverbs 3:5,6. We are thankful that God would entrust us with this high calling.

We must never forget that having the label *preacher's wife* has its benefits and rewards. It is worth giving our lives in full-time ministry to help people come to the Lord, to lend an encouraging word to those in need, to be an example of what a godly woman, wife, and mother ought to be—not being perfect, just striving to become the best we can be for God.

Along with the blessings, trials, hidden

pain, and loneliness can creep in. *Shhh! Oh, I forgot this is an area of being a preacher's wife that we're not supposed to talk about.* We are "taught" to project happiness and joy and lead seemingly perfect lives. But when our families become the headlines of the local church gossip paper, our blessings can turn into trials.

These trials can make it difficult to maintain joy. Bitterness and resentment of the ministry can take control of us. We are so busy helping others in need, we sometimes neglect our own hurts. Not only can our spiritual walk suffer when we feel confused or burned out, but our family and the church body suffers too.

I have learned that after you give and give of yourself, you must turn back to the reason of your calling and recharge your soul. *Boy, this can be hard to do.* We look around for a listening ear only to find ourselves all alone with no one who understands. We are left saying, "Lord, I can't do this job!"

If you have felt this way, believe me; you are normal. Solving the "glass house syndrome" of the ministry isn't easy. Through my "adventures" I've learned some things that enable us to be preachers' wives with Christlike holiness, energy, and peace.

## **I'M ME...READY OR NOT!**

Preachers' wives are stereotyped. Some people in the church realize we are normal human beings and encourage us to be ourselves. But in the midst of these wonderful people is the table of critics (usually people you wouldn't suspect). They judge our personality traits, the way we smile, what we wear; and to top it off, they watch everything we say and do, especially where our family is concerned. Trying to fit our critics' perception of a preacher's wife can hinder our personality and ministry.

Part of the problem is that it is hard for the church body to really get to know us. People

don't realize there is only one of us vs. hundreds of them. To them, our personality may appear different than it actually is.

When I was a young preacher's kid, I saw people in the ministry putting on phony faces and attitudes. I used to watch as they took their masks off when church was over. Thankfully, my parents were always the same at home as they were at church. I'm sure that is one reason why I'm in the ministry today. *What you see is what you get!*

I've often struggled with being myself. It's hard to open up my personality to loads of people; it makes me vulnerable to criticism. I have realized that some people may never accept me as their preacher's wife, so I may as well enjoy life and be me.

I work at being me. It's a continual process. Many people we have pastored over the years have told us that one of the things they liked about our ministry was that we were ourselves and didn't have a pompous attitude, thinking we were better than our congregation. It's true. My husband and I enjoy having fun being "real"—being ourselves to our congregation.

This does not mean that as a preacher's wife I should not maintain good

character and portray a godly example. I just serve the Lord with all my heart, and at the same time, be myself.

## YOU EXPECT WHAT?

According to some, Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," is for preachers' wives only. Many in the church think we ought to lead visitation, coordinate children's activities, work with the youth, teach Sunday school, conduct Tuesday morning Bible study, direct the choir, and be full-time church secretary, while never having the word *no* in our vocabulary.

I agree we must be involved in as many ministries we feel God has called us. And in some situations, preachers' wives must do so much because there isn't anyone else to carry the load. The pastor and his wife are equipped to assist the church in moving forward with its mission. But burnout can occur when we are involved in ministries without taking into consideration what God wants us to do.

I have discovered that in order to do my best and give myself to others in true happiness, I can't worry about what people expect of me. I'm called to lend a *helping* hand to my husband in his job.

As long as God is happy with me and I'm in His will doing my best to please Him, people's expectations become minor.

## TIME-OUT!

*Yeah...right! When is this supposed to take place?* Taking time for yourself seems impossible, yet it is vitally important. If we don't take time to come apart, we will come apart. If the sturdy ground we stand on crumbles, it's difficult to keep our families and the church body strong. We can destroy everything we have worked hard to achieve.

Being a preacher's wife can be one of the most rewarding yet draining jobs. We can lose sight of who we are. But it's a challenge to take time out of our busy schedule to relax and rejuvenate our soul.

It's so vital to spend time with our spouses and children without discussing church situations or problems—to have fun away from ministerial duties. And we need time alone to relax, energize, and regain strength. Many women feel guilty if they admit they need time to themselves. However, there are moments when every woman should put her feelings before others', to better herself for the benefit of those around her.

I have learned when I take a day every few weeks to be by myself doing what I enjoy, I am able to deal with the ministry and my family with more patience and understanding. God expects us to take care of ourselves physically as well as spiritually, enabling us to put forth our best effort in serving Him.

## WHAT IDENTITY?

Preachers' wives can have a major identity crisis. We glance in the mirror wondering, *Who am I? What am I doing in this position of the church? What about my goals?*

The best gift a preacher's wife can give her husband and church body is to support his ministry. This doesn't mean she becomes a shadow of the preacher—one who never speaks her mind or





gives her opinion. God can use a preacher's wife to lend advice to her spouse concerning a church matter.

We work with our spouses. We travel through the mountains as well as the valleys. Preachers and their wives should work as a team to build the kingdom of God. A ministry couple has dreams and goals. However, a preacher's wife can have her own dreams and goals as long as they don't become more

important than her spouse's. If pursued properly, the pastor and his spouse can both be involved in ministry that will mesh together. The sense of value I gained from knowing God can use me as a person has benefited our ministry together.

### WE ARE FAMILY

*Smile, kids. We live in a glass house, and aren't we havin' fun?* The most

important gift God gives us is our family. Residing in a minister's house can bring about a lot of unnecessary stress. Many church people love the pastor's family for who they are, not the position they fill. Others eat and sleep to criticize the preacher's family. A preacher's wife must be on guard to protect her children against people who expect too much from them.

It is crucial to let your kids be normal—kids who will make mistakes. However, teaching them discipline and respect according to God's Word is vital.

My advice? Have fun with your family. Show them unconditional love and support. Don't be too "preachy" at home. Keep the lines of communication open. Stay focused on the needs of your family. Your children should know that God has called their parents to be dad and mom before preacher and preacher's wife.

It is a blessing to be a preacher's wife. Just remember to be yourself and not sacrifice your family for the sake of the ministry. **E**

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## Confessions of a Former Associate

*Enrichment salutes the thousands of faithful men and women who are partners in ministry with their senior pastors. We begin this new column on the ministry of associates in recognition of the valuable contributions they are making to the kingdom of God.*

BY JOHN R.  
WOOTTON

***One simple discipline I followed was to always address the senior pastor...as Pastor.***

I fondly look back on my experiences during the 7 years I served as a youth pastor. Under that title I was at times children's church director, worship leader, Christian education director, Sunday fill-in preacher, office manager, church publications editor, director of church departments, choir director, and, in my spare time, minister to youth! Can you relate?

That's the life of an associate minister. Although most associates can recite similar lists of varied responsibilities, most would agree that not all their memories of associate duties are pleasant ones.

I have a few confessions to make about the years I spent as an associate pastor under different senior pastors. Some things I would change, but thankfully, others I would leave the same. Perhaps other associates can identify with me.

### **I RESPECTED MY SENIOR PASTOR.**

One simple discipline I followed was to always address the senior pastor, in private and in public, as Pastor. I have found from experience that using a title creates more respect. I did not anticipate, though, how building up the senior pastor would produce similar respect for all the pastors and leaders in the church, including myself.

### **I COMMUNICATED WITH MY SENIOR PASTOR.**

How embarrassing for senior pastors to not know what their associates are doing.

Whether by notes, phone calls, or brief stops

***Instead of focusing solely on my world of activity, it would have been beneficial if I had more frequently considered the weights and concerns of my senior pastor.***

in the pastor's office, I knew it was important to provide timely updates. I never felt I was strictly enforced to report every last detail. To the contrary, I always enjoyed tremendous liberty in my ministry. The common courtesy of keeping my senior pastor informed of my plans and activities instilled a confidence that I didn't need to be continually watched.

### **I UPHELD MY SENIOR PASTOR.**

Senior pastors are encouraged by hearing staff members relay uplifting comments they have heard from the congregation. The pastors I worked with could be confident that I never played audience to their critics. They didn't have to worry about my talking behind their backs. And it was an example to the church to know the pastoral team was unified and loyal to the senior pastor.

When associates make it known that negative conversations about those in leadership will not be entertained, they save their senior pastors from needless hurt and save themselves from the mire and entrapment of unkind words.

### **I WAS WILLING TO TAKE ON EXTRA DUTIES.**

At first glance, the prospect of taking on extra duties, especially ones assigned at the last minute, seemed to invite frustration. Certainly there were pressures and inconveniences

associated with accepting tasks that were not in my portfolio, yet the rewards were numerous.

In addition, the church enjoyed the benefits of an undertaking being completed successfully. And I became aware of new capabilities, broadened my scope of experience, and grew in the eyes of the congregation.

Senior pastors must constantly stretch to meet the changing demands of church leadership, and they appreciate associates who are willing to stretch with them.

### **I LISTENED TO MY SENIOR PASTOR.**

Apart from the two or three opportunities each week to teach or preach, the bulk of a senior pastor's time is spent listening. Counseling sessions, prayer requests, visitation, and other daily encounters give ample occasion for the pastor to listen.

So it is therapeutic for senior pastors

***The common courtesy of keeping my senior pastor informed of my plans and activities instilled a confidence that I didn't need to be continually watched.***

to be able to speak openly with associates and know they have listened carefully. I discovered, however, that I was most often the beneficiary from such conversations. I look back on the times I was seated in my senior pastor's office, listening to him share his heart, as some of the richest moments of my ministry as an associate.

### **I SHOULD HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO MY PASTOR'S NEEDS.**

I will never know the burdens I was protected from bearing because of the selfless nature of the senior pastors I served. But I should have asked more often what I could do to help. I should have been more sensitive to offer encouragement after a difficult board

meeting or helped alleviate the pastor's schedule during a grueling week of ministry appointments. Instead of focusing solely on my world of activity, it would have been beneficial if I had more frequently considered the weights and concerns of my senior pastor.

### **I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT CHURCH FINANCES.**

Although my department's accountability to the financial status of the entire church was important, I didn't have to pour over the church's finances each month. But the senior pastor didn't have that luxury.

In church budgets, every little bit does count. Whether or not my particular segment of ministry was having a financially prosperous month, I owed my senior pastor and the church my best efforts as a good steward to spend wisely.

### **I SHOULD HAVE PLACED HIGHER EMPHASIS ON MY SENIOR PASTOR'S PRIORITIES.**

At the head of every associate's calling should be the resolute desire to help fulfill the senior pastor's vision. This may involve something as large as dreaming with the pastor about reaching an entire community with the gospel or something as simple as arriving at work on time.

As the shepherd over the entire church, the pastor has a myriad of issues to reconcile when giving instructions to associates—instructions that may not immediately seem important to the staff. I should have displayed more trust in my pastor by following through on assignments to the best of my ability, even when assignments appeared to lack relevance.

In those moments when the pastor's request seems petty or irrational, an associate can still find purpose in doing it as unto the Lord. Quite often the purpose of a task becomes much clearer after completion.

### **I SHOULD HAVE PRAYED MORE FOR MY SENIOR PASTOR.**

Few individuals profit more from the spiritual well-being of the senior pastor than the associates. Without question, every associate wants to work for a pastor who is in the center of God's will.

Some of the darkest hours for many staff members come during times

***At the head of every associate's calling should be the resolute desire to help fulfill the senior pastor's vision.***

when they begin to question the pastor's spiritual walk. I found the best solution in those difficult seasons was to lift my senior pastor up in prayer for God to bless his life and ministry. It also made laboring together more fulfilling because I knew the Holy Spirit was continually renewing the pastor spiritually.

### **I SHOULD HAVE STUDIED MY SENIOR PASTOR MORE CLOSELY.**

How thankful I am for the lessons in character I was able to learn from the senior pastors I worked with.

Associates should not only model the pastor's character but should learn the practical lessons of how their senior pastors "do" ministry. How do they conduct a baby dedication? What preparations do they make for business meetings? How are requests for benevolence handled?

### **CONCLUSION**

God bless pastors who lovingly mentor young men and women, considering their associates' needs above their own! And God bless associates who esteem their senior pastors and strive to follow their examples. **E**

*John R. Wootton is administrative assistant for the Ohio District Council of the Assemblies of God, Columbus, Ohio.*



# Charitable Choice: Government Funding for a Social Ministry

BY KERT G.  
PARSLEY

*Churches now face one of the greatest opportunities and challenges to use federal funds in the arena of social ministry, but with little government regulation.*

## OPPORTUNITY

"The Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy" (Psalm 140:12, NIV). We are admonished to remember and care for the poor and needy, yet America's social and welfare status has reached a crisis.

Churches now face one of the greatest opportunities and challenges to use federal funds in the arena of social ministry, but with little government regulation. This opportunity is accompanied by two impassioned buzzwords of the 1990s: *reform* and *choice*.

Recently, Congress passed federal welfare reform legislation. This reform, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996,<sup>1</sup> was signed by President Clinton on August 22, 1996. PRWOR includes in Section 104 a provision known as Charitable Choice.

Senator John Ashcroft (R-Missouri) is the sponsor of Section 104. One of his goals behind Charitable Choice is to see faith-based organizations expand their services to the public by cooperating with governmental officials. This cooperative effort would allow faith-based organizations to receive governmental funds yet maintain their religious character, integrity, and autonomy.<sup>2</sup>

## AVAILABLE FUNDS

PRWOR applies to state programs created under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families—the replacement for Aid to Families with Dependent Children. TANF expands AFDC, hoping that states will implement a range of services to help individuals become self-sufficient. This coincides well with activities of many faith-based organizations. Funds are available for: "job search, job-readiness, and job-skills training programs; community service positions; GED and ESL programs; nutrition and food-budgeting advice; second-chance or maternity homes for expectant

unmarried minors who cannot live with their own parents; abstinence education; drug-treatment services; and health clinics."<sup>3</sup>

States can enter into two types of assistance with providers, either through direct contracts with the provider or indirectly through certificate or voucher programs. If the programs are direct contracts, then none of the funds expended can be used for "sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization" Section 104 (j).

Just as state government may not discriminate against providers or require them to discard or censor their religious emphasis, a faith-based provider may not discriminate against beneficiaries of those services. Their faith, or lack of it, may not be a precondition to receiving services, nor may a provider require beneficiaries to actively participate in religious practices.

This discrimination limitation applies only to PRWOR funds directly received in a purchase-of-services contract. If funds are indirectly received through the vehicle of certificates or vouchers, the provider may precondition services. The prohibition on expending funds for religious activities does not apply because it is the recipient who is free to choose among many providers—and chooses a faith-based one.

## ELIGIBILITY

A state can use federal welfare funds to provide services, either through its own governmental agencies or by using independent providers. If the state chooses to involve non-governmental organizations, then, under Charitable Choice, the state is not permitted to discriminate against providers, based on their religious nature.

Charitable Choice does not guarantee that a faith-based organization will be selected as a service provider. If, however, the state has allowed for the use of independent providers,

faith-based organizations will have the opportunity to compete for contract or voucher arrangements. Thus, Charitable Choice may open the door for religious providers, who regularly provide services to the poor or needy, to do so with the assistance of federal funds.

## GOVERNMENT REGULATION

Although allowing for governmental assistance, Section 104 of PRWOR does not bring what is perceived as the accompanying threat of governmental intervention. Such intervention has arisen previously, and regulations were so pervasive as to include controlling “church policy, hiring of personnel, and the content of religious programming.”<sup>4</sup> Faith-based providers neither have to cleanse their property of religious symbols or artwork nor alter their form of internal governance to participate under Charitable Choice.<sup>5</sup>

The primary extent of government intervention is in the area of fund accountability. The provider, faith based or not, is subject to account in accordance with generally accepted auditing principles for the use of federal funds. If the provider creates a separate account for those funds, then only that account shall be subject to the audit. An alternative is to create a separate corporation to manage/direct the funds.

***Charitable Choice widens the ability for faith-based providers to use federal funds in providing welfare services, while maintaining their own integrity and autonomy.***

Charitable Choice widens the ability for faith-based providers to use federal funds in providing welfare services, while maintaining their own integrity and autonomy.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Charitable Choice refers to the use of

***Charitable Choice does not guarantee that a faith-based organization will be selected as a service provider.***

federal funds. States with their own welfare funds do not have those moneys subject to Section 104, to the extent the state authorities segregate state funds from federal funds. If state and federal funds are commingled, then they must all be administered under Section 104 standards.

Remember, PRWOR is still in its infancy. Many state governments have had little opportunity to review the impact of the entire act, let alone the charitable choice provision of Section 104. After prayerfully preparing to work with a state government, I encourage you to contact the welfare office, specifically the individual charged with oversight of federal welfare block-grant funds. I further encourage you to seek legal counsel, skilled in the area of constitutional law and tax counsel, regarding possible implications.

## CONCLUSION

Congress has taken the necessary steps to permit churches and other faith-based providers the opportunity to compete for federal funds. These particular funds can be used to assist in providing for the poor and needy in various ways. Government regulation of the faith-based provider is very minimal. The provider must be permitted to retain its religious expression and identity, without censorship. There are additional requirements and guidelines upon a state, which do not fit within the parameters of this article.

The door is open. Faith-based entities are invited to increase involvement in providing social services, while retaining their religious nature. Will you take the challenge and opportunity open to you? **E**

*Kert G. Parsley, J.D., is the president of the Assemblies of God Loan Fund, Springfield, Missouri.*

## ENDNOTES

1. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, H.R. 3734, 104th Congress, 2d Session P.L., 104–193.
2. The Honorable Senator John Ashcroft, introductory letter to *A Guide to Charitable Choice: The Rules of Section 104 of the 1996 Federal Welfare Law Governing State Cooperation with Faith-Based Social Service Providers* (Washington D.C.: The Center for Public Justice, and Annandale, Va.: The Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom, January 1997), iii.
3. *A Guide to Charitable Choice*, 4. Can be ordered from the Center for Public Justice, \$5. (See sidebar for address.)
4. Carl H. Esbeck, *The Regulation of Religious Organizations as Recipients of Governmental Assistance* (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Public Justice, August 1996), 12. Can be ordered from the Center for Public Justice, \$11. (See sidebar for address.)
5. Although the exemption under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which permits employment discrimination) continues, other federal antidiscrimination laws, as well as state and local antidiscrimination laws, may apply.

## RELATED INFORMATION ON CHARITABLE CHOICE

### For implementing Charitable Choice contact:

Stanley Carlson-Thies  
Center for Public Justice  
P.O. Box 48368  
Washington, DC 20002–0368  
410–263–5909

### Other related publications: (See Endnotes 3, 4, for other suggestions.)

Carlson-Thies, S. and J. Skillen, eds.  
*Welfare in America: Christian Perspectives on a Policy in Crisis*.  
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996.  
Order from Eerdmans, 800-253-7521, \$24.

Esbeck, Carl H. “A Constitutional Case for Governmental Cooperation with Faith-Based Social Service Providers” with responses by Douglas Laycock and John Garver. *Emory Law Journal*, Winter 1997.

—Kert G. Parsley

# What Pastors Need To Know About Cults

BY KERRY D.  
MCROBERTS

*Cults are often successful in their efforts to penetrate basic anxieties people have about the future.*

Susan Strom was first enticed into the esoteric teachings of Heaven's Gate by a flier she saw at Oregon State University.

Do—as he was called by his followers—assured his devotees of the hope of an extraterrestrial escape from impending world disaster. (Cults are often successful in their efforts to penetrate basic anxieties people have about the future.)

A master manipulator, Do lured his followers into his deluded virtual reality—a false reality over which he was lord.<sup>1</sup> (Unverifiable revelations, claimed by the founder or leader of a cult, are used for the purpose of controlling the minds and hearts of the cult's faithful followers.)

His followers believed he was a new "Representative" sent by the Father to finish the unfinished work of Jesus Christ: "I am in the same position to today's society as was the One who was in Jesus then," announced the self-proclaimed messiah of cyberspace, Marshall Herff Applewhite, on the cult's web site.<sup>2</sup>

The lethal spiritual buffet served by Do readied his deluded devotees to obediently swallow his deadly dessert: pudding laced with phenobarbital.<sup>3</sup> Susan's body was one of 39 corpses discovered by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, March 26, 1997.

## THE POINT OF DEPARTURE: JESUS CHRIST

What is the primary distinctive of a cult? How do we discern the source of spiritual power behind the claims and works of Marshall Applewhite, Jim Jones, David Koresh, Joseph Smith, Jr., Mary Baker Eddy, Marishi Mahesh Yogi, Sun Myung Moon, and others?

A cult "is a group of people polarized around someone's interpretation of the Bible and is characterized by major deviations from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, particularly the

fact that God became man in Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup> Simply, a cult often results when people attempt to improve upon God's way of doing things.

The solemn warning of the apostle Paul exposes the devious yet methodical design of the primary force and architect of cult systems to introduce a counterfeit Jesus, "a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached"; followed by a spurious source of spiritual power, "a different spirit"; originating from a false basis of authority, "a different gospel" (2 Corinthians 11:4).<sup>5</sup>

The primary point of departure between cults and historic Christianity is the person, nature, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the final criterion for judging the teachings of any church, sect, group, or cult—in determining the classification of the former and more importantly, in discerning the "Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood" (1 John 4:6)—must remain: What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He? (Matthew 22:42). What is the response of the kingdom of cults to this divine inquiry?

The Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society) claim that Jesus is Michael the archangel, the first and greatest creation of Jehovah God who died and rose as an invisible spirit and returned to the earth invisibly (except to the "faithful flock," that is, the leadership of Jehovah's Witnesses) in 1914.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) respond with the claim that Jesus is the illegitimate offspring of a resurrected, glorified man, Adam. Jesus is a man who evolved into a god and is merely one god in a pantheon of gods. (They believe all Mormon males can be exalted to godhood through their exclusive claim to possessing the Melchizedekian priesthood.)

The Christian Science cult considers Jesus of Nazareth to be a "divine idea." And the



Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon contends that Jesus Christ failed in His earthly mission because He was prematurely crucified. Jesus was supposed to marry and raise the “perfect, sinless family” and now, the “Lord of the Second Advent,” Sun Myung Moon, must complete the unfinished work of Christ.

The Bahais rank Jesus Christ as merely one of nine world manifestations representing God. To the Unitarians, the Nazarene was a good man whose followers mistakenly deified. According to the Spiritists, Jesus Christ is an advanced medium in the sixth sphere of astral projection. And to the Unity School of Christianity, the Son of God is a man who perfected a “divine ideal.”

The Rosicrucians believe Jesus is a manifestation of cosmic consciousness. And the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of Transcendental Meditation insists that although Christ is an enlightened guru, He never suffered for anyone. The Jesus of the New Age movement turns out to be a pantheistic impostor posing as the resurrected conscience of humanity.

This sampling demonstrates the pathos of cult systems in introducing “another Jesus” into the lives of their unwary followers, leading to their ultimate destruction:

“This perversion has extended historically, not just to the teaching of our Lord, but more important, to the Person of Christ; for it is axiomatic that if the

doctrine of Christ himself, i.e., His Person, nature and work are perverted, so the identity of the life-giver is altered, then the life which He came to give is correspondingly negated.”<sup>6</sup>

Cults cleverly and deceptively assign new meanings to Christian terminology in an attempt to ensnare the unsuspecting. Although cults promise spiritual riches to their followers, their counterfeit Jesus is bankrupt in the power to save.

## DISCERNING THE POWER SOURCE

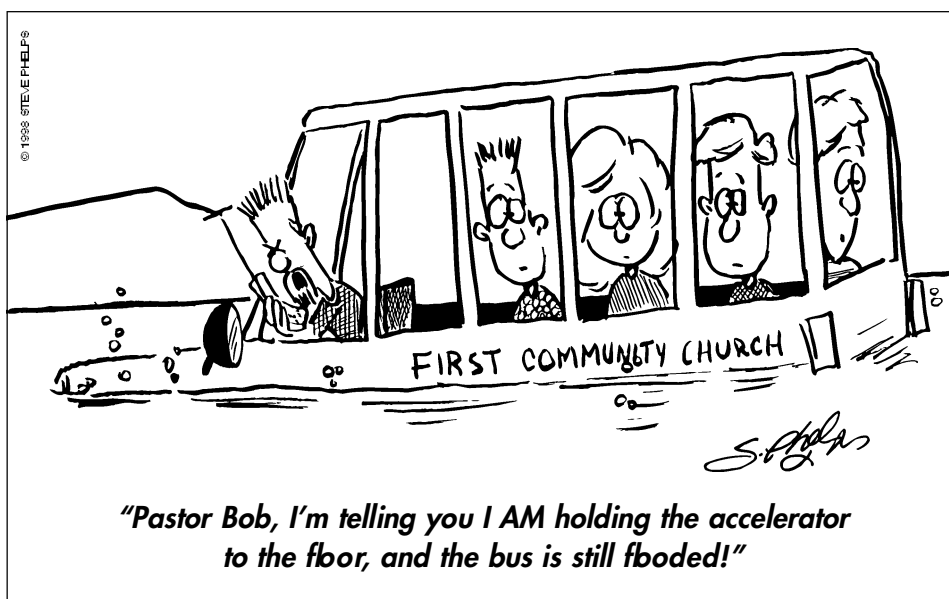
There is no lack of spiritual power available to the adherents of cult systems and the occult. Counterfeit healings, tongues, prophecies, miracles, words of knowledge are all experienced within the kingdom of the cults (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:8–12).<sup>7</sup> In every age, the Church has needed to heed the warning of our Lord to beware of spiritual impostors (Matthew 7:15–23), false Christs, and false prophets who come performing “great signs and miracles” (Matthew 24:4,5,23,24).

The apostle John provides us with divinely inspired understanding for exposing the counterfeit source of power behind cults:

“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.... Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son” (cf. 1 John 2:18–22).

John’s letter is an apologetic against the deceptive intrusions of docetic gnosticism into

*The primary point of departure between cults and historic Christianity is the person, nature, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.*



the gospel. Docetism taught that Christ did not actually become flesh but merely seemed to be a man. Only the enlightened—those who possessed a secret knowledge available only to the initiated—perceived that Jesus of Nazareth was really a phantom instead of God incarnate.<sup>8</sup>

**Unverifiable revelations, claimed by the founder or leader of a cult, are used for the purpose of controlling the minds and hearts of the faithful.**

John wrote in the “last hour.” Here, it is likely John was thinking of the final stage before the end, though early Christians regarded the whole period between the first and second coming of Christ as constituting the last days. John also speaks of “the antichrist” (singular) and “many antichrists” (plural). Spiritual counterfeits mark the “last hour.”

The word *antichrist* is a compound Greek word. The preposition *anti* means, *in place of* or *in the stead of*,<sup>9</sup> and the root *christ* means the *Anointed One*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the intention of both *antichrist* and *antichrists* is summed up in the name: To replace or

exchange the biblical Christ with a counterfeit Christ.

What do the “antichrist” and “antichrists” have in common? The driving force of “the spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3). John points to four distinctive marks of the spirit of antichrist:

The “spirit of antichrist”:

1. *Begins in association with the church* (1 John 2:19; cf. Acts 20:28–31). By its very nature, the spirit of antichrist operates where the gospel is preached, for its aim is to replace the Jesus of biblical revelation with an impostor.

2. *Denies that Jesus Christ is the Messiah*. Consequently, it denies Christ’s uniqueness as the only Savior of mankind throughout all of the ages (John 1:18; 1 John 2:22).<sup>11</sup>

3. *Denies the doctrine of the Trinity*—particularly at the point of the relationship between the Father and the Son.<sup>12</sup>

4. *Denies that the Messiah “has come in the flesh”* (1 John 4:2,3). It renounces the incarnation of the true God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

As ministers of the gospel of God’s Son, we “are to defend Christianity itself—the faith preached by the Apostles, attested by the Martyrs, embodied in the Creeds, expounded by the Fathers.”<sup>13</sup> We are to first test the

source of any spiritual power by God’s infallible Word before we rejoice in the effects of that power. **E**

## ENDNOTES

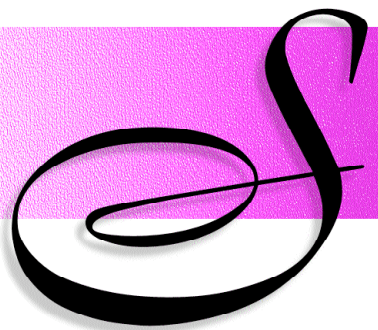
1. See Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House Publishers, 1985, revised), chapter 3, “The Psychological Structure of Cultism,” for an excellent study of the psychological effects of spiritual delusion.
2. *Newsweek*, April 7, 1997, 41.
3. For an excellent study on the sociopsychological dynamics behind cult brain-washing techniques, see Ronald Enroth, *The Lure of the Cults* (Chappaqua, N.Y.: Christian Herald Books, 1979).
4. Walter R. Martin, *Rise of the Cults* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Vision House Publishers, 1977), 11–12.
5. Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.
6. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 377.
7. The word *occult*—Latin: *occultus* meaning *hidden* or *secret*—refers to a type of supernaturalism that is, by its very nature, unverifiable (cf. Acts 26:26). By nature, biblical revelation is historical, and therefore, Christian spirituality is verifiable (cf. Acts 2:22ff.).
8. Cerinthus (ca. A.D. 85) was the first-known advocate of this heresy. Cerinthus held that Jesus differed from other men only in that He was wiser and better than they; all men could discover the *Christ* within through initiation into the secret knowledge of gnosticism. Further, according to Cerinthus, the divine Christ descended upon Jesus at the baptism and left Him at the cross.
9. See Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 49, for the universal sense of the preposition *anti*.
10. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, rev.), 886–87.
11. See the “Chalcedonian Definition,” The Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D. (i.e., the Church’s definition of the relationship of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ).
12. See the Nicene Creed, 325 A.D. (i.e.,

the Church's creedal statement of the relationship between the Father and the Son. In 381 A.D., the creed was revised to include statements concerning the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and the Son).

13. C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), 90.

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## Safeguards for Handling Church Funds

BY MARK S.  
BURGUND

*We must be diligent to see that the church practices good stewardship after the congregation has done its part.*

Stewardship is a necessary sermon topic in our churches, but we must be diligent to see that the church practices good stewardship after the congregation has done its part. Pastors and leaders have a responsibility to properly manage funds given to the church. Careful money management establishes credibility with the church body as well as with those examining the finances of the church. Sloppiness in this area leads to mistakes and invites possible criminal activity.

### EXAMPLES OF FAULTY FUND HANDLING

Your church may have a fund-handling system that worked well when the church was small, but now because of growth, the procedures need to be changed.

Your situation may be similar to what I encountered when I was invited to meet with a deacon board and pastor to recommend a fund-handling procedure change for their church. Their obstacle was a faithful treasurer who had been in office for over 20 years. Her regular routine was to take the uncounted offering home and count and deposit the funds, with no accountability to anyone else. While there was no reason to doubt the honesty of the treasurer, the church needed to change this inappropriate method of handling funds.

Another church had a youth department treasurer who had similar practices. Because the weekly amount was small, he would only make deposits when it was big enough to be meaningful. Meanwhile, it was not unusual for him or his parents to borrow from the undeposited funds, with all good intentions to repay them.

A third church had the offering regularly collected by the ushers, but then left only one usher to put the collection into a bank deposit bag and then the depository for counting the next day.

These are examples of glaring fund-handling problems that can be prevented when proper procedures are followed.

"We've always done it this way" is a dangerous slogan for church finances. Stressing proper accountability removes individuals from being vulnerable to accusation. A full accounting of funds is impossible without clearly following procedures.

You may have inherited a situation where each department has its own checking or savings account. This is a practice to insure that funds won't be intermingled, but it is no longer acceptable. One main account, with all funds from each department flowing through that account, is much preferred for proper fund management. Fund accounting is then used to keep department totals separate. Bookkeeping programs are available for every level, from handwritten manual accounting systems to sophisticated computer software programs that can handle hundreds of departments.

### PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING OFFERINGS

After an offering is received and until it can be properly secured, it should not be left unattended or with only one person. Smaller churches may have the ushers or other designated people count the offering immediately, using a form indicating the amount of cash, coin, and checks, along with who counted the funds (see sidebar for Sample Offering Form). Completed offering forms are essential and should be kept on file for an appropriate amount of time.

The offering counted during or immediately after the service must be done in a private, secure area. Many pastors prefer the offering be secured and counted later to avoid people missing out regularly on the sermon. If so, at least two people should put the money into a money bag and secure it until it

can be counted later.

There are times when an offering will not be counted until the next day. In such cases, it is wise to have two people take the offering to the night depository at the bank. At least two people should also pick it up and count it. Unless your church has a secure safe, leaving money on church premises overnight is too risky.

When an offering is counted, care must be taken to see that the people who donated funds receive proper giving credit. It is necessary to have a system to assure that the name and amount on the envelope agree with the amount inside.

## PROCEDURES FOR OTHER CHURCH RECEIPTS

When special events are held, expenses should not be paid directly from the income, and then only the profit deposited. For example, if the church's youth department sponsors a music concert and receives an offering to pay the band, proper personnel should deposit the total offering and write a check for the band's fees.

In other instances where church activities provide food concessions, it is tempting to just pay for the food expenses with the cash received and then only account for the profit. *All* proceeds from church-related events must be deposited and checks written to pay for expenses. This procedure provides for accurate record keeping and accountability.

Tape and book sales, pop-machine collections, food-service sales, and fund-raisers all offer potential fund-handling problems. Make sure people involved are held accountable for monies received and are properly instructed in the church's fund-handling procedures. In many cases, those collecting funds are not designated to deposit the money. Funds should still be accounted for by more than one person and turned over as soon as possible to those responsible for making deposits.

## SOLUTIONS TO FUND-HANDLING EXAMPLES

In the meeting with the deacon board and pastor mentioned earlier, I suggested a plan of action to honor the treasurer for loyal service. We invited the treasurer to meet with us, and after acknowledging her years of faithfulness, I presented my evaluation of the need to change procedures. I pointed to past practices that exposed the treasurer to possible criticism or accusations, especially since no one else had been involved or shared the accountability or responsibility of the record keeping. The treasurer readily agreed with me and welcomed the change.

The church with the youth treasurer changed its fund-handling procedures. They established that the offering must be counted immediately by two people who signed off on the amount and then gave it to the church treasurer to deposit along with the regular church offerings.

The church that left the funds with one usher changed procedures to include at least two ushers to be with

the money at all times until it was secured. They initialed a form with the number of the locked bank bag on it, even though they did not actually count the offering. They did not have a key to unlock the bag once it was secured. The keys were kept in the accounting department and used when the bags were picked up the next day at the bank.

## CONCLUSION

Proper fund-handling procedures protect church funds and the reputations of those involved. The time it takes to set up proper accountability is negligible compared to the time and effort it takes to remediate situations where the mishandling of funds has created problems. **E**

*Mark S. Burgund is church administrator at Calvary Church, Naperville, Illinois.*

### Sample Offering Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Service \_\_\_\_\_

Currency \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Coin \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL OFFERING** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Counters:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

—Mark S. Burgund

# Preachers' Kids: Their Unique Challenges and Battles

## PART 2: Helping PKs Develop Positive Spiritual and Social Goals

*In the Spring 98 issue, Bill Carmichael listed some of the problems and benefits of being a preacher's kid. Part 2 offers some suggestions on how ministry parents can help their children.*

BY BILL  
CARMICHAEL

*Our kids deserve a chance to grow up outside the bubble of spiritual perfection.*

Most ministry couples have the same anxieties about raising godly children as other Christian parents—maybe more since they feel pressured to have families that are good examples to others. Here are some suggestions to help your PKs develop positive spiritual and social goals.

### TEACH YOUR PKS THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE GRANDCHILDREN.

When they are young, move your children toward their own relationship with Jesus. They must understand that mom and dad in ministry does not give the children a ticket to heaven or salvation.

### LET GOD DO HIS WORK IN HIS TIME.

Although it is important for us to lead our kids in spiritual growth and insist they attend church, we need to be careful that we do not force feed them by insisting they make spiritual commitments they may not personally be ready to make. We must be sensitive to God's timing in their lives for true conversion, water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Too often PKs go through spiritual motions only to doubt later because the commitments and vows they took were premature or forced.

### TREAT THEM NORMALLY.

Our kids deserve a chance to grow up outside the bubble of spiritual perfection. They need opportunities to simply live life—to be able to participate in sports and school and social activities

without worrying what people in the church think. Remember, it is you who are called to the ministry you have, not your children.

### BE HONEST—YOU DON'T HAVE THE PERFECT FAMILY.

Tell the truth about your own struggles as a parent when teaching others about how to raise their children. Your congregation needs to know you go through the same difficulties with your kids as they do. When they see your vulnerability, they will find a new sense of hope in trusting God. The side benefit is that they will lower their expectations of the preacher's kids.

### BE PREPARED FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS.

All of us want our kids to turn out right. We've all seen PKs who rebelled and didn't follow their parents' example.

As your children are growing up, remember that most of us needed to go through times of "trying on" God for ourselves. For some, it may only mean a thought process and a simple prayer of repentance. For others, it may mean more open times of rebellious behavior.

### BE A PRAYER WARRIOR FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

Do you spend time in prayer and fasting for each of your children? You and I are called to stand in the gap for them. It is essential that we make intercessory prayer for our kids a vital part of our time spent in the presence of God.

### MAKE SPIRITUALITY FUN.

Who says family devotion times have to be boring? Act out Bible stories, play games, go to the zoo, or walk through a nature center to teach your young children about God. Think of



creative ways to share the Word with your older children and teens also.

PKs need to sense that serving God is not a diligent chore but a joyful pleasure. Spiritual disciplines will come later if they sense the joy and adventure there is in knowing and serving God while they're young.

### **NEVER LET MINISTRY ROB YOU FROM YOUR CHILDREN.**

The spiritual landscape is littered with the lives of PKs who resented their mom or dad not being available because of ministry. We must remember our first church and our first ministry is our family. We must be sure to give our children quantity and quality time. Parents who seldom attend their kids' school concerts and sporting events, who come home after the kids are in bed, or who travel away in ministry for long periods of time will someday see it reflected in their children's attitudes toward God and spiritual things.

Remember, the time spent parenting is only one season in our life. It is not God's will to sacrifice our children to other tasks, no matter how noble or fulfilling they may seem.

### **INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN IN YOUR MINISTRY.**

One of the ways to balance ministry and parenting is to include your PKs in your work. The benefits are: (1) It puts you and your child together for times that would otherwise be spent apart. (2) It gives your child a sense of ownership and participation in your calling and ministry. (3) It lets your

***Remember that most of us needed to go through times of "trying on"***

***God for ourselves.***

child see the hand of God at work. Taking them on visitation assignments to the elderly will teach them the lessons of grace, compassion, and hospitality. If your kids sing, play instruments, or work with puppets, find ways to add their talents to your ministry.

### **BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU DISCUSS.**

PKs should not be privy to conversations about church problems. They are not prepared to handle the same emotions or problems that you are capable of coping with.

### **BE A CONSISTENT MENTOR AND ROLE MODEL.**

If your kids see a different person in public than they experience at home, they will discount the truth of God's Word. They must see you living out your convictions. It would be better for them if you were not in ministry than for them to sense that much of it is fake on your part.

### **REPENT TO YOUR FAMILY.**

In my family seminars I ask, "How can your children learn to repent if they do not see you repent when you do something wrong?" We model God's grace (or lack of it) by the way we handle our own imperfections. Your kids notice your mistakes. How you handle them will mean everything about how you teach your children to find God's grace.

***Your kids notice your mistakes.***

***How you handle them will mean everything about how you teach your children to find God's grace.***

When you blow it, you need to come to your children and name the wrong behavior, admit you were wrong, tell them you have asked God to forgive you, and then ask them to forgive you also. Then they will see the wonderful way in which repentance and forgiveness restore relationship with God and with each other.

Nothing pleases Satan more than to steal our kids from us, and he will use every opportunity—including our ministry—to do so. It is up to us to guard our homes and lives, to be quick to respond to God's voice in raising our children. It is our God-given duty and calling to give them our very best now. **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.*

# What Would Life Be Like If There Were No Pastors?

BY DON COLEY

*Where would we be if your salt no longer seasoned and preserved us?*

Dear Pastor:

How do you put up with us? Sermons on the unity of the body are answered with divisive annual meetings. Counseling sessions uncover evidence that pleas for righteous living have gone unheeded. Biblical answers for life's problems are regularly shared but too frequently ignored. The cleansing fire of revival seems distant, and doubts about the effectiveness of your ministry linger in your mind.

If the discouragements of ministry threaten your continued call, consider what life would be like if there were no pastors to shepherd the flocks. What would the body of Christ be like without your presence? What would the nations of the world be without your collective influence? Where would we be if your salt no longer seasoned and preserved us? Here are some thoughts from a layman about the importance of your pastoral role.

Each week I see evidence of what America would be like without pastors. Headlines scream out the verdicts on a nation that looks to politics, not pastors, for lasting answers. Is there any wonder we are experiencing an epidemic of divorce when the original plan for marriage has been casually cast aside? Where, aside from the biblical teaching of the faithful pastor, will men and women learn how to be true husbands and wives? Where, aside from the biblical counseling of the faithful pastor, will those struggling in their marriages hear that the answer is not to abandon each other but to renew their commitment to one another? Who in our society is capable of equipping young men and women for the future challenges of marriage, if not you?

Where will our world learn of justice except from those who know its Author? How will we experience racial harmony and reconciliation without first being reconciled with the One who made us? When will we realize the command to treat every person, rich or poor,

impartially because He has commanded it and because it is right? A world without moral standards is incapable of explaining why we should exercise justice and be reconciled to our enemies. Our world does not understand the origin of its problems and the source for its answers. You do. God has entrusted you with His message. Speak and live it forcefully.

*Where will our world learn of justice except from those who know its Author?*

Our depth of insight often results from your pastoral care. If every person in your community knew that they are valued by God, valued so highly that they were worth the death of His Son, would we be experiencing the sense of estrangement and isolation so evident in our world? If every man and woman understood the price God paid so they could live in peace, would the problem of domestic violence be skyrocketing? If every child knew the innocence and safety of a home headed by men and women of faith, would sexual abuse be the modern plague that it is? If every son and daughter lived with parents dedicated to their biblical roles, and to each other, would we be facing our current crisis of sexual orientation and rebellion?

*You must never underestimate the impact of who you are and what you do.*

The church, alone among all of our institutions, has the answer. Pastors, alone among all vocations, have the ultimate calling to share the answer with people.

Each time I drive to church I pass those who live their lives without a shepherd. How do they survive without your influence? Where do they go when they are discouraged? I benefit

from your teaching and encouragement. I learn from your dedication and example. Who are their role models? Rush

***Our world does not understand  
the origin of its problems  
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answers. You do.***

Limbaugh? The Simpsons? Hardly! Only in your care will they experience the words of life. Only in relationship with people of faith will they find the fulfillment they seek, and God intends.

How do those who have not yet heard God's message of hope deal with the devastating news of a lost job, a failed marriage, a positive biopsy? What sustains them in the black of night when the message of light is something unknown to them? Who comforts them with a sense of purpose when everything in their existence seems void of meaning? You do. And the people in your pews carry your message on roads you will never travel and inject your influence into places you will never go.

The demands of life outstrip the ability of service clubs, sports, work, or any human activity to bring lasting and ultimate meaning. Twelve-step programs are not enough. Fame and power vanish. Beauty fades. Physical strength wanes. Dreams disappear. Prodigals don't return. Expectations are unfulfilled. Spouses die. What then? Without your message—despair. With your message—hope. Hope that does not disappoint. Hope that has a future.

You must never underestimate the impact of who you are and what you do. You must resist the temptation to dwell on the shortcomings of your work. Yes,

***The people in your pews  
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will never go.***

there are frustrations. But there is also fruit. It is easy to be distracted by the visible impact of the family disintegrating in your midst, without remembering

***God has entrusted you with  
His message. Speak and live  
it forcefully.***

the families that are intact and functioning because of your invisible influence. There are and will be financial crises that would be eased if more of us in the pews were serious about stewardship. Apathy will continue to exist. Those we esteem may fall and disappoint us. Because we still feel the affects of our sinful nature, only that amazing grace, which makes your walk and mine possible, is sufficient for us to try again. God's mercy is new every morning.

His grace changes our hearts from an orientation of self to an orientation of others. We learn to give and be glad. His constant presence reminds us that there is still time to obey His call. We learn that He patiently waits for us to return to Him. When we fall and disappoint, He raises us up and comforts us. We learn that He does not abandon us to our failures but supplies strength in our weakness. This God who called you into ministry is a great and mighty God. One whose faithfulness never ends.

Don't quit on us. Don't quit on yourself. God remains at work in all of us. So take courage from this view from the pew; we are in this work together. These words, written by one person, are views shared by countless thousands. We say to you at the moment of your discouragement: "Persevere." We pray for you at the moment of your need: "Lord, deliver." We stand with you when you think you are all alone. God's presence is enough. He is able. He began a good work in you. He will be faithful to complete it.

God bless you. **E**

*Don Coley, a layman, attends First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.*







# Together in a Cause: The Power of a Missions Convention

BY DAVID E.  
GODWIN

**A missions convention gives the pastor a platform to unite the people around the singular purpose of bringing people to Christ.**

A friend recently remarked, "If Christians would just get together, they could really do things for God." Bringing God's people together points out the real power of a missions convention. When a pastor takes time during the year to formally consider the Great Commission, several church-changing things start to happen.

- *People come together around the Cross.* The mission and the message have to do with what Jesus accomplished at Calvary. A missions convention gives the pastor a platform to unite the people around the singular purpose of bringing people to Christ.

I am touched by the unselfishness of the pastor who sends a percentage of the general budget to missions each month. But the problem is that the congregation has not united around this transcendent cause. They have no sense of the pastor's sacrifice, no increased burden, and no sense of the joy that comes from obedience. Unfortunately, they have been left out of the loop.

- *People in agreement pay the missions bills.* A California presbyter's face radiated joy as he reported how his church had given 23 percent of its annual income to missions. The congregation went far beyond what he had thought possible.

Some have asked, "How can I afford a missions convention?" In the pastorate I discovered the only way to afford the missions program of the church was to faithfully present the challenge in our annual missions convention. The convention always paid its way and never failed to underwrite our entire home and foreign missions budget. Beyond subsidizing the missions budget, the convention provided the setting for increase.

God used a missions convention to create an unusual response for the Assembly of God in Meridian, Idaho. Last year the congregation responded with an increase of almost 350 percent in faith promises for missions. Pastor Ed Kreiner reported that the actual monthly missions offerings were 500 percent above the previous year. He added that the general budget

increased 30 percent since the convention.

- *God's people are encouraged to consider their role in the harvest.* We suggest that a church set aside two Sundays every year for a missions convention and that the pastor preach the first Sunday to impart the vision God has given for the church. Although no group can support every missionary and field, a review of the church's history will show that God has brought before it certain burdens and opportunities time and again. When pastors declare with a heart full of passion what they see to be the church's part in the harvest, the congregation will rally around the cause.

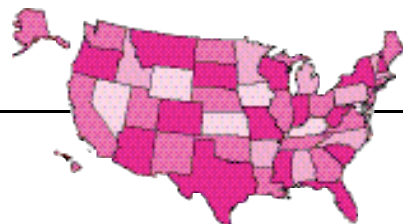
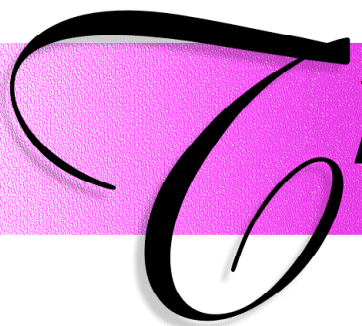
- *People gather together around the altar.* Few events on the church calendar are as conducive to intercession as the missions convention. Far more than just an appeal for a project, the missions convention offers the pastor the opportunity to present the cry of the entire world. Those in darkness are the ones who are lost by default. They have not rejected the truth; they have never heard the truth.

Years ago as a young missionary, I observed a church in Albany, Oregon, gather around the Great Commission. People responded with almost unbelievable faith promises—a response born in a revival of prayer. We were brought to our knees as we prayed for workers in the harvest. We laid aside our own needs and wept over a fallen world.

Over and over God has used missions conventions to bring His people together around the altar of prayer. At the altar a congregation can consider the faces of people for whom Christ died but who will never be saved without believers partnering in intercession.

As believers we have already rallied around the Cross. The missions convention gives us the opportunity to rally around God's great cause: the salvation of lost humanity. **E**

*David E. Godwin is Task Force Ministries coordinator for Assemblies of God Foreign Missions.*



## The Right Way To Split a Church

**P**astor, this is the right way to split a church," one of our deacons said through tears of joy.

We had just finished a commissioning service where we had prayerfully released some 80 adults and children from our church to start a new church in one of America's fastest-growing areas. Our board appointed Senior Associate Cassell as the new pastor of this fledgling congregation.

My instructions to the group that evening were: "You will always be a part of this church family, and we expect to always be a part of you. Now you are joining hands with us in birthing a new congregation in Parker, Colorado. We will work together. We will establish another great missionary church, and the kingdom of God will be richer."

### WHAT PROCESS DID WE FOLLOW?

Parker Christian Center began as the result of our burden to properly establish a self-supporting work in the area 25 miles southeast of Denver/Aurora, Colorado. As part of our Decade of Harvest goals, we planned to help sponsor at least two new works during the decade. This was one of them.

We called for at least 50 members from our church—preferably those who lived in the general area of Parker—to make at least a 2-year commitment to the new church. Our board announced the plans in our annual business meeting.

In the fall of 1995, Pastor Cassell started the Parker Class, which met each Sunday for almost 5 months during our Sunday school hour. The members of the new work listened to the new pastor's vision as they began to lock-in to the work being established in Parker.

Then in April 1996, the work began, fully endorsed by the Rocky Mountain District of the Assemblies of God. Our church, Aurora First Assembly of God, guaranteed the new pastor's salary, as needed, for up to 18 months and assisted with start-up costs.

We set up an advisory board for the new work comprised of myself, three deacons from our church, the pastor and three representatives from the new work,

and the Rocky Mountain District assistant superintendent.

### HOW IS THE NEW CHURCH DOING?

Parker Christian Center had 144 in attendance on their inaugural Sunday in April 1996. In the first 6 months average attendance was 106, and average offerings were \$4,000. Pastor Cassell reports that current average attendance has doubled, and over 250 people call Parker Christian Center their church home. Finances have continued to increase along with the steady church growth.

During their first missions convention, Parker Christian Center committed \$92,000 in faith promises. The church applied for and received sovereignty status with the Rocky Mountain District Council and The General Council of the Assemblies of God 9 months after it started holding services—January 12, 1997.

### HOW HAS THE NEW CHURCH IMPACTED THE MOTHER CHURCH?

Although we commissioned over 80 people and some \$130,000 in finances to the new work, we stand upon God's promise in Luke 6:38: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

We believe God will provide the replacements for all those who started the new church. Over 10 new families have stepped forward to say, "Count on us. We'll help take the place of the families who left to start the new church."

God honors His Word and is blessing Aurora First Assembly. At present there is a real spirit of revival in our church. During the last year, decisions have been made for Christ in our church services. **E**

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

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*BY HOWARD L.  
CUMMINGS*

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*We will work together.  
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# Prayer and Fasting in Today's World

BY SANDRA G.  
CLOPINE

Fads grab us. Buzzwords come and go. Human nature thrives on its fickle tendencies.

One buzzword or fad, however, sweeping our world was not born of a fickle nature. It was born in the heart of God. Prayer has become a major theme throughout the Christian world. Prayer retreats, prayer seminars, prayer summits, and annual prayer and fasting conferences are in vogue. People of all denominations seek God's face with eagerness, purpose, and spiritual hunger.

Books on prayer dot bookstore shelves. Both religious and secular authors write of prayer's influence and practice in individual lives.

In 1993 I was interviewed by Jim Castelli for a secular book he was compiling on the topic of prayer. *How I Pray* carried the names of many well-known people such as Billy Graham, Norman Lear, George Gallup, Jr., and others. It was written to be placed in newsstands and convenience stores. My purpose in participating was that somebody might read what I had said about a lasting relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and would desire such a relationship.

Jo Kadlec reported of a prayer gathering of some 40,000 children from all over the world who filled the Olympic Stadium in Seoul, Korea, in 1995: "They were not there to take in a sporting event, hear a rock concert or even a great evangelist. They gathered with only one objective: to pray."<sup>1</sup> Thank God for the children with a heart for seeking God and for the Florida-based Esther Network International that helped organize the gathering.

Author Ronnie Floyd makes the point in his book that one of the primary functions of fasting and prayer is to help us discover what God's ordained purpose and will are for our lives. True power is found in obedience to God and His Word.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of fasting and prayer is not to give us power to fulfill selfish desires and ambitions. It is not for the purpose of manipulating God. It is not to elevate our status or personal agenda.

Neither should it promote false piety or legalism.

Notes in *The Full Life Study Bible* suggest that fasting and prayer are a sign of the believer's longing for the return of the Lord, a preparation for His coming, a mourning of His absence, and a sign of sorrow for the sin and decay of the world. The whole point is to honor God, express a penitent heart, and hungrily seek His will and way.<sup>3</sup>

The Psalmist says it well: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God" (Psalm 42:1, NKJV).

Floyd expresses this need for hungering and thirsting after God in a bit more crude but practical way: "When will we come to that time in our lives when God causes us to crave the nourishment of a spiritual feast in His presence more than bellying up to an earthly smorgasbord?"<sup>4</sup>

Fasting and prayer should be a time of discovering, exploring, and enjoying intimacy with God. It should be feasting in His presence, identifying with His purpose, and denying the natural to delight in the supernatural. Jesus assumed His disciples would fast when He said, "When you fast," not if you fast (cf. Matthew 6:16,17). God help us to be as eager to fast with Him as to share His table of abundant provision.

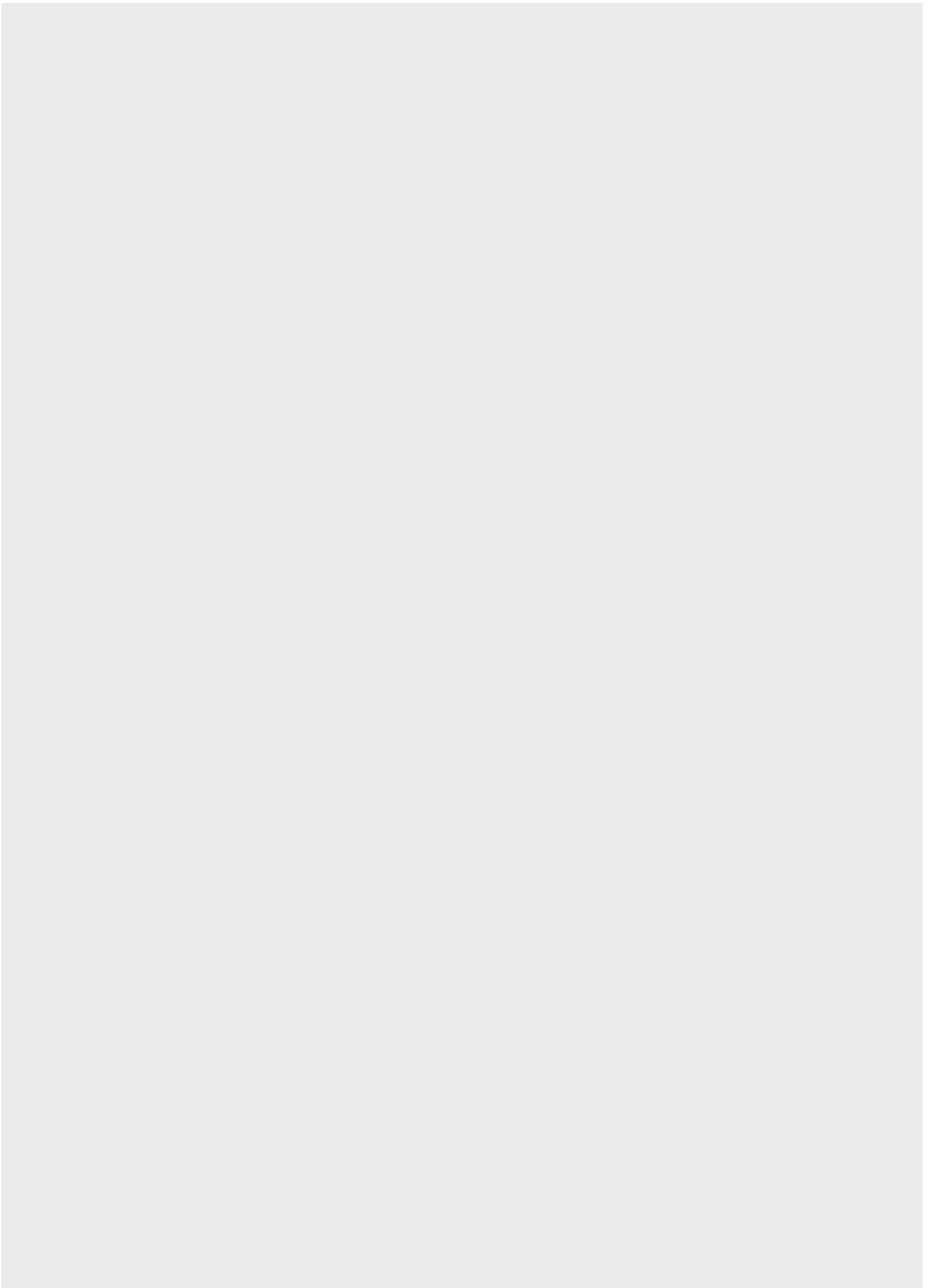
Prayer is more than a buzzword in a world of fads. Prayer is the lifestyle of His true disciples. **E**

## ENDNOTES

1. Quote taken from the newsletter *News for the New Man*, March/April 1996.
2. Ronnie W. Floyd, *The Power of Prayer and Fasting: Ten Secrets of Spiritual Strength* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 200.
3. Donald C. Stamps, ed., *The Full Life Study Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1990), 1411-12.
4. Floyd, 55.

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







## ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

**John 16:13,14**

### INTRODUCTION:

We have 24-hour assistance through the Holy Spirit.

The disciples had no hope without Jesus. But the work of Jesus was not broken off after His death and resurrection because He promised a continual outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

### MESSAGE:

The Holy Spirit helps us in looking:

1. **Upward (verse 14).**  
Only through the Spirit can we truly know Jesus.
2. **Inward.**  
The Holy Spirit is a counselor. He will advise you.
3. **Forward (verse 13).**  
The Holy Spirit helps us understand the destiny God has for this world,

the human race, and the Church.

### 4. Outward.

It is the Spirit's responsibility to help the believer testify to the world.

### CONCLUSION:

The Holy Spirit helps us with our outlook by giving us the love we need. It is futile to have spiritual power if we do not have spiritual love.

—Jay Herndon, Burlingame, California

## THE TRAGEDY OF A DELINQUENT DAD

**1 Samuel 2**

### INTRODUCTION:

The story of Eli is the story of a delinquent dad who failed to teach his sons three crucial lessons that every father must teach his children.

### MESSAGE:

Eli did *not* teach his sons to:

1. **Fear God (verses 12–17).**
  - a. We must teach our children to fear God (Proverbs 1:7).
  - b. There are two aspects to fearing God.
    - (1) We must teach them what God is like.

- (2) We must teach them to worship God (Proverbs 3:5).

2. **Control their bodies (verse 22).**  
We must teach our children to control their bodies (Proverbs 2:16–18; 5:1–10; 1 Thessalonians 4:4).
3. **Obey him (verses 23–25).**
  - a. We must teach our children to obey us as parents (Proverbs 3:11,12; 10:13; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:17).
  - b. The result of Eli's sons' disobedience was death (1 Samuel 2:30–34).

### CONCLUSION:

Dr. James Dobson writes: "This mission of introducing one's children to the Christian faith can be likened to a three-man relay race. First, your father runs his lap around the track carrying the baton, which represents the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the appropriate moment, he hands the baton to you, and you begin your journey around the track. Then finally, the time will come when you must get the baton safely in the hands of your child. Relay races are won or lost in the transfer of the baton.... If failure is to occur, it will likely happen in the exchange between generations."

—John Lindell, Springfield, Missouri

## RECONCILIATION

**Luke 15:11–31**

### INTRODUCTION:

Alienation and estrangement between fathers and children are tragically common in our day. Here is a dramatic story of a father's full reconciliation with his prodigal son and an attempted reconciliation with a jealous elder son.

### MESSAGE:

1. **A heart-breaking separation**
  - a. Reluctant compliance: "So he divided his property" (verse 12)
  - b. Inevitable consequence: "there squandered his wealth" (verse 13)
  - c. Predictable dilemma: "began to be in need" (verse 14)
  - d. Ultimate despair: "longed to fill his

- stomach" (verse 16)
2. **A life-giving awakening**
  - a. Quickened conscience: "came to his senses" (verse 17)
  - b. Enlightened memory: "as my father's hired men have more"
  - c. Insightful decision: "I will...go back" (verse 18)
3. **A love-motivated reunion**
  - a. Expectant waiting: "while he was still a long way off" (verse 20)
  - b. Joyous reconciliation: "threw his arms around him"
  - c. Honest admission: "I have sinned" (verse 21)
  - d. Appropriate celebration: "Let's have a feast" (verse 23)
4. **A pride-incited challenge**

- a. Awakened suspicion: "he heard music and dancing" (verse 25)
- b. Startling discovery: "your father has killed the fattened calf" (verse 27)
- c. Fallen countenance: "refused to go in" (verse 28)
- d. Heartless confrontation: "you never gave me" (verse 29)
- e. Generous affirmation: "everything I have is yours" (verse 31)

### CONCLUSION:

This story provides the inspiration, instruction, and motivation to reunite estranged fathers and children.

—Richard L. Dresselhaus,  
San Diego, California



## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### Matthew 6:9-15

#### INTRODUCTION:

This prayer is often called The Model Prayer. With just 66 words it gives a threefold message: to God, for others, for self.

#### MESSAGE:

This prayer's:

#### 1. Personality (verse 9)

- Person: "Our Father" (John 1:12; 1 John 3:2)
- Place: "which art in heaven" (Isaiah 43:11)
- Purity: "Hallowed be Thy name" (Leviticus 20:7; Hebrews 12:14)

#### 2. Power (verse 10)

- Dominion: "Thy kingdom come" (Revelation 22:20)

- Desire: "Thy will be done" (Psalm 143:10; Romans 12:1,2; 1 John 2:17)
- Divine: "as it is in heaven" (Proverbs 3:5,6; Matthew 6:33)

#### 3. Provision (verse 11)

- Daily strength (Philippians 4:13)
- Daily surrender (Romans 12:1,2)
- Daily sustenance (Psalm 37:25; Philippians 4:19)

#### 4. Pardon (verse 12)

- Forgiving our sins (Psalm 103:3; 1 John 1:7,9)
- Forgiving sinners (John 6:37; Romans 10:13)
- Forgiving shortcomings (Ephesians 4:32)

#### 5. Plea (verse 13)

- Desire: "And lead us not into temptation" (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:12)
- Deliverance: "but deliver us from evil" (Romans 8:31)
- Divine: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"

#### 6. Plan (verses 14,15)

- Faithfulness
- Forgiveness

#### CONCLUSION:

Prayer is more than words. God looks upon the heart. We will learn to pray when we take time to pray daily.

—Croft M. Pentz, Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

## BENEFITS OF BELONGING

### Psalm 103:1-5, NKJV

#### INTRODUCTION:

As a part of belonging to God's family, we enjoy His benefits. David lists five benefits of belonging to God's family and admonishes us not to forget them.

#### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Forgiveness (verse 3)

- "Who forgives all your iniquities"
- Foundation for all benefits
- For all (Romans 6:10)
- Covers all our sins (Mark 3:28)
- Requires forgiving (Mark 11:26)

#### 2. Healing (verse 3)

- "Who heals all your diseases"
- Promised to Israel (Exodus 15:26)

- Performed by Christ (Mark 1:34)
- Practiced by the disciples (Matthew 10:8)
- Part of Christ's ministry today (James 5:14)

#### 3. Redemption (verse 4)

- "Who redeems your life from destruction"
- Through His blood (Ephesians 1:7)
- From the curse (Galatians 3:13)
- To God (Revelation 5:9)

#### 4. Crown (verse 4)

- "Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies"
- Lovingkindness
- Tenderness
- Life (James 1:12)

- Glory (1 Peter 5:4)
- Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)

#### 5. Satisfaction (verse 5)

- "Who satisfies your mouth with good things"
- Thirst (John 7:37)
- Hunger (John 6:35)
- Desires (Psalm 37:4)
- Soul (Psalm 107:9)

#### CONCLUSION:

These benefits are available to everyone. The key is belonging. Without belonging to God's family, you cannot partake of His benefits.

—Randy Cartwright,  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

## HE SENT FORTH HIS WORD AND HEALED THEM

### Psalm 107:20

#### INTRODUCTION:

The Psalmist makes a declaration of the healing power of the Word of God. God's Word can heal you today.

#### MESSAGE:

God's Word is:

1. Creatively powerful (Genesis 1:3; Psalm 119:25; Ecclesiastes 8:4).
2. Eternal (Psalm 119:89; John 1:1).

3. Alive and active (Jeremiah 20:9; 2 Timothy 2:9; Hebrews 4:12).
4. Faith producing (Romans 10:17).
5. Life giving (Ezekiel 37:1-10). God's Word has healing power for the:
6. Soul (Isaiah 1:18; John 1:14, 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:23).
7. Mind (Psalm 119:9; Romans 12:1,2; Ephesians 4:23).
8. Heart (Psalm 119:11; Jeremiah 17:9).
9. Body (2 Kings 13:21; Matthew 8:8;

John 11:43,44).

10. Eternity (Psalm 23:6; 119:74; Revelation 21:4).

#### CONCLUSION:

What area of your life needs healing today? Allow God's Word to touch you and bring divine healing.

—James T. Meadows,  
Kansas City, Missouri





## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

### 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

#### INTRODUCTION:

We often face overwhelming circumstances. What do you do when you don't know what to do? How did Jehoshaphat get from overwhelming circumstances to victory and peace? He did it by turning to God in prayer, faith, obedience, and worship. In times of crisis, we should do the same.

#### MESSAGE:

We should turn to God in:

1. **Prayer (verses 1-19).**
  - a. Jehoshaphat's Prayer (verses 1-13)
    - (1) His prayer was prompt.
    - (2) His prayer was passionate (verses 3,4,9).
    - (3) His prayer was proper.

b. God's response (verses 14-19)

- (1) God's response brought encouragement.
- (2) God's response brought instruction.

2. **Faith (verse 20).**

- a. Faith based on God's person
- b. Faith based on God's promises

3. **Obedience (verses 15-17).**

- a. Obedience to God's specific instruction
- b. Obedience to God's general instruction (17:1-6)

4. **Worship (verses 21-28).**

- a. Praise God before He brings victory (verses 18,19).
- b. Praise God while He is bringing victory (verses 21,22).
- c. Praise God after He brings

victory (verses 26,28).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. **The story's conclusion (verses 29,30).**  
When Jehoshaphat turned to God in the face of overwhelming circumstances, he experienced financial blessings, rest, peace, and complete deliverance from his enemies.

2. **The story's message for us.**

When we face overwhelming circumstances and don't know what to do, we need to turn to God in prayer, faith, obedience, and worship. When we do, He will make our battle His own and bring victory into our lives.

—Tim McIntyre, Morenci, Arizona

## THE BLESSED MAN

### Psalms 1

#### INTRODUCTION:

Godly Jews sang psalms to worship the Lord and build up their faith. Psalm 1 draws a sharp contrast between the godly and the ungodly.

#### MESSAGE:

1. **The godly man**

- a. His decision (verse 1)
  - (1) Not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly (Proverbs 14:12; 1 Corinthians 1:20)
  - (2) Not to stand in the way of sinners (Matthew 7:13)
  - (3) Not to sit in the seat of the

scornful (Psalm 68:6; 1 Peter 5:5)

b. His delight (verse 2)

- (1) In the law of the Lord (Psalm 43:3; 119:24)
- (2) Meditating in it constantly (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 63:6)

c. His description (verse 3)

- (1) Like a tree (Acts 5:15; Colossians 2:7; 2 Peter 3:18)
- (2) Shall not wither (Ezekiel 47:12; Ephesians 5:26)
- (3) Will prosper (Psalm 35:27; 3 John 2)

2. **The ungodly man**

- a. Is as chaff
  - (1) Driven away

(2) Brief prosperity (Psalm 73:3,19)

(3) Only for burning (Matthew 3:12)

b. His fate (verses 4,5)

- (1) Fail in the judgment (Hebrews 9:27; 10:31)
- (2) Shall be barred from God's elect (Matthew 25:46; 2 Timothy 2:19)

#### CONCLUSION:

"The Lord knoweth" (verse 6) and sees the way the righteous live, and He promises to reward them (Revelation 22:12). He also sees the way the ungodly live and warns that they shall perish (Luke 13:3).

"Blessed" is the man who chooses to be godly.

—John F. Walker

## WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL PERSON?

### Galatians 6:1-6

#### INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever heard someone say, "He isn't spiritual" or "She sure is spiritual"? The Bible defines for us what it means to be a spiritual person.

#### MESSAGE:

A spiritual person:

1. **Has the Spirit's birth** (John 3:5-7).
2. **Believes the Spirit's book** (2 Timothy 3:16,17).
3. **Obeys the Spirit's beseeching**

(Romans 12:1,2).

4. **Walks in the Spirit's behavior**

(1 Corinthians 6:17).

5. **Experiences the Spirit's blessings**

(Galatians 5:22,23).

—Buddy Barnett, Mathis, Texas



## FIFTEEN WAYS TO PUBLICIZE YOUR CHURCH

Here are 15 ways to stretch a small publicity budget.

**1. Telephone directory business ad pages.** You can get the maximum benefit for minimum expense. Study existing ads. Which ones catch your eye? No need to clutter the ad with a lot of copy. Often, just location, a line that describes your church's personality, and a phone number is sufficient.

**2. Newspaper.** Consider a small weekly ad on your local newspaper's church page. We have designed a series of ads using cartoon illustrations with thought-provoking comments that the newspaper rotates.

When you advertise regularly, the newspaper is more apt to give you free news coverage of your church's special events.

Consider placing an ad in the newspaper's periodic supplements. They receive far greater distribution than normal circulation.

Write a timely letter to the editor. It's free, and people will read it.

**3. Telephone message.** You don't need a fancy message system to make sure a caller never encounters an unanswered ring. State up front what information you're about to give, and tell callers how they can skip ahead to leave a message.

**4. Specialty ads.** Consider placing an ad in specialty publications such as the Christian Yellow Pages, county fair guides, and area maps listing advertisers.

What about an ad in the Little Theater, symphony, or civic events programs?

**5. Public-service announcements.** PSAs are free and a great source of publicity. Newspapers, radio stations, and even some television stations offer this service. Remember to follow their guidelines, keep to the point, and plan far enough in advance so that you meet their deadlines.

**6. Bulk mailings.** If you've moved to a new location, are having a special outreach, or just want to reach occasional attenders, a 4- by 6-inch postcard bulk mailing can be effective. Include eye-catching graphics and avoid "churchese" language.

**7. Posters, flyers, and tickets.** Place posters on your church walls and in the

windows of local businesses.

Use flyers as bulletin inserts or as handouts when going door-to-door.

Even if you are not charging admission for an event, a complimentary ticket, given by your congregation to friends, carries the message: "This is a special event." It also serves as a reminder of date and time and indicates how many people might show up. We include the message: "Guaranteed seating for the first 1,000 only."

**8. Giveaways.** Printing your church name and number on pens, mugs, or T-shirts will ensure that they are seen by more people than just the recipients. A coffee processor once donated little bags of coffee on which we placed our own label. They made popular gifts for first-time visitors.

**9. The Internet.** Someone familiar with the Internet can set up a web site for your church. You can offer a directional map, a complete list of your ministries, or whatever you want to let people know about your church.

**10. Your church building.** Make your church building available for community events. Become a voting site. Welcome the bloodmobile.

**11. Television and other media.** The public access channel of your local cable operator will air footage of your service or Bible study free of charge. Make sure your church name and phone number are included so viewers can contact you.

Consider becoming a host for a local Christian television station's talk show. As you gain confidence before a microphone, you can make yourself known to local secular talk shows as a spokesperson for pro-life, antigambling issues, or humanitarian efforts.

**12. Signs.** If your exterior church sign has a reader board, place clever, positive sayings on it, not just your name, sermon title, and times of service. The *Assemblies of God Bulletin and Newsletter Service* and other resources provide pithy sayings.

If you have a van or bus, make sure your church name and phone number are painted on the sides.

**13. Regular publications.** Consider adding the names of the newspaper's

religion editor and your town's mayor to your mailing list. Remember, your church's bulletins, newsletters, and brochures are often passed on to others, so be sure to proofread carefully.

**14. Stationery, business cards, and envelopes.** With the right design, even black ink on white paper can look dignified and communicate the right message. Include not only the church name, address, and phone number, but also your fax number and E-mail address if you have them.

**15. Involvement in community activities.** Publicize your church by getting involved in community events. Encourage various church groups to participate in local parades. Sponsor fund-raisers and clothing exchanges open to the community.

As a pastor, your involvement is also important. Begin with the local ministerial association. Does your town have a Rotary Club? Can you get on a local hospital board or become chaplain for your police or fire departments? Volunteer to head up the National Day of Prayer observance in your community. Attend city council meetings or school board meetings open to the public. Your warm, compassionate involvement in the community will assure people that your church is a good place to attend.

—Diana Kruger, Renton, Washington

## E-MAIL DAILY DEVOTIONS

The Bible says we are to "encourage one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13, NIV). I have often wondered how we can do that.

Last year after preaching a message from this text, I felt prompted to start an E-mail daily devotional for those in the congregation that have E-mail access. (Many pastors would be surprised at how many people in their congregations have E-mail, at home or at work.)

Early each morning I write a short, uplifting, and challenging message, usually based on a single phrase or portion of Scripture. E-mail programs allow you to set up a list of recipients. So after I enter my message on the computer and click the mouse button, I can send many in our congregation a daily message from their pastor.

—Stephen C. Weber,  
Taunton, Massachusetts



## LIFE SKILLS CLASSES FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER MINISTRY

We have found that many of our young men and women have reached the age of adulthood but do not have some of the basic skills required to be an adult. So once a quarter, our college and career young people meet for life skills classes. This popular event includes classes covering topics such as: how to balance your checkbook, how to cook a home-cooked meal, what you need to know when buying a car or securing a loan, and how to create a résumé.

One memorable life skills class was how to cook a home-cooked meal. We met in our home and divided a group of 35 into teams. The teams were responsible for preparation and cleanup of their part of the meal.

After a great deal of laughter and fun as the meal was prepared, we ate by candlelight. Our college and career young people

still talk about the fun we had that night.

—T. Suzanne Eller,  
Muskogee, Oklahoma

## THE “ASK IT” BASKET

As a small group leader, you want to address your group members’ pressing questions, but you’re not always sure what those questions are. An “ask it” basket is one solution. When you meet, give each person a slip of paper on which to write out questions. Provide a basket where the questions can be deposited. Use these questions as a springboard into your lesson, or set aside 10 minutes at the end of each meeting to address issues raised by the group.

The “ask it” basket works particularly well in these situations:

- **Groups where people are still getting to know one another.** The basket can bridge the gap until members feel comfortable enough to speak openly. Once the group gets to know one another, encourage people to verbalize their questions.

- **Sensitive topics.** Perhaps your next lesson is on marital conflict. The week before, ask group members to turn in their questions on this topic. Then address their questions during your next meeting.

- **Member-driven discussions.** Sensitive ministry sometimes means setting aside your lesson plans to address the real issues and questions your group members are wrestling with.

- **Gauging your teaching effectiveness.** An effective lesson prompts questions in the learners’ minds. Tap into this inquisitiveness and allow people to ask their burning questions. Then ask yourself: Are my lessons promoting deeper reflection? Are group members satisfied with the information I’m imparting to them? Are they asking questions I’ve already covered? The answers will help you improve your skills in teaching and leading discussions.

Bear in mind that you do not carry sole responsibility for responding to questions. Use “ask it” basket questions to engage the entire group in discussion. You’ll be amazed at the collective wisdom in one small group.

—Keith D. Wright,  
Kansas City, Missouri

## FALL HARVEST PARTY

An annual fall harvest party is an alternative to Halloween and a great outreach to your community. For kids 12 and under, it could be the event of the year.

At our fall harvest party we have elephant and pony rides, jump-n-space, 8 game booths for preschoolers, 15 game booths for elementary kids, face painting, clowns, and balloons. More than 500 kids come to this annual event.

Keep in mind that if you are going to sponsor a community outreach, do it so well that it surprises people. When people are within sight of the location of your fall harvest party, they should see that something big is going on. When you promote your event, promote it big. Use the radio, flyers, letters, and posters. I would rather hold 1 quality event that people will remember as opposed to 10 mediocre ones they would rather forget.

Even if your budget does not allow for renting elephants, there are creative ways of having a spectacular event. One way to promote evangelism outreach and your children’s department is to hold fundraisers to raise the budget needed to sponsor such an event.

Be sure to start planning months ahead of time. Start collecting candy from the congregation early enough that you are sure each child will leave the party with a bagful.

Perception is everything. We rent eye-catching outdoor games and create a carnival-like atmosphere outside. Then inside we coordinate our party decorations and names of game booths around a theme. Last year’s elementary theme was The Jungle, and the preschool theme was The Farm. The jungle game booths were decorated with palm trees and stuffed animals, and the names of the games were all jungle related—e.g., Hand in the Lion’s Mouth, Deep Dark Jungle. The preschool area was decorated with pumpkins and bales of straw, and the workers were dressed in overalls and straw hats.

In addition, we provide a concession stand for the adults. This gives them a place to sit down, and the proceeds help with the cost of the party. We only charge





for refreshments. If your budget is big enough, you might consider providing tickets for free cotton candy, popcorn, and a drink to everyone who registers. This gives you names and addresses for follow-up.

During the last 15 minutes of our party, we have a clown who uses object lessons to present the gospel.

Our fall harvest party is an event the church and surrounding community does not soon forget.

—Tommy Sparger, Springfield, Missouri

### CRUISE-IN

In an effort to build a bridge to the community, our church sponsored a Cruise-In.

On a Saturday afternoon, we provided a grassy area on our church property where individuals could park and “show” their classic cars. We registered over 50 cars from the 1930s through the 1970s. We gave every car owner a registration packet that contained a beautiful dash plaque donated by a local merchant, along with other items including a tract and information about our church.

Several hundred people from the community came to our Cruise-In. Throughout the afternoon we had local Christian music groups perform; the Men's Ministries group provided barbecued chicken; and the ladies of the church had a craft fair. Many families came, and after viewing the cars, parents stayed to play horseshoes and let their children play on the playground equipment. Prizes donated by local merchants were given away to car owners at the end of the day.

We received many compliments and thank-yous from the community for offering this family activity. The purpose of the event was realized as a bridge was built to our community.

—David Dale, Columbiana, Ohio

### HOW'S YOUR PULSE

This idea is geared primarily to senior adults 55 and older. Emphasis is on providing a monthly time of food, fun, fellowship, and frivolity including humorous skits centered around a major activity or holiday theme. Encourage seniors from your church to bring a covered dish and invite a friend from the community.

Although designed for fellowship, make sure emphasis is also placed on helping senior adults. Every quarter have several volunteer nurses available to take each senior's blood pressure and pulse, record other vital signs, and keep a record. The nurses could also offer suggestions on how senior adults can take better care of themselves.

—Adapted from 100 Great Growth Ideas by Neil E. Jackson, Jr. © 1990 Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee.

### USING OUTSIDE CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS

Are the sheep in your pasture suffering? Do some in your congregation need Christian counseling, but because of lack of time, training, or finances you are unable to meet their counseling needs?

I care about my congregation and know there is a place for Christian counseling if it is coupled with prayer, Bible reading, and church attendance. Our solution for the past 2 years has been to refer those who need a counselor to a state-certified, Spirit-filled counselor.\*

How do you go about finding a Christian counselor?

- *Check with other churches about their contacts.* I have found it is better if the counselor does not attend our church. Counselees often find it easier to be honest with a counselor who does not attend the same church.

- *Contact the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary to see if any of their graduate counselors are in your area.* Some of the most qualified men and women in the field of counseling are graduating from AGTS. They use wisdom, prayer, discernment, and their education to help pastors and their congregations.

- *Invite the counselor to spend an informal evening with you in your home or a quiet restaurant.* Ask questions about his or her techniques.

- *Invite the counselor to teach a Sunday school class for a couple of weeks.* He or she could address issues such as child development, teen problems, or marital problems. Find out how the counselor came across to those in attendance.

- *Pray about your decision to use a particular counselor.* God is just as desirous as you to see that those in need of counseling help are ministered to effectively.

I help my people set up the initial appointment, and the counselor keeps in touch with me on cases deemed necessary. This practice has proved to be a great service to our congregation.

Using an outside counselor has yielded changed lives, which is a blessing for me and our church family.

\*A referral list is maintained by the Assemblies of God Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri. Contact them at 417-862-2781, ext. 3014.

—Phillip T. Webb, Springfield, Missouri

### CHILDREN'S MISSIONS “TRIP”

One of the goals of our annual missions convention is to provide an opportunity for



children and their families to interact with our guest missionaries and learn about the country in which they minister.

### The Concept

This year we took a “trip” to an open-air market in Malawi, East Africa. Since getting there is half the fun, we planned a “cruise” to Africa, followed by a cross-country “safari” to the Malawi “open-air market.”

#### The Cruise

We transformed the fellowship hall into a cruise ship complete with life preservers and other nautical decorations. Passengers could visit several areas of entertainment and relaxation.

- The *buffet* area featured tropical fruits common to Malawi and fruit punch.
- The “*sun deck*” had lounge chairs and patio umbrellas for those who just wanted to relax.
- The *fitness room* was outfitted with a television, videocassette recorder, and an exercise video.
- A *shuffleboard court* was marked out with masking tape, and equipment was borrowed from one of the local nursing homes.

#### The Safari

Upon docking, passengers were escorted to “safari vehicles” (a pickup truck and flatbed trailer) and treated to a hayride around the church grounds, while the cruise ship was turned into a marketplace.

#### The Open-Air Market

Six market stalls were set up to show different aspects of the life and culture of Malawi. Tables were covered with “straw” (grocery bags run through a paper shredder), and those running the stalls were dressed in native costumes. Tour guides directed the “tourists” through all of the stalls:

- *Craft stall*. Since basket weaving is an art form in Malawi, this area displayed several woven baskets, and a woman demonstrated the technique. Children had an opportunity to weave a place mat.
- *Big game hunting stall*. Even though Malawi doesn't have a large population of big game animals, they are so closely identified with Africa in our children's minds that we included this area. Children shot foam arrows at large cutouts of African animals.

- *Game stall*. Teams participated in relay races in which they rolled metal hoops with a stick, a game popular with children in Malawi.

- *Trinket stall*. Our guest missionary brought small carved elephants from Malawi that children could barter for by quoting memory verses.

- *Fishing stall*. Fishing on Lake Malawi is an integral part of the economy and lifestyle in Malawi. Our lake featured magnet fishing.

- *Information stall*. This area included map displays, pictures, clothing, artifacts, and short articles about Malawi's geography, politics, school system, economy, religion, and culture.

We ended our day with our guest missionaries holding a short open-air church service similar to what they would conduct in the marketplaces of Malawi.

### Adapting the Concept

This idea can be adapted for other countries by substituting crafts, games, and activities. For example, one year we took the children on a “trip” to Taiwan. We played baseball, learned the art of paper cutting, had a cooking demonstration, and sampled Chinese wontons.

While this idea takes quite a bit of research and advance planning, we've found that the benefits far exceed the effort involved. Our children and their families look forward to the missions convention each year and make suggestions for our next “trip.”

—Ted and Denise Wyatt,  
Coweta, Oklahoma

### 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)



## ARE WE LISTENING?

It was the largest and most luxurious passenger liner in the world. It was also supposed to be the safest, possibly even unsinkable. But when the *Titanic* struck an iceberg on the night of April 14, 1912, ocean water surged relentlessly through its torn hull into the deepest parts of the ship. Less than 3 hours later, it settled to the bottom of the north Atlantic, dragging more than 1,500 people with it.

Investigators discovered that another ship, the *Californian*, had passed less than 20 miles away when the *Titanic* first radioed its SOS.

Unfortunately, because ships in 1912 were not required to maintain a 24-hour radio watch, the *Californian's* radio operator was off duty and asleep in his bunk.

We will never know how many of those 1,500 passengers aboard the *Titanic* would have survived if 1 person had been awake and attending to business. Similarly, how often are we in the church spiritually "off duty and asleep" while frantic cries for help go unheard? How many are lost to eternity because God's children are asleep?

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4, NIV).

—Submitted by Richard Maffeo,  
San Antonio, Texas.

Adapted from the Encyclopedia  
Britannica, 15th edition, 1992.

## DEAD ON ARRIVAL

In the spring of 1990, Luella Houston, a 60-year-old Chicago resident, complained of chest pains. The paramedics were dispatched and arrived on the scene. Unfortunately, the rescue workers inadvertently locked their keys in the ambulance, preventing them from getting the needed medicine and equipment. By the time another set of keys could be brought from the fire station so that Houston could be taken to the nearest hospital, she was pronounced dead on arrival. Six years later the city of Chicago agreed to pay

\$280,000 to the family for wrongful death damages.

Ironically, everything necessary to save the woman's life was available and in easy reach, but the doors of the ambulance were locked. Jesus told His followers that He was giving them the keys of the Kingdom—keys that would enable them to rescue unbelievers from the prospect of eternal death.

Sadly, the keys we've been given often get locked inside a heart of fear or apathy. We have within our grasp what those around us desperately need, but we fail to sense the urgency of the situation.

—Greg Asimakoupoulos,  
Naperville, Illinois

## PRAYER OF A FATHER

Build me a son, O Lord,  
who will be strong enough to know  
when he is weak  
and brave enough to face himself when  
he is afraid.

One who will be proud and unbending  
in defeat  
but humble and gentle in victory—  
A son who will know that to know himself  
is the foundation stone of all true  
knowledge.

Rear him, I pray, not in the paths of ease  
and comfort

but under the stress and spur of  
difficulties and challenges.

Let him learn to stand up in the storm;  
Let him learn compassion for those who  
fail.

Build me a son who will master himself  
before he seeks to master other  
men.

Build me a son whose heart will be clean,  
whose goal will be high.

One who will learn to laugh, yet never  
forget how to weep.

One who will reach into the future, yet  
never forget the past.

And after all these are his, add, I pray,  
enough of a sense of humor  
so that he may always be  
serious,  
yet never taking himself too seriously.

Add a touch of humility,  
so that he will always remember  
the simplicity of true  
greatness,  
the open mind of true wisdom,  
the meekness of true strength.  
Then I, his father, will dare in the sacred  
recesses of my own heart to  
whisper:  
"I have not lived in vain!"

—Adapted from Roy B. Zuck,

The Speaker's Quote Book, © 1997,  
Kregel Publications. Used by permission.

## THERE ARE LITTLE EYES UPON YOU

There are little eyes upon you, and they  
are watching night and day;  
There are little ears that quickly take in  
everyword you say;  
There are little hands all eager to do  
everything you do.  
And a little boy who's dreaming of the day  
he'll be like you.  
You're the little fellow's idol; you're the  
wisest of the wise;  
In his little mind about you, no suspicions  
ever rise;  
He believes in you devoutly, holds that all  
you say and do;  
He will say and do in your way when he's  
grown up to be like you.  
There's a wide-eyed little fellow who  
believes you're always right.  
And his ears are always open, and he  
watches day and night;  
You are setting an example every day in all  
you do,  
For the little boy who's waiting to grow up  
to be like you.

—Adapted from Roy B. Zuck,

The Speaker's Quote Book, © 1997,  
Kregel Publications. Used by permission.

## DON'T BE AFRAID

This is a true story that took place in one of  
the Nazi death camps during World War II.

The Rosenberg family had been imprisoned in a work camp where the gas ovens  
could be avoided as long as a person could  
work. Solomon Rosenberg and his wife,





well into their eighties, barely survived the long hours, lack of decent food, and the miserable hygienic conditions. Their two sons were also in the camp. David, the younger, was handicapped. Solomon feared that he and his wife would be the first in the family to go to the ovens, followed shortly by David.

Every morning the family was separated for their work assignments. Every night they returned to huddle together in the barracks. Each day Solomon wondered if this would be the day one of them would be taken. As he entered the barracks at night, his eyes quickly sought out his family.

One night what Solomon had feared happened. As he walked into the barracks he could see none of his family; he became frantic. His eyes searched again for the precious faces of his family. At last he saw his oldest son Jacob hunched over, weeping.

Solomon hurried to Jacob. "Son, tell me it isn't so. Did they take David today?"

"Yes, Papa. Today they came to take David," he said sadly. "They said he could no longer do his work."

"But mama—where is mama? She still is strong. Surely they wouldn't take mama too?" he asked.

Jacob looked at his father through tear-filled eyes and said, "Papa, papa. When they came to take David, he was afraid and cried. So mama said, 'Don't cry, David. I will go with you and hold you close.' Mama went to the ovens so David wouldn't be afraid."

—Take A Break, © 1992, Gospel Publishing House. Used by permission.

## TO QUOTE

Tell me who your father is, and I'll tell you who you are. —*Selected*

Let every father remember that one day his son will follow his example instead of his advice. —*Selected*

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. —*Theodore M. Hesburgh*

Every time I hear a person say his

home life is unbearable, I wonder if I'm not listening to the bear. —*Selected*

No nation can be destroyed while it possesses a good home life.

—*Josiah Gilbert Holland*

The first thing a woman should do to make a successful husband out of a man is admire him. —*Selected*

The easiest way to get your son to follow in your footsteps today is to offer him the keys to your car. —*Selected*

I have thought about it a great deal, and the more I think, the more certain I am that obedience is the gateway through which knowledge, yes, and love too, enter the mind of a child. —*Annie Sullivan (Teacher of Helen Keller)*

The greatest benefits conferred on human life—fatherhood, motherhood, childhood, home—become the greatest curse if Jesus Christ is not the Head.

—*Oswald Chambers*

I believe the family was established long before the church, and my duty is to my family first. —*Dwight L. Moody*

Give your life to God; He can do more with it than you can. —*Dwight L. Moody*

He who most clearly discerns the perfect character of Jesus will be most urgent in prayer for grace to grow like Him.

—*Charles H. Spurgeon*

More and more, as I grow older and go on preaching, I find that if I take a text, I need the whole Bible to explain it.

—*G. Campbell Morgan*

If Jesus bore the cross and died on it for me, ought I not be willing to take it up for Him? —*Dwight L. Moody*

## THE JUGGLER

He was born in Italy but came to the

United States as a young man. He studied juggling and became famous worldwide.

The man decided to retire and return to his home country to settle down. He booked passage on a ship and invested his money in a single diamond. He hid the diamond in his stateroom.

While aboard ship, he showed a boy how he could juggle a bunch of apples. Soon a crowd gathered. His pride went to his head, and he ran to his stateroom to get the diamond. He explained to the crowd that the diamond represented his entire life's savings. He started juggling the diamond high into the air, and the crowd gasped. Knowing what the diamond meant, they begged him not to do it again. Moved by the excitement, he threw the diamond even higher. Again the crowd gasped and then sighed in relief when he caught it.

Having total confidence in himself and his ability, the juggler told the crowd he would throw it up one more time. This time it would be so high that it would be out of sight for a moment. Again, they begged him not to do it.

But with the confidence of all his years of experience, he threw the diamond high into the air. It disappeared and then returned into view sparkling in the sunlight. At that instant, the ship lurched, and the diamond dropped into the sea and was lost forever.

We feel terrible about this man's loss of all his worldly possessions. But God says our soul is more valuable than the possessions of the whole world.

Just like the man in the story, some of us are juggling with our souls. We trust in ourselves and our abilities. There are often people around us begging us to stop taking risks because they recognize the value of our soul. But we continue to juggle one more time—never knowing when the ship will lurch and we will have lost our chance forever.

—*Adapted from Stories for the Heart. Selection by Billy Graham; retold by Alice Gray, © 1996, Vision House. Used by permission.*



## LUTHER THE TENDER FATHER

Martin Luther was a good father, knowing the right mixture of discipline and love: "Punish if you must, but let the sugar-plum go with the rod."

He composed songs for his children, and sang these songs with them while he played the lute. And his letters to his children are among the jewels of German literature.

His sturdy spirit, which could face an emperor in war, was almost broken by the death of his favorite daughter Magdalena when she was 14. "God," he said, "has given no bishop a gift in a thousand years as He has given me in her." He prayed night and day for her recovery. "I love her very much, but, dear God, if it is Thy holy will to take her, I would gladly leave her with Thee." And he said to her: "Lena dear, my little daughter, thou wouldst love to remain here with thy father; art thou willing to go to that other Father?"

"Yes, dear Father," Lena answered, "just as God wills."

When she died he wept long and bitterly. As she was laid in the earth, he spoke to her as to a living soul: "You will rise and shine like the stars and the sun. How strange it is to know that she is at peace and all is well, and yet be so sorrowful!"

—Adapted from *James S. Hewett, ed., Illustrations Unlimited, © 1988, Tyndale House Publishers.*

## GOD-GIVEN HOPE CONQUERS ALL FEAR

If you ever have the privilege of visiting Rome, don't fail to include the Mamertine Prison in your itinerary. Located beneath a church near the Forum, it deeply stirs those who go there.

Going down about a dozen steps, you will come to the dungeon where the apostle Paul was imprisoned during the final period of his life. From this dingy dungeon came the Prison Epistles including 2 Timothy, Paul's final message before his execution.

The room, about 15 feet square, has three

major features. In the apostle's time, a hole in the ceiling was the only means of access for prisoners and the food dropped to them. An iron door is at one end with a plaque on the opposite wall, lit by a dim light.

Across from Paul was the huge iron door. If anything could inspire fear, that could. Behind it was a tunnel leading to the Tiber River, which bisects the city. After prisoners died from malnutrition or execution, Roman soldiers dragged their corpses through the tunnel and dropped them into the river.

But Paul had defeated the fear he constantly faced, though he knew the door symbolized his probable fate. Instead, he wrote, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV).

How did the apostle conquer the fear? Hope had replaced it. The word he uses for death, *departure*, is the picture of a ship loosed from its moorings to move to another destination. For Paul, death meant he would just be setting sail for a better land.

Paul had found another secret of victory. Instead of whimpering about his gloomy conditions, the apostle concerned himself about others. He wanted them to share his God-given hope.

The plaque on the wall tells what happened: "Here the apostles Peter and Paul won Processo and Martiniano, guards of the prison, and 47 others, to faith in Jesus

Christ." (Some think Peter was imprisoned at Mamertine Prison at the same time as Paul.)

Eager for his guards to know the Savior, Paul considered them instead of himself. Some scholars believe he was chained to them. If so, he had a captive audience.

He told them of Christ. He who had once been Jesus' greatest enemy was now His foremost supporter. And the power of the gospel the apostle referred to effected the guards' conversion and that of 47 others.

Not long after, a Roman sword flashed in the sun, and the apostle's body lay lifeless on the ground. But what an example he left of courage, faith, and love.

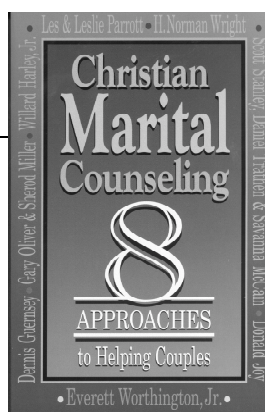
If we will emulate Paul's love for God and others, we too can defeat any fears that confront us.

—Ralph Harris, Springfield, Missouri

## ILLUSTRATIONS WANTED

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E-mail: You may send your illustrations to [Enrichment@ag.org](mailto:Enrichment@ag.org)



Everett Worthington, Jr.  
(Baker, 253 pp., paper,  
\$15.99)

### **Christian Marital Counseling: Eight Approaches To Helping Couples**

Everett Worthington, Jr. (Baker, 253 pp., paper,  
\$15.99)

Whether in preventive, remedial, or enrichment settings, *Christian Marital Counseling* is an excellent resource for those involved with helping couples. Worthington gives a broad overview of eight approaches used in Christian marital counseling with the purpose of integrating psychology and Christianity. His style is easy to read and practical in application for counselors, pastors, professionals, instructors, and students.

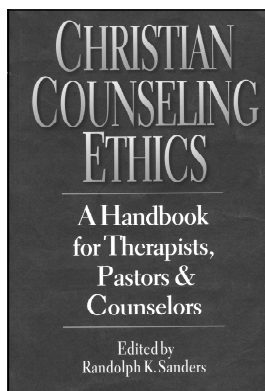
Worthington asked eight Christian counselors to respond to five questions dealing with their basic theory of marriage counseling, which clients respond best, the foci for counseling, counseling session structure, and common marital problems. After each counselor answered these foundational questions, the final task was to respond to a specific case study implementing their approach with the couple.

The diversity of each of the eight approaches in Christian marriage counseling is both

amazing and stimulating. And although no one approach stood out as a dominant leader in Christian marriage counseling, the common thread among the eight counselors was their biblical foundation and their high regard of marriage.

The condensed writing of each of these published, experienced Christian counselors provides a wealth of knowledge, scriptural and structural foundations, current resources, and excellent tools. This book is a must for anyone helping couples work through the marvels and complexities of marriage.

—Reviewed by Ruth Kaunley, counselor,  
Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.



R.K. Sanders, editor  
(InterVarsity Press, 412  
pp., paper, \$22.99)

### **Christian Counseling Ethics: A Handbook for Therapists, Pastors, and Counselors**

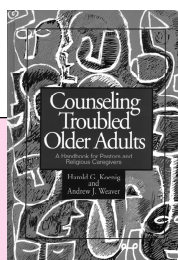
R.K. Sanders, editor (InterVarsity Press, 412  
pp., paper, \$22.99)

Written by highly respected evangelical psychologists, the 19 chapters deal with the ethical, legal, and professional issues faced by pastors, therapists, and counselors.

*Christian Counseling Ethics* begins with a strong rationale for ethical conduct. And although Christian counselors may hold themselves to a biblical standard of professional conduct, they are urged to know and follow the code of ethics of the major professional associations.

The important topics of confidentiality, informed consent, privileged communication, dual relationships, sexual misconduct, and the abuse of power are discussed. Special concerns in counseling married couples, children, homosexuals, former cult members, and chronic mental health conditions are also covered. Excellent guidelines are provided for improving counselor competency.

The chapter "Pastors Who Counsel" urges pastors to maintain the integrity of the



### **Counseling Troubled Older Adults: A Handbook for Pastors and Religious Caregivers**

Harold G. Koenig and Andrew J. Weaver (Abingdon, 256 pp., hardcover, \$32.95)

Koenig and Weaver have made a valuable contribution to the literature on Christian counseling. The heart of the book is case studies in which the authors illustrate how pastors should interact with elderly members who are experiencing problems in aging. They provide the diagnostic criteria a pastor needs to know when dealing with the person and his or her family. They progress from simple to complex cases in such a lucid way that the pastor with limited clinical training will be able to minister appropriately to troubled older adults.

The authors emphasize making appropriate referrals to mental health professionals and list local and national self-help resources. I highly recommend this book to all who are engaged in caregiving to the geriatric set.

—Reviewed by Raymond T. Brock, Ed.D., Tulsa, Oklahoma.



## B O O K R E V I E W S

pastoral calling by thinking clearly about how their counseling ministry fits into the overall picture of their work as pastor. The book also includes an excellent section on how pastors can make successful referrals to a mental health professional.

This is a comprehensive, up-to-date resource for all Christians who counsel. With a strong biblical base, the book goes a long way toward integrating the Christian's concern for faithfulness to the Scriptures and the ethical codes of professional associations. Every Christian counselor will find the discussions valid and relevant.

—Reviewed by Paul A. Lee, Ph.D.,  
professor of family therapy and counseling,  
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary,  
Springfield, Missouri.

### Leading Your Local Church Through Conflict and Reconciliation

Marshall Shelley, editor (Bethany House, 320 pp., hardcover, \$19.99)

This volume provides a litany of approaches for dealing with conflict within the church and interpersonal relationships.

Authors such as Stuart Briscoe, Jack Hayford, Bill Hybels, Ben Patterson, and Chuck Swindoll lend value and validity to the text as practitioners who write from the arena of conflict, not the grandstand.

The book is divided in four divisions: (1) *Anticipation*. The inevitability of conflict and the predictable circumstances from which conflicts arise are aptly rehearsed. Fred Smith reveals why peacemakers are not popular. Marshall Shelley provides a graphic for identifying church dragons. (2) *Prevention*. Steps are outlined that can be taken to avoid or at least manage conflict and its fallout. Larry Osborne discusses stopping conflict before it begins. R. Steve Warner advises how to bring new leaders up to speed. (3) *Confrontation*. Leroy Armstrong tells when not to confront.

Kevin Miller deals with deception. And Andre Bustanoby identifies wars you cannot win. (4) *Redemption*. A menu is given for making the best out of an otherwise destructive situation. Michael Phillips offers hope and remedy for healing the war-torn church.

Having found myself in direct dealing with church conflict resolution for many years, I highly recommend this text and the application of its practical counsel in the stressful situations that pastors, staff members, and church officials frequently find themselves.

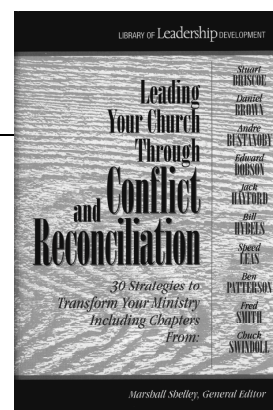
—Reviewed by Almon M. Bartholomew,  
northeast area executive presbyter,  
North Syracuse, New York.

### The Trivialization of God: The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity

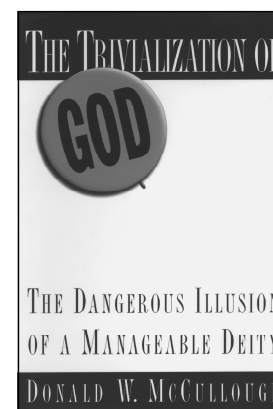
Donald McCullough (NavPress, 172 pp., hardcover, \$16)

Perhaps the subtitle of this small volume gives pithier insight into its contents. With compelling and convicting insight, McCullough nails the practice of many believers relating to a “God formed in the image of man.”

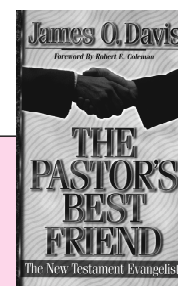
The reader is brought face-to-face with the absurdity of trying to relate to the God of Scripture and to the God pieced together by



Marshall Shelley, editor  
(Bethany House, 320 pp.,  
hardcover, \$19.99)



Donald McCullough  
(NavPress, 172 pp., hard-  
cover, \$16)



### The Pastor's Best Friend: The New Testament Evangelist

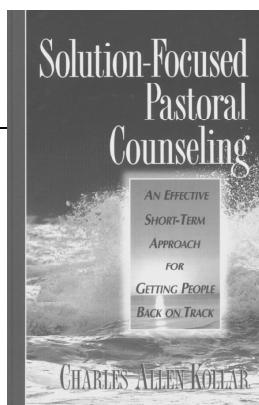
James O. Davis, D.Min. (GPH, 240 pp., paper, \$12.50)

*The Pastor's Best Friend* is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the role of a New Testament evangelist in an era of Pentecostal revival.

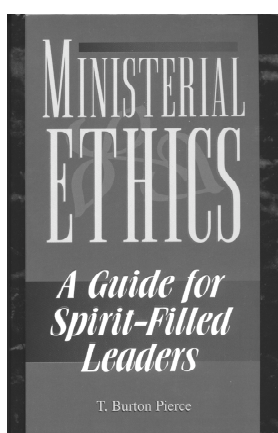
The book is easy to read because of its logical progression and easy to teach because of its practical applications. And it is a book the reader can trust because it is thoroughly Bible-based.

Do not be fooled by the title. *The Pastor's Best Friend* will benefit every pastor and church member with Dr. Davis' rich insights. It is time for the entire body of Christ to embrace the office of the evangelist once again with joy and proper appreciation.

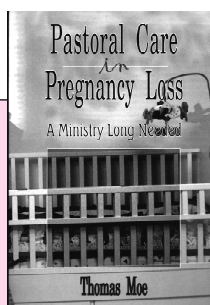
—Reviewed by Charles T. Crabtree, Assemblies of God  
assistant superintendent, Springfield, Missouri.



Charles Allen Kollar  
(Zondervan, 224 pp.,  
hardcover, \$19.99)



T. Burton Pierce (GPH:  
Logion Press, 288 pp.,  
hardcover, \$19.95)



death of a newborn.

Moe's purpose is to provide the pastor and church practical helps in equipping them to effectively minister to those who grieve from pregnancy loss. He also includes a list of support organizations for families and individuals who have suffered the loss of a pregnancy.

—Reviewed by Todd Weston, pastor of First Assembly of God, Manhattan, Kansas.

## B O O K R E V I E W S

our own images and prejudices that make Him “manageable.”

Exposition of Bible truth is clothed in illustrations so powerful readers will laugh, weep, pray, and ultimately relinquish any foolish ideas of a God who can be domesticated to fit either the human mold or weak, sloppy theology.

Working from the premise that “our mental arms are too short to embrace Divine Mystery,” McCullough challenges, leads, interprets, and articulates with piercing clarity a scriptural treatment that leaves the reader bowed in reverence. The fog of presumptuous familiarity with God is blown away in what could be a book you will treasure and often recommend.

—Reviewed by Allen Groff, an Assemblies of God evangelist, Dallas, Texas.

### **Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach for Getting People Back on Track**

Charles Allen Kollar (Zondervan, 224 pp., hardcover, \$19.99)

As a pastor, founder of On-Trac Ministries, and graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Charles A. Kollar has an outstanding

background in Christian counseling.

Kollar demonstrates how a short-term approach to pastoral counseling is appropriate for the busy pastor who is involved in counseling and for lay counselors in the church who can be trained to counsel members for a limited number of sessions. He emphasizes that individuals with more intense problems should be referred to mental health professionals.

Kollar has coined a couple of intriguing phrases: (1) “*Grace events* are...life situations we encounter that help form our personality.... Afterward, we realize they were turning points.... They represent the primary intention of the Holy Spirit...to work upon our lives until ‘Christ is formed’ in us (Galatians 4:19).” (2) The “*writing of the Spirit*” on the heart and in the life of the counselee. Kollar suggests the Christian counselor look for evidence of how the Holy Spirit has been working in the life of the counselee that led him or her to seek counseling.

This book has much to offer the counselor who is looking for a short-term soul care methodology to help individuals face the perplexities of contemporary living.

—Reviewed by Raymond T. Brock, Ed.D.,  
an Assemblies of God minister and  
licensed counselor, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

### **Ministerial Ethics: A Guide for Spirit-Filled Leaders**

T. Burton Pierce (GPH: Logion Press, 288 pp., hardcover, \$19.95)

First Thessalonians 1:5 makes it clear that genuine, Spirit-filled ministry includes at least three components: *logos*—“our gospel came to you,” *pathos*—“with power,” and *ethos*—“you know how we lived among you.” *Ministerial Ethics* magnifies the last of these traits by illuminating the importance of ethics in anointed ministry.

No one ought to give out what they do not

## B O O K R E V I E W S

live out. Church leaders can ruin their otherwise faithful ministries by just one or a series of unethical actions. As Charles Spurgeon said about a certain minister: "He was so good in the pulpit that when he was there, no one wanted him to come down; and he was so bad when he was out of the pulpit that no one wanted him to go up into it."

T. Burton Pierce, D.Min., an Assemblies of God minister and faithful district official for 20 years is well-qualified to author this sound book on ministerial ethics. He is clear in his presentation and laces his recommendations with Scripture. Chapter 7 is particularly strong. Pierce walks the reader through 10 important ethical issues we all face.

Buy this book, read it carefully, and follow through on its suggestions. You, your congregation, and God will all be blessed.

—Reviewed by Thomas Lindberg, D.Min.,  
pastor of First Assembly of God,  
Memphis, Tennessee.

### Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century

Harvey Cox (Addison-Wesley, 355 pp., hardcover, \$24)

What makes this such an explosive book on Pentecostalism is that it is written by a professor of religion at Harvard—one of the most widely read theologians of our time.

Cox set out to discover the reasons for the appeal of "this complex and fascinating spiritual child of our time"—the most experimental

branch of Christianity. He not only read about Pentecostals but visited churches and talked with ministers and members on four continents.

The Movement's spectacular growth rate of 20 million new members a year and its worldwide membership of 410 million cannot be disregarded. "It has succeeded," Cox suggests, "because it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness." To be Pentecostal is to have a genuine encounter with "the liberating Spirit."

Cox offers a compassionate analysis of Pentecostalism but also notes the perils of the Pentecostals' upsurge.

Because we stand on the cusp of another millennium and the 100th birthday of the Pentecostal Movement, the lesson for each of us is not to rest on the laurels of past glories but to reconsecrate ourselves to what God is doing now.

—Adapted from review by Burton K. Janes,  
World Pentecost, Autumn 1996.  
Used by permission.



Harvey Cox (Addison-Wesley, 355 pp., hardcover, \$24)

### Happiness Is a Choice: The Symptoms, Causes, and Cures of Depression

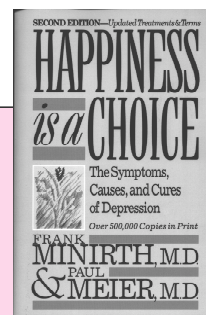
Frank Minirth and Paul Meier (Baker, 244 pp., paper, \$9.99)

The second edition of *Happiness Is a Choice*, authored by Christian medical doctors specializing in psychiatry, helps meet the need in the church for new material on medications and treatment choices for depression. The new edition combines scriptural guidelines, case studies, and research data.

The book has three parts that address difficult questions Christians ask about depression.

*Happiness Is a Choice* is a good resource on depression. It addresses the depression continuum—from that caused by sin to the chemically based depression over which the individual has little control. It does not however spell out when to refer.

—Reviewed by James M. Harris III, a licensed professional counselor and clinical, marital, and family therapist, and adjunct instructor in counseling at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 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.



# NEWS & RESOURCES

## HONORBOUND OFFERS EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS

HonorBound: Men of Promise has developed four educational and developmental seminars for men to help establish the mission statement of HonorBound—Growing Godly Men. The seminars are in cooperation with strategic alliances that HonorBound has established with existing men's parachurch ministries. Seminar topics include: (1) Father Power (5 hours) in cooperation with Dad, the Family Shepherd; (2) Foundations for Effective Men's Ministry (6 hours) in cooperation with Promise Keepers; (3) Men of Integrity (6 hours) in cooperation with Promise Keepers; (4) Success That Matters (4 hours).

Districts and churches can schedule these 1-day seminars by calling the national HonorBound office.

## HONORBOUND SOUL-WINNING COURSE RELEASED

You're a Soul Winner—You Just Don't Know It Yet has been released by HonorBound. This 8-week discipleship/evangelism video course is designed to train men how to win their family and friends to Christ. Taken from a Pentecostal perspective of Acts 1:8, the course is produced within the uniqueness of the male context.

The course is a follow-up to the 1997 released HonorBound discipleship course Preparing To Win.

## JOIN TEAM HONORBOUND

Team HonorBound is committed to establishing an effective and vibrant men's ministry within every church through educational and leadership training seminars. Men's monthly/yearly contributions will help support ministry efforts in three areas: (1) Missions Emergency Grant—for foreign and home missions grants; (2) district HonorBound—to assist in the development of ministry to men in every church to every man; (3) national HonorBound—to assist in the development of resources that assist local church ministry to men.

Men can join Team HonorBound by sending a \$5 monthly contribution to the national HonorBound office. Team members will receive special communication and ministry updates from HonorBound.

## MEN OF PROMISE AND PROMISE KEEPERS PREPARE STRATEGY FOR TRAINING

"Blueprint" training for pastors and their congregational men's leaders will be the next step of cooperation between HonorBound: Men of Promise and Promise Keepers. For over a year the two ministries have diligently trained leaders selected by their pastors for local church men's ministry.

"Blueprint" training will move beyond this year's Key Man Training by actually helping a pastor and his or her men's team construct a 2-year plan for their congregation. For more information contact any district men's director or call the national HonorBound office at 417-862-2781, ext. 4170.

## AUG. 10 IS HILLCREST BACK-TO-SCHOOL DAY

School is an important part of the lives of the boys and girls at Hillcrest Children's Home. Many of the children have never had schooling on a regular basis due to difficult family situations. It is important they begin the school year with nice clothes and proper school supplies.

Hillcrest Back-to-School needs lists detailing the clothing and school supplies

needed are available for your church groups by checking rsc #10 and indicating quantity.

## BEREAN UNIVERSITY OFFERS COURSES ON-LINE

Berean University is now offering several of its courses via the Internet through a concept called *virtual study centers*. Students who enroll in a Berean virtual study center meet electronically via the Internet one evening a week. This means they sit at their individual computers throughout the U.S. and sign on to a live chat session at an appointed time.

An experienced on-line facilitator guides the lesson for each evening session, providing instruction and encouragement. Also during this on-line class period, the students ask questions and discuss the material in their textbooks. This experience duplicates a classroom atmosphere; the difference being that the students communicate by typing their comments. Throughout each 10-week course, students can participate in E-mail conferences with classmates and play audio messages that summarize each lesson.

Each class has a minimum enrollment of 10 students and a maximum of 15. To participate in a course offered through a virtual study center, a student must have

access to the Internet. Berean's web site lists the equipment requirements.

Instructions for enrolling in a virtual study center are available on the web site at <http://www.berean.edu>. The site also announces the schedule for the 23 on-line courses Berean is offering during 1998. Prospective students may contact the university with any inquiries: Berean University, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802; 800-443-1083, ext. 2302; fax: 417-862-5318; E-mail: [berean@ag.org](mailto:berean@ag.org).

### **A/G POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE FALL 1998 COLLEGE DAYS**

American Indian College of the A/G,  
Phoenix, Ariz.—Oct. 15-17  
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary,  
Springfield, Mo.—None  
Berean University of the A/G, Springfield,  
Mo.—None  
Bethany College of the A/G, Scotts Valley,  
Calif.—Nov. 5,6  
Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.  
—Nov. 13-15  
Central Indian Bible College, Rapid City,  
S. Dak.—Oct. 16,17  
Evangel College, Springfield, Mo.  
—Nov. 12,13  
Latin American Bible Institute, La Puente,  
Calif.—None  
Latin American Bible Institute, San  
Antonio, Tex.—Sept. 29-Oct. 2  
North Central Bible College, Minneapolis,  
Minn.—Oct. 8,9  
Northwest College of the A/G, Kirkland,  
Wash.—None  
Southeastern College of the A/G,  
Lakeland, Fla.—None  
Southern California College, Costa Mesa,  
Calif.—Nov. 9,10  
Southwestern A/G University,  
Waxahachie, Tex.—Nov. 5,6  
Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N. Dak.  
—Oct. 2-4  
Valley Forge Christian College,  
Phoenixville, Pa.—Oct. 2,3; Nov. 13,14  
Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.  
—Oct. 20,21

### **FREE COLLEGE COMMITMENT DAY MATERIALS AVAILABLE**

College Commitment Day is Sept. 13. Plan now to highlight the 17 endorsed A/G post-

secondary schools. Over 10,000 students enroll in A/G higher education each year. Students learn from a Pentecostal perspective with emphasis on integration of faith and learning.

The new fourth edition of the *Assemblies of God College Guide*, a 32-page resource highlighting the 17 endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary schools, is available free. It includes current information from each school: tuition costs, application deadlines, an overview of the local community, job availability, and financial aid. A comprehensive majors chart lists the 17 schools and the degrees offered. Handy business-reply postcards can be returned directly to the schools to request additional information.

Request copies for your church library and youth group by checking rsc #3 and stating quantity.

### **ON COURSE MAGAZINE CAN BE RECEIVED AT HOME**

The only free magazine published specifically for teens by the Assemblies of God is available for home delivery. Request copies for your church library and youth group by checking rsc #4 and stating quantity.

*On Course* has no subscription fee; however, we do accept offerings. If you desire to contribute to *On Course*, you may

send your offering to *On Course*, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO. 65802. Make checks payable to *On Course* and specify the following account number: 001-01-226-4051-226.

### **1998 SCHOOL OF MISSIONS ANNOUNCED**

The Division of Foreign Missions has announced July 7-17 as the dates for the 1998 School of Missions. The 10-day event, held on the campus of Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo., provides opportunities for missions updates, interaction, and spiritual refreshing for foreign missionaries home on deputation.

Preceding School of Missions, a prefield orientation for candidate missionaries will be held June 22-July 6. Its purpose is to prepare new missionary personnel for various aspects of their future overseas ministry.

A district Missions Leadership Seminar is also scheduled for July 14-17 to coincide with School of Missions. During this 4-day meeting, district leaders will be updated on missions achievements and will explore ways to promote missions in local churches.

### **MAPS DAY IS JUNE 28**

A/G volunteer workers of all ages can be found throughout America. They build,

# NEWS & RESOURCES

remodel, and repair churches, Christian schools, and Teen Challenge centers. They reach out evangelistically, support ministries in prayer, assist missionaries, and do countless other tasks through the Division of Home Missions Mission America Placement Service. These dedicated volunteers save the Assemblies of God millions of dollars each year in labor costs through their volunteer service.

On Sunday, June 28, churches and individuals are asked to honor these selfless workers with a special DHM MAPS offering. Although DHM MAPS workers are volunteers, it's your support that keeps this hard-working ministry organized, coordinated, and moving into areas where it's needed most.

This is your opportunity to say: "Thank you, we believe in the ministry of DHM MAPS."

## MILITARY PERSONNEL DAY IS JULY 5

They're young men and women asked to sacrifice everything to keep America and its allies free. They're experienced leaders, exhausted boot campers, somber veterans, and retired valiant men and women who deserve respect and gratitude.

On Sunday, July 5, remember our military personnel. The sacrifices of military personnel and their families require our honor.

Make a special effort to say thank you on July 5 to the military men and women of your church. They deserve our expressions of appreciation.

## INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES DAY IS AUG. 23

America can be accurately described as a mosaic. Today, America is made up of over 500 ethnic groups and more than 630 languages and dialects.

Did you know that New York City is home to more Jews than Jerusalem, more Italians than Rome, and more Puerto Ricans than San Juan? Did you know the Los Angeles region has the largest Korean population outside of Seoul, the largest Filipino population outside of Manila, and the largest Japanese population outside of Japan?

America is the third largest mission field in the world. And every day, our intercultural missionaries are living in the heart of urban America doing all they can to reach

people for Christ.

On Sunday, Aug. 23, churches are asked to support the efforts of the Division of Home Missions intercultural missionaries through prayer and giving. Through your prayerful and financial support, these men and women will see and feel a difference in their lives and ministries.

## BIENNIAL MISSION AMERICA CONFERENCE DATES SET

The Division of Home Missions Intercultural Ministries Department will host its biennial Mission America Conference July 30-Aug. 5, 1998, at Drury College in Springfield, Missouri.

All nationally appointed intercultural missionaries are required to attend this conference at least once every 4 years. In 1996, 210 missionaries and 129 of their children attended. The theme for the 1998 conference is Empowering Leadership for Ministry.

Speakers scheduled for the conference include: Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent; Wayne I. Goodall, coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office and executive editor of the *Enrichment* Journal; Ray Berryhill, pastor of Evangel Assembly of God, Chicago, Ill. (a multicultural church); John Lindell, pastor of James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Mo.; and David Moore, director of Intercultural Ministries.

Intercultural ministries comprises 560 missionaries who minister to 45 different cultural groups. "It is imperative that we empower leaders from among these groups to carry on the work of the ministry so the gospel can be adequately communicated, and indigenous churches can be established among all Americans," Moore said.

District missions directors and others interested in home missions are also welcome to attend the conference. More information is available through the DHM Intercultural Ministries Department.

## NEWS FROM THE PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL

Pastors will soon be able to **personalize** their church's *Evangel*s. New equipment will print the name and address of the church on the back covers. The same equipment will also enable magazine bundles of any quantity to be shrink-wrapped and mailed flat. Call the *Pentecostal Evangel* office for more details.

Through a partnership between

Assemblies of God Foreign Missions and the *Pentecostal Evangel*, the Great Commission is being presented to a larger readership. Since April, the *Missions World* edition of the *Pentecostal Evangel*, distributed the first Sunday of each month, presents the work of foreign missions. Articles with colorful photography and creative design report what God is doing around the world, help believers understand their role in the Great Commission, and inspire a passion to reach the unreached. The *Evangel*-foreign missions partnership will encourage more believers to become involved in missions.

Copies of the *Evangel*'s quarterly **evangelism editions** are still available. Take advantage of these effective witnessing tools by calling 1-800-641-4310 (20 cents per copy; minimum order of 50).

## COLORADO SPRINGS HOSTS LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST CONVENTION

The DoubleTree World Arena Hotel in



Colorado Springs, Colo., is the site of the annual Light-for-the-Lost convention Apr. 23-25. Speakers include George O. Wood, general secretary of the Assemblies of God; L. John Bueno, Division of Foreign Missions executive director; Sam Cochran, Light-for-the-Lost founder; Charles E. Hackett, Division of Home Missions executive director; and Benny Ferguson, LFTL national coordinator.

"What a tremendous opportunity to develop a world vision for lost souls," stated Benny Ferguson. "You will be inspired and challenged to reach this dying world with the gospel of Christ."

Dynamic services, business meetings, nightly banquets, and women's activities are planned. There is still time to register. Call 800-988-0292 for more information.

### **SLAM DUNK AIDS REACHING AMERICA'S YOUTH WITH THE TRUTH ABOUT AIDS**

"I have had AIDS for over a year now. Please send me some information booklets." This plea came from a young girl who recently wrote to us. We sent her the *Slam Dunk AIDS* tract.

Slam Dunk is a sports hero who gives essential information on the AIDS epidemic along with a concise and straightforward salvation message. Targeting young adults, this comic book style tract can be used for a variety of youth outreach functions.

The contemporary look and subject matter of *Slam Dunk* will catch the eye of America's youth. The gospel message will reach their hearts and give them hope for the future.

The response to this publication has been tremendous. If you would like more information about *Slam Dunk AIDS*, contact Light-for-the-Lost at 417-862-2781, ext. 4175. To order quantities by phone, call Gospel Publishing House at 800-641-4310 and ask for item #02FG1096.

### **TODDLERS & TWOS CURRICULUM IS ENHANCED**

Radiant Life announces improvements in the Toddlers & Twos Sunday school curriculum. These changes, designed to empower the teacher and simplify lesson preparation, will premier fall 1998.

The larger, newly designed Toddlers & Twos Teacher Guide will feature a new look

and format. Teachers will have more options as they plan lessons for their specific classrooms. Lessons can be structured for younger or older children. New features include easy to use lesson schedules, options for teaching the Bible story, greater freedom in selecting activities and planning lessons, and separate Sunday school and Churchtime pages. Also provided in the teacher guide will be reproducible pages printed on one side to make duplicating easy. The teacher guide will continue to provide articles to enhance teaching skills, suggestions for planning classroom space, a reproducible check-in sheet, and a page on which teachers may share insights and suggestions with the editors.

Toddlers & Twos Resource Packet has also been improved. Additional visuals and a set of activity cards will be provided each quarter. The cards match activities in the teacher guide and may be used for planning, making assignments to workers, and for quick reference while working with a child during the classroom session.

Toddlers & Twos Sunday school curriculum continues to provide Toddlers & Twos Bible Treasures, a colorful weekly take-home paper; Parenting Helps, a monthly newsletter for parents; and Little Lamb puppet, a fur puppet for use in lesson activities.

See your Radiant Life curriculum order form for a full listing of Toddlers & Twos curriculum resources.

### **NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEPARTMENT**

Y.M.I. (Youth Ministry Institute) is a new 250-page, 3-ring binder manual for youth ministry. An excellent training resource for vocational and volunteer youth leaders, it is available by calling 800-641-4310, IMF #733-306, \$29.95.

**Day 1, 2000.** Youth groups will gather regionally around the nation on New Year's Eve 1999 to commemorate the new millennium. Stay tuned for more information from the national Youth Department regarding this exciting once-in-a-lifetime occurrence.

**"Jesus Would Have Come in This Jeep"** is the all-new Speed-the-Light devotional containing inspirational thoughts from Assemblies of God missionaries around the world. This booklet will encourage your teens to be committed givers to Speed-the-Light, as well as draw them into the Word of God. It is available Aug. 1 by calling 800-641-4310, IMF #733-045.

**Hungry? Spiritual Food for Today's Student.** Order these free booklets for every student hungry to learn more about the life-changing power of the baptism in the Holy

# NEWS & RESOURCES

Spirit. Call 800-641-4310, IMF #731-625.

## **DATES FOR A/G PREACHING SCHOOL ANNOUNCED**

Make plans now 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 being 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. Wayde 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, and reserve your place today.

## **WOMEN'S MINISTRIES/ MISSIONETTES LEADERSHIP SEMINAR EXPANDED**

The 1998 annual leadership seminar for district Women's Ministries directors and Missionettes coordinators is being expanded to include other district and sectional Women's Ministries and Missionettes leaders, according to Peggy Musgrove, Women's Ministries director.

Invitations to attend will be extended by the district Women's Ministries directors and district Missionettes coordinators to their district and sectional leaders. The seminar will convene Aug. 3-5, 1998, in Springfield, Mo.

The major emphasis of the seminar will be the introduction of new materials for both Women's Ministries and Missionettes to the key leaders of these ministries. "We truly believe this will be a dynamic event for both Women's Ministries and Missionettes leaders," Musgrove said. "The seminar will feature training tracks, workshops, and evening speakers. The shared information, instruction, and inspiration will be awesome!"

## **MEDIA MINISTRIES IS COSPONSOR OF INSPIRATION '98**

Media Ministries has announced it will cosponsor Inspiration '98: Technologies for Worship Conference in Dallas, Sept. 8-11.

Inspiration '98 will feature over 140 workshops on drama, music, audio/acoustics, lighting, television, radio, computer/Internet, video, and more.

"There is no other conference like it," stated Barry Copeland, director of Media Marketing. "We want Assemblies of God people to have a place to receive the best training possible in these areas of ministry. And if a church is looking for the right equipment to purchase, this is the place to come for advice."

Besides the regular workshops and exhibits, a special room will be reserved for Assemblies of God people to gather for idea exchanges and special workshops on issues unique to Assemblies of God churches.

Media Ministries has negotiated a



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***Sensing another no-show, Pastor Schmegly ponders a more appealing schedule of activities.***

special rate for Assemblies of God participants only if they register through the Media Ministries office. Pastors should consider attending and bringing any staff or volunteers who work with these ministries.

For more information, mark rsc # 12 or fill out and mail in the card located after page 128.

### **FIRST-EVER PENTECOSTAL KIDS EVANGEL**

For the first time the *Pentecostal Evangel* will become a children's magazine. On Children's Day, June 14, 1998, the *Pentecostal Evangel* will devote its entire issue to telling children that God loves

them, Jesus came to save them, and God has good plans for their lives. The good news for children will be presented in pictures, games, and ideas that appeal to kids, ages 3 through 11.

Use this evangelism issue of the *Pentecostal KIDS Evangel* to get the good news to kids in your community. Here are ways to connect kids with the *Pentecostal KIDS Evangel*.

- Give one to every kid on the last day of school.
- Give copies to church kids to share with their friends.
- Arrange to leave stacks in day cares, grocery stores, and doctors offices.
- Give a copy to every kid who visits your church.
- Use the magazine with VBS or backyard Bible clubs.

The *Pentecostal KIDS Evangel* will be available May 21, 1998, for just \$20 per 100 (minimum order of 50). Call 800-641-4310 and request item #69-6824.



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# In Closing

BY RICK KNOTH

## WISDOM FROM HEAVEN

You love the ministry. But if you're like most, your dreams of spiritual victory have at times yielded to the harsh realities of life. Few would disagree that it is much easier to experience the victories of ministry than to endure hardship and suffering for Christ's sake.

Scripture pictures the Christian life as a spiritual battle in which members of the body of Christ are soldiers. The Book of James reminds us: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).<sup>\*</sup> We in ministry are not exempt from the trials of life. Paul encouraged Timothy to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Throughout Scripture we are reminded that suffering is no respecter of persons. Much of the suffering we encounter in ministry comes from carrying the hurt and pain of others. We are like sponges soaking up people's spiritual, emotional, and physical trauma. Walking with individuals through the difficult stages of life is what we do. It's one of the central responsibilities of our calling—helping people transcend the temporal to find the eternal.

In times of transition and crisis many people turn to ministers and pastoral counselors for guidance and care. And that's when we need the wisdom from heaven: "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17). This verse describes the characteristics of the spiritual wisdom pastoral counselors need to have.

## Pure

The Psalmist cried, "Create in me a pure heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10). Pastoral counselors and their counselees must long for a pure heart.

## Peace loving

"Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:18). When we counsel those who are at odds with each other, we need the peace from heaven.

## Considerate

What wisdom Christ has offered us in the Golden Rule: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). Being considerate requires us to be thoughtful of the rights and feelings of others.

## Submissive

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?... Submit yourselves, then, to God" (James 4:1,7). What wisdom!

## Full of mercy

Wisdom from heaven is also full of mercy. Jesus calls us to "be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). And we know that God is "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4). Those with whom we counsel in this present age need much mercy extended to them.

## Producing good fruit

We are warned in Scripture that a "tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 3:10). We also know the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). If those to whom we minister can concentrate on producing good fruit, how much better their lives will be.

## Impartial and sincere

The Bible teaches us that our hearts must be sincere (Acts 2:46), our love must be sincere (Romans 12:9), and we must display a sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5). Wisdom from heaven is impartial and sincere.

James 3:17 is the only place in the Bible that uses the word *impartial*, which means to *treat all equally*. Often in counseling there are two sides to every story. We need to consider that people are identical in value and should be treated impartially.

With personal affliction and distress at an all-time high, people are desperate for ways to deal with their personal pain and emptiness. Pastoral counseling can help save those parts of our lives that have become shipwrecked from the daily storms of life. Thank God we can rely on the wisdom from heaven to produce good fruit in our lives and in the lives of those we counsel. **E**

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

*Rick Knoth is the managing editor of the Enrichment Journal, Springfield, Missouri.*



# ADVERTISING INDEX

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# ADVERTISER	PAGE #
* AG Foundation.....	51
* AG Insurance.....	22
* AG Insurance.....	41
* AG Loan Fund.....	45
* AG Theological Seminary.....	39
* AG Theological Seminary.....	46
* AG Theological Seminary.....	55
* Berean.....	121
* Bible Quiz.....	28
* <i>Book of Life</i> .....	87
1 Camman Industries.....	126
2 Chaplains.....	121
3 Christian Higher Education.....	137
4 Christian Higher Education.....	137

# ADVERTISER	PAGE #
* Church Care.....	29
* Decade of Harvest.....	34
* DFM.....	15
* DFM.....	47
5 E.R. Moore.....	127
* EMERGE.....	4
* EMERGE.....	89
* <i>Enrichment Journal</i> .....	110
* Evangelists Church Quake.....	63
6 Fiberglass.....	138
* Finkbinder.....	141
* Graebel.....	100
7 GPH.....	17
* GPH.....	23
8 GPH.....	35
* GPH.....	111
* GPH.....	136
9 GPH.....	137
* Healthcare.....	128
* Highlands.....	59
10 Hillcrest.....	60, 136

# ADVERTISER	PAGE #
11 Imperial.....	141
* ICI Project Timothy.....	95
* Marriage Encounter.....	139
12 Media Center.....	141
* Miami Tent.....	140
13 Microframe.....	131
* Ministers Appreciation.....	67
* Ministerial Enrichment Office.....	94
* Ministers Benefit Association.....	61
* Missionettes.....	140
* North Central.....	100
* Office of Public Relations.....	16
* Pentecost Sunday.....	7
* <i>Pentecostal Evangel</i> .....	cover
* Preaching School.....	86
* Royal Rangers.....	103
* Southwestern University.....	cover
* SSP&T.....	111, insert
* 2000 Celebration.....	3
* Youth.....	6
* Youth.....	62



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*"It's our new men's group, Pastor, the Premise Keepers."*