

ENRICHMENT

WINTER 1999

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A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

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M^{inistry Matters}

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL
*Angels cannot preach the gospel; only beings such as Paul, you, and I can preach the gospel.*¹

When God created the church of Jesus Christ, He also determined how He would nourish it. He “gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–13, *italics mine*).

This issue of *Enrichment* focuses on the office of the evangelist. These wonderful, gifted people are critical to our churches, for our Creator knew what the church would need to bring it into balance and maturity. I have often thought about what kinds of tools or helps could be found to pastor more effectively. All of us have attended ministers’ seminars and conferences, read the latest books, and sought out clues from how other successful pastors are doing their work. All this is good, but sometimes we miss some of the perfect advice given in the Scriptures: using the gifts God has given to the Church.

One of these gifts is the gift of the evangelist. Like pastors, evangelists are unique gifts to congregations. We need to utilize every tool God has created to make our churches work effectively. We are a team with various players doing their jobs. All the team members have the same goals in mind; namely, to help the lost come to Christ and to help the found come to maturity in Christ.

Undoubtedly the church that works with an evangelist in precrusade or single-meeting preparation will have better results when the evangelist leaves town. Many evangelists have brochures or programs that advise how to invite a non-Christian to the meetings, how to pray for the services, and how to follow up effectively on those who were saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit, or ministered to in other ways. The preservice preparation and the follow-up work together to help assimilate the new Christian or visitor into the congregation.

Selecting the right evangelist for your church is another important factor. For example, if you need a children’s evangelist, some evangelists specialize in communicating with children. If you need an evangelist who will speak in a multiple-service crusade, other evangelists primarily do that. If you are sensing that the church needs messages on eschatology, faith, repentance, etc., evangelists are available who have unique abilities to communicate in one or more of these areas. Jimmy Davis, national evangelists representative, has provided a booklet with the names, addresses, and specialties of Assemblies of God evangelists. Looking through this enclosure will give you a sense of the different gifts these leaders have.

If your church has not utilized the gift of the evangelist, may I suggest that you do? Pray and think carefully about the results you would like to see. Ask other pastors, friends, or the district officers about evangelists they would recommend. Speak to your congregation about the need for utilizing the gift of the evangelist and what you are praying about concerning the

upcoming special meeting/crusade. God will bless you and the congregation.

Evangelists focus on evangelism and messages that will stir up faith. They have a God-given, unique passion for those without Christ. They sometimes see things pastors do not see—people in your community whom you might have overlooked or forgotten. They hear a heart’s cry that busyness and other voices possibly have shut out. They sense negative attitudes in your church that, because of weariness, you might have learned to live with, and they challenge you to get stirred up and fight for the faith that perhaps has grown lukewarm with many of your members.

One evangelist said, “While women weep, as they do now, I’ll fight; while little children go hungry, I’ll fight; while there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets, where there remains one dark soul without the light of God—I’ll fight! I’ll fight to the very end!”²

Evangelist, thank you, thank you for fighting for us. 

ENDNOTES

1. Oswald Chambers, quoted in Edythe Draper’s *Book of Quotations for the Christian World*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1992), 181.
2. General William Booth, quoted in George Sweeting’s *Great Quotes and Illustrations*, (Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1985), 107.

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I INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK AND JAMES O. DAVIS *Ask the Superintendent*

Imagine a church where all five ministry gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4 are in full operation.

It would be one healthy church! God intended for the ministry offices of the Church to support and complement

one another. To discuss how the offices of the evangelist and pastor are teaming to birth new works and spark

the flames of revival, Enrichment Editor Wayde I. Goodall met with General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask

and James O. Davis, Assemblies of God national evangelist representative.

COMMENT ON THE TEAMWORK RELATIONSHIP GOD ESTABLISHED IN EPHESIANS 4:11,12 WHEN HE GAVE THE FIVE MINISTRY OFFICES TO THE CHURCH.

TRASK: If the offices listed in Ephesians 4 are used properly, they will bring to the body of Christ the fulfillment, well being, and total function God intended.

Let's say you have a church that emphasizes only evangelism and never utilizes the gift of teaching. There is a vital element missing. Or say you have a church that has all teaching and never brings in any evangelists. There is a lack in that body as well. God intended the ministry offices to work as a team, complementing each other and providing a well-rounded ministry for the health of the local church.

DAVIS: Ephesians 4 does not concentrate so much on five personalities as five principles of ministry. These five principles bring the church together: (1) apostle—the principle of governing; (2) prophet—the principle of guiding; (3) evangelist—the principle of gathering; (4) pastor—the principle

of guarding and protecting; and (5) teacher—the

principle of building and teaching. As the Lord brings revival, He is going to use all five principles of ministry rather than only two or three. We see this teamwork taking place right now in the present-day revival.



ARE PASTORS SHOWING A RENEWED INTEREST IN WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH EVANGELISTS?

TRASK: Yes, and there should be. Whenever the church is functioning with vitality and life and is reaching the lost, it sees the need for all the ministry offices. A renewal—revival—is taking place in the Church. The Spirit of Christ is bringing new life and an awareness to the Body through pastoral leadership of the need for these ministry principles.

*God intended the ministry
offices to work as a team, complementing each other and providing a well-rounded ministry for the health of the local church.*

—Trask

So we should not be surprised that revival results in the need for the office of evangelist. The office of evangelist complements the office of pastor.

DAVIS: Absolutely. It's the biblical pattern. In Acts 8 it is recorded that Philip led the New Testament church in evangelism, while the apostles remained in Jerusalem. The evangelist moved the Church into Samaritan and Gentile territory and won the first Gentile to the Lord.

As local churches focus on evangelism, evangelists will come alongside pastors to birth new works and spark the flames of revival. Churches will then reach out to do evangelism and make disciples for the cause of Christ.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE TEAMING UP OF EVANGELISTS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES AND PASTORS FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS?

TRASK: This matter of extended evangelistic services in the local church is not something new to the Assemblies of God. It takes time for a congregation to become familiar and comfortable with the office of evangelist. The longer an evangelist can stay, the more fruitful the ministry can become. It is not something, however, we make happen, but it can very well be in the economy of God.

We are living in a different day. People's busy schedules don't allow them to attend evangelistic services every night. So when

pastors bring evangelists in for 2 or 3 days a week for an extended period of time, there is great strength and benefit in it. The congregation becomes comfortable with the evangelist's ministry and knows his or her heart.

DISCUSS SOME WAYS PASTORS CAN HELP EVANGELISTS FULFILL THEIR MINISTRY ROLE.

DAVIS: One way is to not overschedule church activities too close around an evangelistic crusade. Give breathing time—time for preparation. Billy Graham once said that “a successful crusade is 10 percent proclamation and 90 percent preparation.”

Pastors can prepare their people—till the soil and get it ready for the seed to be shared and sowed. Preparation produces bountiful results. Pastors can prepare for evangelistic crusades by preaching in advance a series of messages on revival and evangelism.

To spark faith in people's hearts to what God can do during an evangelistic crusade, pastors can have testimonials of what God has done in people's lives in previous crusades. They can also prepare the soil by leading the church in prayer and fasting.

By creating the right spiritual climate, the church will be ready to move forward when the evangelist arrives.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD PASTORS INVITE EVANGELISTS IN FOR SPECIAL MEETINGS?

TRASK: There isn't any prescribed time frame. There are seasons of visitation for a church—times of building and discipling. And you have to take into consideration that different evangelists have different ministries. One might have an emphasis on evangelism, one on divine healing, one on deeper life, and another on prayer.

Personally, I feel churches ought to have an evangelist in at least twice a year. Some churches may have more frequent outreaches, and others may choose to have an annual emphasis. It has to be the spirit of the pastor and the leadership knowing what the congregation will support.

WHAT IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE WAY FOR AN EVANGELIST TO MAKE HIMSELF OR HERSELF KNOWN TO A PASTOR?

TRASK: Because word travels fast, the best advertisements evangelists can have are their results. There is a network among pastors, and

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evangelists will come
alongside pastors to
birth new works and
spark the flames of
revival.*

—Davis

every pastor is looking for help. If an evangelist comes in and says to a pastor, "Look, I'm here to help you. I'll do whatever you want me to do," others will hear about it.

It takes time for a congregation to become familiar and comfortable with the office of evangelist. The longer an evangelist can stay, the more fruitful the ministry can become.

—Trask

I remember my father conducted revival meetings in 117 of the 130 churches in Minnesota. He always went to the pastor and said, "I'm here to help you." They would spend the morning in prayer, the afternoon knocking on doors inviting people to come, and the evening expecting God to do something in the service. He helped the pastors.

That's the best advertisement evangelists can have. If they will seek God, have a word from God, have a quickening in their spirit by the Holy Spirit, be open to what God wants to do, people will be ministered to. People are hurting today, and they are not interested in just being sermonized. They want to hear from God.

And when the word gets out about evangelists who are hearing from God and helping churches, I promise you they will never have to worry about scheduling meetings.

WE'VE INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE OF *ENRICHMENT* THE EVANGELISTS' PICTORIAL DIRECTORY. WHY DID YOU PUT IT TOGETHER, AND HOW CAN IT HELP PASTORS?

DAVIS: Our office put the pictorial directory together for several reasons. Many of our pastors and churches do not realize how many evangelists we have in the Assemblies of God. With close to 1,800, the Assemblies of God has more evangelists than any other denomination in North America. And that number is growing. In the last 2 years more than 500 young people have contacted the national Evangelists Office asking for materials on how they can become evangelists to the 21st-century Church.

We want pastors to have the pictorial directory to see that there are a host of people

willing to come alongside them as coworkers in the Kingdom. There is power in synergy—working together. We believe, as evangelists, the more we *synergize* the more we can *evangelize*.

TRASK: It's a mistake for pastors not to utilize the gifts God has given. Evangelists are not outdated. They are as valuable and up-to-date as any ministry in the Church.

Pastors who stay scripturally based and do what the Word of God instructs will use the office of evangelist, and God will bless their churches.

It's important that pastors use people with a variety of gifts and ministries that will appeal to different segments of the congregation. They should offer a well-balanced ministry to the church. For example, when I pastored I brought in those gifted in Bible prophecy and teaching to complement my preaching ministry. A good pastor provides a well-rounded diet for the flock.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CLOSING REMARKS?

DAVIS: I want to say thank you to Brother Trask for epitomizing the five principles of Ephesians 4—for governing, guiding, gathering, protecting, and teaching our Fellowship. As general superintendent, he has functioned as an evangelist, prophet, apostle, pastor, and teacher. I've watched his life and deeply appreciate what he has done for the Assemblies of God.

When the word gets out about evangelists who are hearing from God and helping churches, I promise you they will never have to worry about scheduling meetings.

—Trask

TRASK: Let me say on behalf of the Fellowship that Jimmy Davis has brought to the Assemblies of God and to the office of the evangelist a level of ability that we have needed. He has brought an awareness to pastors through his ministry and through the ministries of the national Evangelists Office the need for evangelists and the need to resupply the ranks of evangelists.

God is using our evangelists. May they fan the flames of revival. 



By creating the right spiritual climate, the church will be ready to move forward when the evangelist arrives.

—Davis



The New Testament Evangelist and the 21st-Century Church

The life of
the local
Pentecostal
church must
center around
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Have our evangelism goals in Pentecostal churches become root bound like redwood trees stuffed into flower pots? Are we willing to develop up-to-date, creative approaches to evangelism?

The life of the local Pentecostal church must center around the biblical orientation of winning the lost. When the heartbeat of evangelism slows or dies in a church or in a denomination, there will be more denominational buildup and less soul-winning movements. If the Pentecostal church does not evangelize, it will fossilize.

The ministry of the evangelist is crucial for continued vitality in the local church. Their ministry is as valid today as it was in the early decades of the Christian church. God has called the entire Church to evangelism and has given particular people the gift of the evangelist to the body of Christ. Yet there is often a misunderstanding among leadership and laity as to the identification and instrumentation of an evangelist.

As we enter the 21st century, new maps for uncharted lands will be required to traverse the highly technological landscape of a global community. Evangelists and pastors will need to network to achieve exponential growth in a rapidly changing country. Churches need a biblical compass for effective ministry. Function follows foundation.

THE POSITION OF THE EVANGELIST

What were the aims and accomplishments of the New Testament evangelists? What are the biblical roles of Pentecostal evangelists today? Can the local church reach its full maturity in Christ without the functioning gift of the evangelist in its midst? Is the evangelist crucial to the completion of world evangelization?

Calling one's own self an evangelist does not validate his or her ministry. This has created a vagueness in the church about who are the true, biblical evangelists. Consequently, the uniqueness of the evangelistic calling has been watered down. Exegetical parallels between New Testament evangelists and contemporary evangelists are needed for the purpose of rediscovering the biblical function of the evangelist.

The purpose of this article is to portray the life and ministry of first-century evangelists in such a way that 21st-century evangelists and pastors can build their roles and goals on proven biblical principles of evangelism.

The fivefold ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 are not only representative of distinct people and ministerial offices, but they also reveal five principles for effective ministry. The apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher represent the principles of governing,

“the apostles did not know when to stop being evangelists.”⁴ And without the ministry of the true New Testament evangelist, the Church would die out.⁵

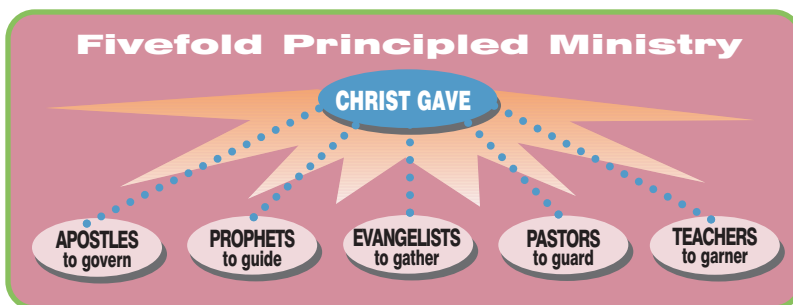
Have our evangelism goals in Pentecostal churches become root bound like redwood trees stuffed into flower pots?

In all three New Testament passages where the term *evangelist* is used (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5), the evangelist was subordinate to the apostles.⁶ *Evangelist* in Ephesians 4:11 seems to “denote an order of workers midway between apostles and prophets on the one hand, and pastors and teachers on the other.”⁷ Sometimes these ministerial gifts can overlap. For example, the apostle Paul functioned as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Christ used him in a fivefold gift-

ing of itinerant evangelistic ministry. For Paul, “the work of the ministry is of much greater importance than any hierarchy of officials.”⁸

Even though the term *evangelist* appears only three times, the evangelist had an effective and extensive ministry in

the New Testament church. This is indicated by the usage of the Greek verb *euaggelizō* (to proclaim the good news) 54 times and the Greek noun *euaggelion* (good news or gospel) 76 times. In Luke 20:1 and Acts 8:4, Jesus and the apostles were evangelists in preaching the gospel.⁹ Since the centrality of evangelism is derived biblically, theologically, practically, and logically throughout the New Testament, it can further be deduced that the term *evangelist* is located in the center of the five gifts in Ephesians 4:11. Evangelism is the heart of the Church. It seems reasonable to conclude that all of the fivefold ministry gifts focus on evangelism. When evangelists are multigifted (apostle, prophet,



Example 1: Functions of the fivefold principled ministers in the Church.

guiding, gathering, guarding, and garnering. All of these principles are needed for equipping Christians for effective evangelism (see Example 1).

An evangelist is a person with a divine gift and sacred calling from Christ to proclaim or announce the good news of Christ. The person who serves as an evangelist is a “gospeler.”¹ The evangelist’s calling originally denoted both a function and an office. There was not much difference between an apostle and an evangelist. All apostles were evangelists; however, not all evangelists were apostles, since a direct call by the Lord was necessary.² John Calvin advocated there were times when God would raise up evangelists as substitutes for apostles.³ In a real sense,

pastor, teacher), there is greater diversity in evangelism. These leadership gifts are given by Christ to equip churches for ministry (see Example 2).

The 21st-century evangelist should have an evangelistic ministry as well as an equipping ministry. The evangelist must be able

to appeal to the sinner regarding repentance and to the believer regarding revival. The position of the evangelist is critical to building a bridge between prophetic and pastoral ministries in the church and is a necessary link between repentance and revival.

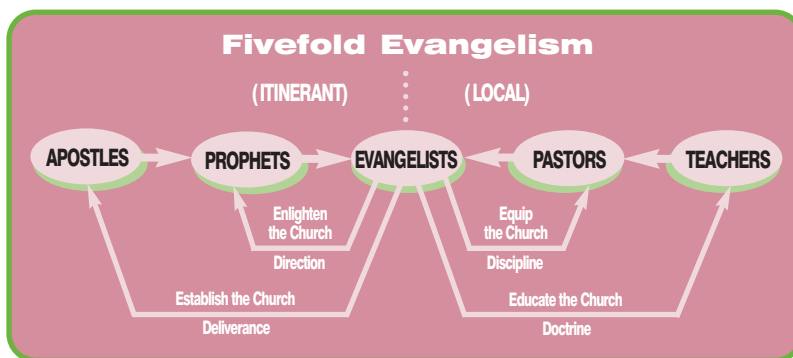
THE PURPOSE OF THE EVANGELIST

The aim of all ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11 is for the equipping of God's people for "works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12, NIV). *Equipping* denotes "the bringing of the saints to a condition of fitness for the discharge of their functions in the Body, without implying restoration from a disordered state."¹⁰ In the case of the evangelist, this work of service or ministry is equipping for evangelism. And in order for the local church to be active in evangelism, the body of Christ must be spiritually healthy.

In order for evangelists and pastors to function biblically, their message, motives, methods, and ministry must align with the Christ-given functions outlined in Ephesians 4:13–16. These functions are to help churches become mature in *stature* (verse 13), *stability* (verse 14), *speech* (verse 15), and *service* (verse 16).

Ecclesiastical discussions should not center around categorizing a person as

an evangelist or a revivalist. Those with itinerant ministries should be encouraged to fulfill their New Testament position and purpose as evangelists. Evangelists have a dual role: a soul-winning and a strengthening ministry.



Example 2: Purposes of evangelists in relationship to other ministry gifts.

PREACHER-EVANGELIST (Luke 10:1–19)	PIONEER-EVANGELIST (Acts 8)	PASTOR-EVANGELIST (2 Timothy 4:5)
Dignified Mission (verse 1)	Supernatural Wonders (verses 5–8)	Thoughtful Evaluation (verse 5)
Difficult Mission (verses 2,3)	Scriptural Work (verses 9–12)	Tremendous Endurance (verse 5)
Disciplined Mission (verses 4–8,10,11,16)	Submissive Will (verses 13–24)	Tireless Evangelism (verse 5)
Deliverance Mission (verses 9,17–19)	Spirit-led Witness (verses 25–40)	Total Effort (verse 5)
PREACHING CHRIST	REACHING A CITY	TEACHING A CHURCH

Example 3: The three pictures of New Testament evangelists.

THE PICTURES OF THE EVANGELIST

Even though there are numerous examples of itinerant preachers in the New Testament—John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Twelve, the Seventy, Philip, Paul—there are three distinct pictures that clarify what an evangelist is to do in the church. Example 3 summarizes the New Testament pictures of evangelists in the life of the 21st-century Church.

The New Testament evangelist not only preached Christ to the saved but proclaimed the gospel in new areas. Philip was known as a pioneering evangelist. God used the gift of the evangelist (along with the gift of the apostle) to preach the gospel to unreached people.

While the apostles were receiving reports of evangelism in Jerusalem, an evangelist was leading the way to reach a new ethnic group with the gospel.¹¹ Philip was the one who led the Church to fulfill Acts 1:8 regarding Samaria and to open the door for

world evangelization (Acts 5:25–40). An evangelist, not an apostle, won the first Gentile to Christ.

The contemporary evangelist must be willing to move churches forward in evangelism. Just as Philip went where no one else was willing to go, 21st-century evangelists need

to set an aggressive pace for evangelism. Evangelists must become owners of their gift before the churches will embrace their gift of evangelism. In the New Testament era the evangelist was respected by the church leaders and local pastors. So long as 21st-century evangelists are faithful to

their calling, they are also worthy of ministerial respect, financial support, and open doors of evangelism.

The work of the evangelist includes both evangelizing the lost and equipping the saints. While Paul instructs us regarding the equipping of the saints, Philip illustrates the evangelization of sinners. Even though every evangelist is not a pastor, every pastor should have an evangelistic ministry. The apostle Paul commanded Timothy, who was pastoring a metropolitan church in Ephesus, to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). Evangelism must be the main purpose of every local assembly. (See Example 4 for a checklist to assist pastors in selecting an evangelist for their church.)

Pastor's Checklist for Selecting an Evangelist

1. What is the purpose of the upcoming ministry event? Evangelism (Acts 8)? Equipping (Ephesians 4:11–16)? Both?
2. Will the evangelist fit the purposes of this crusade?
3. Is the evangelist known as a solid Bible preacher (Acts 8:9–12; Ephesians 4:11,12)?
4. Will the evangelist equip believers for the evangelization of the lost (Ephesians 4:11–16)?
5. Does the evangelist conduct himself or herself as a Christian ambassador (Luke 10:1)?
6. Does the evangelist live by faith for all financial needs (Luke 10:4–8)?
7. Is the local church prepared to meet the evangelist's travel needs and provide an adequate honorarium (Luke 10:7)?
8. Do supernatural signs follow the evangelist's message (Luke 10:17–19; Acts 8:6–8)?
9. Is the itinerant preacher accountable to fellow ministers (Luke 10:1; Acts 8:13–24)?
10. Does the evangelist refrain from engaging in sensationalism to attract crowds (Acts 8:9–12)?
11. Is the evangelist led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:26–28)?
12. Is the evangelist ethical in all areas of ministry (Acts 8; Ephesians 4:14)?
13. Is the evangelist submissive to authority (Luke 10:1,18,19)?
14. Does my ministry as pastor complement the work of the evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5)?
15. Does the evangelist focus on exalting Christ (Acts 8:12)?
16. Is the evangelist a personal soul winner (Acts 8:26–40)?


Example 4: The pastor's checklist for selecting an evangelist.

Jesus Christ is chairman of a great worldwide fishing enterprise and desires for us to be His partners in catching people alive for Him (Luke 5:1–11). It is time to stop having lifeguard meetings while people are drowning in their sin. Churches must launch out into the deep waters of our culture through evangelism and believe God for bountiful results. This will require teamwork among all the various ministry gifts.

As we enter the 21st century...evangelists and pastors will need to network to achieve exponential growth in a rapidly changing country.

God has historically used evangelists to begin spiritual movements that shake entire nations. The various ministry gifts must again make evangelism the heartbeat of believers. While people talk about their culture, let our churches talk about Calvary and the power of salvation. We

need to be willing to turn pulpits into fishing boats, our automobiles into ambulances, our homes into shelters, our bodies into the temples of the Holy Spirit, and our churches into hospitals where the souls of men, women, and children can be healed by the grace of God.

The tide is going out. People are calling for someone to save them as they are about to go under the surf for the last time. We must save them before it is eternally too late. 

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THE Evangelist

The dynamics of being an evangelist can make an itinerant ministry difficult—the ongoing problem of scheduling, preaching to an unknown group, repeating sermon material. All of this is hard.

A few years ago I was called to preach in a small church that was between pastors. The congregation was extremely discouraged. They were dead. I sat on the platform thinking: *What they need is someone to come in here with some enthusiasm and some joy and a transcendent view of God. They need someone to preach the glory of God and the greatness of Jesus, our hope for the future. They need someone to really stir them up.*

The Lord spoke to my heart and asked, “Why do you think you are here?”

I said to myself: *My notes are prepared, but I didn't know my goal was to raise the dead. I felt deeply convicted and thought, If only I had prayed harder.*

After the service the Lord said to me, “You cheated them. You didn't pay the price for a miracle. You did not pray and fast. You did not bring your heart and life into touch with Me so that you could be a channel of blessing.”

This experience made me aware of the need for the gift of the evangelist.

DEFINITION OF THE EVANGELIST

A number of issues need to be dealt with to understand the biblical role of an evangelist. Three Greek words undergird the concept of

news. The content of the message is God's universal victory—that His victory and His rule have begun. With the coming of Christ the announcement is: “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Matthew 4:17; John 1:29).

The messengers spread out to carry this message, this great news. Salvation has come to the world. The message announces the Kingdom but also inaugurates the Kingdom. The message from God is a divine act that inaugurates, starts, precipitates, and catalyzes spiritual activity. It is not just a memo that comes through the office, but it is a message that has power in it. In the very preaching act, spiritual activity takes place. People are never left neutral. The message gives them an opportunity to accept or reject, to cooperate with God or rebel.

Euaggelizō simply means I preach, I proclaim, or I announce. *Euaggelistēs*, the evangelist, is the messenger or the preacher—one who proclaims the good news or the message.

In the New Testament there are only three occurrences of *evangelist*. In Acts 21:8 Philip is called an evangelist. In Ephesians 4:11, the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are given to the Church. These gifts are persons. In 2 Timothy 4:5, Timothy is told to do the work of an evangelist. That's all we have in the New Testament to tell us about the work of the evangelist. We know something of the good news and the message, but we know very little about the messenger.

The message from God is a divine act that inaugurates, starts, precipitates, and catalyzes spiritual activity.

WINNING THE LOST—REVIVING THE CHURCH

evangelism: (1) *euaggelion*,*—gospel, (2) *euaggelizō*—I preach, (3) *euaggelistēs*—evangelist. These words are derived from the word *aggelos*—angel, messenger, or one who makes an announcement.

Euaggelion is the gospel. The English word *gospel* comes from the word *godspell*—a story about a god. It means good news or a good message. Good messages are considered to be gifts from the gods. The *eu* prefix means good, which along with *aggelos* means a good message or the good news. The gospel is good

FUNCTION OF THE EVANGELIST

By definition, the evangelist is a preacher or a proclaimer. However, by looking at the example of Philip, we gain some additional insight into the function and work of this ministry. In Acts 21:8, Philip is called an evangelist. But we see in 6:5 that he is also a deacon. He is called to the service ministry the apostles established so that they might be liberated to give their attention to the Word.

In chapter 8, Philip went down to Samaria, preached to sinners, made believers, and

We should get our leading from the Holy Spirit and organize in a way that can touch our world.

experienced miracles. By reading through these verses, we can develop a better understanding of what the evangelist does. In 8:12, he preached to sinners, won converts, and baptized men and women. In 8:26, he met the Ethiopian, witnessed to him, and baptized him. From these verses a picture emerges. The evangelist preaches to sinners—either as a group or individually—presents Christ, leads people to Christ, experiences miracles in his or her ministry, and baptizes people in water.

The second example is Timothy. Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. But we are not given a description of the work (see 2 Timothy 4:5). It is reasonable to assume it is consonant with what we see with Philip.

Charles Finney, an evangelist, said that revival has two functions: to win the lost and to revive the church. Both of these are ministries of the evangelist, and, historically, evangelists have done both.

What emerges from this are the functions of the evangelist. The evangelist preaches the good news to sinners, makes converts, and baptizes them. That is the primary role of the evangelist. However, there seems to be another role, which is not only preaching salvation to sinners but also preaching revival to believers.

Part of the problem we have in the church is being able to come to grips with the concept of revival and the role of the revivalist. We try to get some sense of what happens, who does what, which gifts operate, and how the Spirit works in these various ministries.

FIVEFOLD MINISTRY GIFTS

A proper understanding of the various ministry gifts is one of the problems we face. In traditional Pentecostal circles, part of the reticence toward the fivefold ministry gifts are issues based on the Latter Rain revival. In 1948 a prophecy was given in Canada that God would restore to the Church all the ministry gifts, including the restoration of the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. This restoration idea spawned the Latter Rain movement. The Latter Rain movement swung out into a healing movement featuring A.A. Allen, William Branham, Jack Coe, Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborn, Gordon Lindsey, and many others. It was sometimes characterized by excess, fanaticism, and scandal, as the lives of Branham, Allen, and others demonstrate.

But the restoration movement did not die. As a matter of fact, it continued in independent Pentecostal churches and was the undergirding of the charismatic movement that started in the 60s. In some places restoration churches are doing a tremendous job. In other places they have some offbeat doctrines such as kingdom now and dominion theology.

Evangelistic campaigns must be strategic, committed to do whatever it takes to reach the pagan and to touch their lives with the gospel.

Because of these dynamics, talk among traditional Pentecostals about the restoration of the gifts often gets a negative response. The fivefold ministry gifts must be addressed. Ephesians 4:11 specifically says, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." How do we understand this, and what do we do about it?

Part of my thesis is that failure to come to grips with the ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11 is part of the reason many of our evangelists are currently struggling. Part of the problem is a failure to harness the spiritual ministries that build the church—looking for solutions in administrative offices instead of spiritual gifts, and putting more weight on the pastoral office than it can bear. Pastors cannot do it all.

Failure to understand and explain Ephesians 4:11 in its relation to other ministries has created numerous problems. It has eliminated, renamed, or reconfigured some of the office gifts. Are some evangelistic revivalists really prophets? What is the proper role of the evangelist?

We have created other offices for which there is no clear biblical base. If these roles are appropriate, they raise significant questions about the extent to which we need biblical precedent and instruction to form our models of church government. We should get our leading from the Holy Spirit and organize in a way that can touch our world. We do not want to lose the ministries we need to have a powerful and dynamic church.

We have marginalized some of our gifted ministries. That is, we may have moved them so far to the periphery that they are no longer a blessing. Absolute distinction among the

office gifts and their functions is not possible. There is overlap; there is dual function. We don't need to draw lines that are absolutely rigid. The deacon did evangelism; the pastor was told to do evangelism. Hard and fast categories are not necessary; but whatever we do, it must be done with sensitivity to biblical principle and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Some think evangelism is traveling and preaching. They don't have a deeper sense of reaching as their focus, their target, their plan, their goal. And some evangelists need to clearly identify their gift, find an accurate and biblical name for it, and accept the responsibilities that go with it.

If God has called you to the pagan, you need to focus your life on the pagan. If He has called you to revive the church, you need to focus on that. Make it your agenda and accept the responsibilities that come with a prophetic, revivalistic ministry. Some evangelists fulfill the prophetic function and call the people of God to revival. They may be prophetic revivalists. If evangelists don't call us to revival, we're going to be hard-pressed for it to be done.

I have teamed up with Evangelist Sam Farina a number of times. Sam is a gifted evangelist and a good friend. In summer Bible camps I do the morning's instruction; Sam does the night's inspiration. It is a team. I cannot do what Sam does. Sam cannot do what I do. We need to have both content and inspiration. If the evangelists don't fulfill their role,

then the church will simply go without this dimension of ministry.

ISSUES THAT HINDER EVANGELISM

In earlier days of our Movement, preachers started churches with evangelistic preaching crusades. This Movement was begun and carried by preachers. The primacy of this ministry has only been called into question as churches have grown and specialized ministries have developed. This is a major challenge for evangelists because they are called to preach.

Our appreciation of the gift of the evangelist is being diluted by our appreciation for other good things. But we should never forget that God called evangelists to preach: "How beautiful...are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" (Isaiah 52:7). Other ministries are important, but God has ordained preaching as the primary plan for proclaiming the gospel.

Part of the influence of the primarily pastoral orientation is that the emphasis has changed from evangelism and revivalism to church life. This is normal when a movement goes from no churches to 12,000. Church life is very important; but if you have it without evangelism, you follow traditional denominational history and lose a primary commitment to evangelism and missions.

The cutting edge of ministry is preaching to the pagan. The cutting edge of evangelism is winning the lost. If a movement loses that and picks up the secondary concern of training and discipling, then it begins to slide toward

We have marginalized some of our gifted ministries—moved them so far to the periphery that they are no longer a blessing.



denominational stagnation. We build Bible schools and produce students who will teach in the schools and pastor the churches, but evangelism will begin to fall away. If evangelism is not a burning foundational commitment that runs through the ranks, then everything else will grow stale.

Are some pastors satisfied to build their own churches by emptying others, largely ignoring the unsaved? It is normal that we would have a growing emphasis on the church, but it produces challenges and potential problems for

the issues of evangelism and church planting. Tent crusades and other strategic evangelistic outreaches have fallen off dramatically. They happen almost incidentally or occasionally. Evangelistic campaigns must be strategic, committed to do whatever it takes to reach the pagan and to touch their lives with the gospel. This must be at the very heart of the church.

Church marketing has largely replaced personal and campaign evangelism. Ads in the paper, radio programs, or other marketing strategies

have replaced grassroots evangelism. There is a place to tell about our church, its location, and its ministries; but if that replaces evangelism, we will reach only a limited audience. We would be much better off to simply win the pagan, train them up in Jesus, walk them through Sunday school, get them baptized, and make good Christians of them, instead of transferring disgruntled pew-sitters.

Things are changing. Our churches and Bible schools are full of people who came into the church only recently, 10 to 15 years ago or less. They came out of other churches or have been recently converted, and they don't care about our history. What they need and want is something for today—something to which they can be committed.

Pastors and churches have fewer general spiritual revival emphases. They have been replaced with special interest ministries. General spirituality has been replaced by the mall mentality and its niche-marketing philosophy. There is a proper time to address the issues of life—drugs, divorce, teen violence—but ultimately, those things pale in light of the more important issues of being a Christian, called to be a person of God. Somehow our evangelists need to be tapped for a portion of this ministry that only they can produce.

God exists to call us unto himself. He calls us to His program. We need to have a transcendent vision of a God in heaven meeting people on the earth. Our cry should be: "God, have Your way."

Evangelists have a PR problem. The word *televangelism* is a negative term. It pictures in people's minds a certain image. That's an awful thing to labor under. I call evangelists to change this image.

The evangelist ought to be held in high regard as a prophet of God who is winning souls. Within our Movement, we need to view evangelists as street-level soul winners or prophets.

I emphasize 2 Peter 2:2 that says many will follow the sensuality of false prophets. Sensuality is that which appeals to the senses. False prophets appeal to the

sensual dimension, and many follow that sensuality—things that can be seen, the spectacle that can be observed.

If God has called you to preach, don't get caught up in this sensational stuff. God will create a spectacle if He wants to. It might surprise you too. God honors the faith of sincere seekers. Evangelists must make a renewed commitment to the Word as the primary plan of God to reach the world.

CHALLENGE TO THE EVANGELIST

- *Identify your gift.* If you are called to preach to the pagans, then come to grips with your identity. If you are called to stir revival in the church, then understand it, accept it, and get with it. If you're an itinerant teacher, cultivate your gift.
- *Cultivate your gift.* Read. Study. Attend conferences. Support your gifts with prayer, fasting, and seeking God. Play less and pray more.
- *Prepare as if you were preaching to 10,000.* Prepare your next message that way. If you took the meeting with 25 or 125 as seriously as you would a

Friday-night sermon at General Council, your ministry would escalate in its effectiveness.

- *Get organized.* Keep a schedule. Otherwise, your days will just ooze away. Ministry is a battleground, not a playground. Pick a goal; work incessantly toward it; do whatever it takes to succeed. If an evangelist structures one or more detailed plans for reaching the lost or reviving the believers, then he or she can come to a pastor with a plan. When the evangelist has a plan, he or she can say to a pastor: "What do you want to get done? I am here to help you."


- *Become the kind of person this Movement cannot survive without.* Don't just admire the great evangelists; study and imitate them. Call people to imitate your model of spirituality. Be exemplary, the embodiment of spiritual reality, and deal out your life to the people.

CONCLUSION

Your role as an evangelist gives you an agenda. You are on a mission to win the lost at any cost and revive churches at

any sacrifice. Fads may come and go, but real ministry is always the same. While some of our strategies may need to change, people have always been and always will be saved through the foolishness of preaching. So preach the Word.

Would somebody please be a preacher of the Word and preach the Word of God to a church that needs revival? God ordained this evangelistic gift. It was His idea. It will function. He will empower it.

Evangelists, we need you, your gift, and your ministry. Please don't fail us. Revive us again. Revive us again! 

**The first transliterated g is pronounced as an n in Greek.*

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*The Lord's special enabling of an evangelist is lost to other human
pursuits that hold greater prestige, human honors, and distorted success.*

Discovering the TRUE Evangelist



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How can we distinguish the true God-gifted person who is called and anointed of God as an evangelist?

1. The evangelist will tell the story—proclaim the good news. The word *evangelist* contains the smaller word *evangel*, which means *good news* literally. The evangelist is also able to give a reason and defense of the faith against false and untenable claims.

2. In a compelling, persuasive way the evangelist urges the hearer to make a decision to follow Christ as a natural step of commitment. The evangelist is a persuader, born of the conviction that a person without God is headed for eternal punishment. He is passionate about rescuing the perishing, caring for the dying who are lost.

3. The evangelist works within the church, the body of Christ. Along with other gifted ones, the work of the evangelist is to prepare people for God's work in the harvest—work that extends naturally into discipling those who are born into the Kingdom and nurturing of God's people.

The evangelist is a persuader, born of the conviction that man without God is headed for eternal punishment. He is passionate about rescuing the perishing, caring for the dying who are lost.

No list of criteria determines that a person is a true evangelist. However, responsible discernment seeks to know that the evangelist is:

1. Communicating the basic message of Christ, which is essential for one to respond to Him.

2. Urging a personal response to Christ's provision—a step of personal faith.

3. Acting as an accountable ambassador of Christ, connected to and fully integrated in the life of the body of Christ, His church.

These three tenets provide the basic spine of a structure that identifies an evangelist and his or her function.

Unfortunately, Sinclair Lewis' novel, *Elmer Gantry*, crystallizes for the masses what most

people think of as a typical evangelist. Yet, only an infamous fringe of persons who call themselves evangelists operate by such standards as the shady Gantry character in the novel.

According to this contemporary, erroneous mind-set, evangelists should:

1. Be handsome—striking in physical appearance. It is even better if they have a photogenic TV appearance with the charisma of a celebrity.

2. Have a hypocritical lifestyle that is extravagant, casual, and careless—with no inclination to live in a devout, pious, or sincere way. Self-denial or a disciplined lifestyle is unthinkable.

3. Be impure, loose-living, and morally lax. The raucous Elmer Gantry character was all these things. His lingering image can sometimes cause people to view modern-day evangelists with suspicion.

4. Be simplistic, insincere, and manipulative in their preaching. Characterized as feigning sincerity, the Gantrys have no intellectual prowess. Evangelists are thought to be incapable of grappling with the troubling, intellectual questions of faith in a real world.

5. Have the gift of gab—verbose. Little true thought or substance is found in their words. Speech is essentially a tool of manipulation.

6. Be greedy for money. Evangelists supposedly become rich by taking advantage of their faithful followers.

7. Be rebels to structures and renegades to the established church—unaccountable and irresponsible. They are characterized as independent entrepreneurs of religion, supersalesmen to their own brand of faith.

The image is not true of most evangelists, and evangelical Christians deny that Elmer Gantry represents a biblical view of an evangelist. Yet, consciously or unconsciously, the influence of Lewis' Gantry character has marked the church's, as well as the world's, perception and definition of an evangelist.

While most sincere believers would deny this Gantry imagery, they are unwittingly victims of our cultural perception. Thus it is vital for the church to discover a biblical understanding of the true evangelist—the gift aflame—to the church of Jesus Christ.

It is a mistake for the church to expect an evangelist to provide leadership in all kinds of ministry beyond evangelization. Yet a

The influence of Lewis' Elmer Gantry character has marked the church's as well as the world's perception and definition of an evangelist.

The Evangelist's Personal Life

"For the Lord your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you" (Deuteronomy 23:14).*

God honors obedience and punishes transgression. The gospel is a holy covenant, a holy commitment. Paul told Timothy, "[God] called us to a holy life" (2 Timothy 1:9). As evangelists we are to follow the Lord's example in every aspect of our lives:

1. *Our spirit.* "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Are you walking in the light? Is your conscience clear before the Lord?

2. *Our speech.* We must practice truthfulness. If I am going to have the power of the Holy Spirit, I must be truthful in everything I say. Are you holy in truthfulness?

3. *Our motives.* The glory of God must be our whole objective. Don't mingle desires for personal fame with preaching Jesus Christ.

4. *Our honesty and transparency in finance.* Do you keep money that doesn't belong to you? Do you play games with expense accounts? The Lord knows.

5. *Our jealousy.* Because evangelists are well known, we have a tendency to think we're superior to other people. Which of us has not felt jealousy or envy when somebody else has a bigger meeting, better results, or is written up in a Christian magazine or newspaper? How easy it is to become competitive and jealous of one another, to undermine the other person, and to speak words of hurt—just to bring him or her down a little.

6. *Our sexuality.* More evangelists have wrecked their lives because of failure in sexual temptation than perhaps any other area. Are you holy in your sexual behavior? It is a delicate subject but must be dealt with. Don't ever say you won't be tempted. We have a silly idea that good people, outstanding people, don't know what temptation is.

The Bible says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 4:23). We must watch our inner selves. Joseph had the right principles and ran away from temptation. In some situations we must flee too.

We have the power of the indwelling Christ. His death must be at work in us so that His life may be manifested in us.

The Bible, together with the indwelling Christ, is the power we need. We don't fall into sin—we walk right into it with our eyes wide open. We are tempted when we allow ourselves to have thoughts we shouldn't have. Our sensitivity level goes down. Before we know it, we have taken one step and then another, and the Holy Spirit doesn't seem to get through to our consciences. When the final crash comes, people say, "How could it happen?" It resulted from many small compromises.

If we have fallen or stumbled in this sensitive area of our lives, have we confessed it before the Lord? Have we made amends? Have we reconciled with our local church? Have we gone to our godly counselors to ask what the next step should be?

Proverbs 29:1 reminds us, "A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy." We all know men and women, whom we loved and respected and would listen to with appreciation, who fell into sin and refused to repent and ask for cleansing. They stiffened their necks and became hardened and are broken. Some have become traitors to the cause of Christ. It is a sobering thing.

Are you holy in your heart? Are you walking in the light with the Lord? Is your conscience clear before Him? Robert Murray McCheyne said, "According to your holiness, so shall be your success." Ask yourself, "Am I holy before the Lord?"

—Abridged from an article that originally appeared in *Decision* magazine.
Copyright 1998, Luis Palau. Luis Palau is an evangelist and lives in Portland, Oregon.

*Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

successful evangelist, who is well known because of his achievement in exercising his evangelistic gift, is often elevated to leadership within an organization, a college or seminary, a mission, or a denomination. He may even be elected to a political office or other position. The point is that, like the Peter principle, the evangelist is elevated beyond the capacities of his or her spiritual gift. Such is usually disappointing if not disastrous. Why? The giftedness of the true evangelist does not qualify one for personal vocational choices nor for the popular notions of a majority.

For example, being the Lord's servant, who is honored to preach Christ, does not automatically qualify that person to counsel just because he or she is a gifted evangelist. Counseling requires its own special giftedness, which is different from the gift of evangelist. Some may be given more than one gift, but it cannot be automatically assumed.

A successful evangelist, who is well known because of his achievement in exercising his evangelistic gift, is often elevated to leadership within an organization, a college or seminary, a mission, or a denomination...elevated beyond the capacities of his spiritual gift.

Giftedness is the work of a sovereign. It must be recognized by the body of believers. Commitment must be made by the gifted, but giftedness equips us only to do His calling and does not extend, like natural talents, for our own choices within organizations or careers.

A famous British preacher, who highly regarded God's call, is supposed to have said, "If you are called to be the Lord's servant, God forbid that you ever shrivel up to become King of England."

The enemy of righteousness skillfully diverts evangelists from using their giftedness by giving them position in the calling of humankind. Rather, the Lord's special enabling of evangelists is lost to other human pursuits that hold greater prestige, human honors, and distorted success. Singularity of vision and commitment is required to be the

evangelist God has called and enabled. Human wreckage results from forsaking the gift and calling of the Lord.


Evangelists are on the endangered species list, from the human perspective, and on their way to extinction. Every day fewer seem to respond to their calling to do the work of evangelizing. At a time when our world needs messengers aflame with the Word from heaven, this is truly alarming.

Why are so few still in the field of evangelism on a full-time basis as a total calling today? Why do so few enter the field of evangelism as a ministry calling?

At least a part of the answer is that evangelicals within the church have an uncertain or distorted view of what an evangelist is. Too frequently, any person with enthusiasm or a gift for speaking to others with boldness is termed an evangelist.

The confusion seems to be a tactic of the enemy. To cause the body of Christ to ignore the specialized role of a true evangelist weakens the strategy of world evangelism. At the same time, the neglect of the evangelists among us allows the enemy to render us ineffective. The unique role of bringing others into Christ is not even anticipated. No one is quite sure if there are any true evangelists.

If confusion can be maintained, the church will be naive about evangelism and the task of bringing others into faith. Let none of us who follow our Lord in sincerity contribute to this aberration; rather, discover clearly what the evangelist is, how to know one, how to support one properly, and how to nurture the work evangelists are called to do.

Maximize the special gifts of the evangelists and honor their place in the Body by careful and full use of their role. 

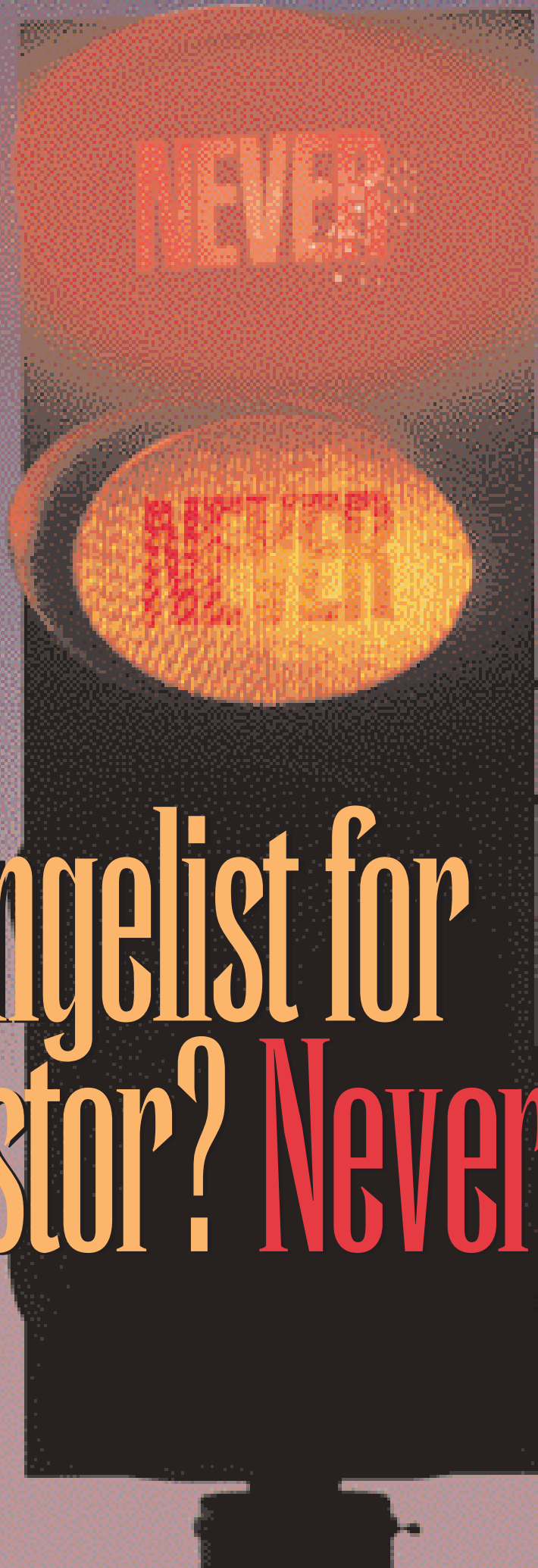
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To cause the body of Christ to ignore the specialized role of a true evangelist weakens the strategy of world evangelism.

*I discovered
that the road
from evangelist
to senior pastor
had several
roadblocks*

An Evangelist for Our Pastor? Never!



After serving as an evangelist for 19 years, I sensed God was leading me to the pastorate. I began the interview process with First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, Arkansas. However, I discovered that the road from evangelist to senior pastor had several roadblocks.

The board members of First Assembly were godly men who were diligently seeking God's will. The following minutes reflect not only their fears but the conventional wisdom regarding calling an evangelist to serve as pastor:

"December 3, 1985: The November 26 interview with Alton Garrison was discussed. The general opinion was that Alton Garrison is young, dynamic, and would be a strong preacher. However, several expressed concern over his ability to become a full-time pastor and divest himself of his current tape ministry and evangelistic lifestyle. On a vote of seven *yes* and one *no*, it was agreed to place Alton Garrison on our *hold* list."

People fear the evangelist has traveling in his blood. How can a man who is used to traveling 50 weeks of the year ever be content to spend all his time in one place?

"January 5, 1986: The purpose of this meeting was to discuss again the possibility of calling Alton Garrison as our pastor. After much discussion, Tom Mitchell motioned that we call Alton Garrison as nominee for senior pastor. The motion was interrupted for a time of prayer. Motion died for lack of a second."

Later that year I sat with the board. After hearing their concerns, I answered, "Gentlemen, you've been in this process for 9 months. You have 100 resumes, and every one of them has more pastoral experience than I do. What we need to do is get on our faces before God and

find out His will for this church. If it is God's will for me to pastor this church, any pastoral logistical skills that I do not presently have, I can acquire."

Many believe that the gifts of an evangelist and the gifts of a pastor are mutually exclusive—that an evangelist can never become an effective pastor. These beliefs are formed in part by certain myths.

MYTHS ABOUT EVANGELISTS WHO WOULD BECOME PASTORS

1. He¹ has only three sermons, and they are all on soul winning.

This is a popular joke concerning evangelists. It was said about me, "He only has three sermons, and I have all three on tape." As an evangelist, I had some tried-and-true messages, but I had more time to seek God for fresh revelation than I have ever had as a pastor.

2. He won't be able to settle down.

People fear the evangelist has traveling in his blood. How can an evangelist who travels 50 weeks of the year ever be content to spend all his time in one place? In fact, many evangelists are ready because God has placed a desire and dream in their hearts to assume a pastoral role.

3. He doesn't have a pastor's heart.

A pastor is not only elected for his or her preaching ability but as a shepherd, a caregiver, and a counselor. The people want someone who will hold their hands through the joys and crises of life. When I became a pastor, I had never conducted a funeral or a wedding and had never ministered to a family in grief. However, as I encountered new situations, I depended on the leading of the Holy Spirit and asked others for advice. God gives a person a pastor's heart—it is not inherited.

4. He has no track record as a pastor.

When I was interviewing at First Assembly, one man said, "He just can't be our pastor because he has never pastored." It is true that an evangelist often-times has no previous pastoral experience. However, an evangelist without pas-

toral experience can acquire the pragmatic skills if God has called him to pastor.

5. He can't give up his tape ministry and mailing list.

The fear behind this statement is that the evangelist will care more about his own ministry than the church. He may not be able to transfer his allegiance, and the church members will be neglected. This rarely occurs, however. An evangelist who chooses to pastor recognizes that he is making the transition into a new phase of ministry.

ADVANTAGES TO CHOOSING AN EVANGELIST AS PASTOR

1. He has access to a vast network of resources and ideas.

In his travels, an evangelist has been able to see what works and what does not work. When I came to First Assembly in North Little Rock, I didn't know everything I wanted to do, but I certainly knew many things I did not want to duplicate. In fact, I told the board, "I don't know exactly what you need, but I know a lot of things you don't need." The life of an evangelist affords a wonderful opportunity to view effective programs, personnel, and methods. I often call for assistance from pastors in whose churches I have preached.

An evangelist has to preach to all types of people...and must develop a dependency on the Holy Spirit and the gift of discernment to address the needs of the congregation accurately.

2. He has learned flexibility by adapting to different congregational moods.

An evangelist has to preach to all types of people (Democrats, Republicans, young, old, traditional, progressive, country music fans, classical music fans, etc.) and must develop a dependency on the Holy Spirit and the gift of discernment to address the needs of the

congregation accurately. Every week I ask God to help me see the needs of my congregation and minister effectively to those needs.

3. The gift of evangelism is present in his ministry.

Every pastor must also function in the gift of evangelism. A healthy church maintains a proper balance between

evangelism, discipleship, and care. An evangelist has functioned in the gift of evangelism and is able to lead others to function in that gift.

4. He has been responsible for the bottom line.

Life as an evangelist is often precarious such as no regular income—no weekly paycheck. An evangelist knows

God gives a person a pastor's heart—it is not inherited.

that the bottom line of paying his expenses and feeding his family hinges on his management. He has learned to plan for the future and live on an uncertain budget. In business terms he is, in effect, serving as the CEO of his

Building Living Memorials

The apostle Paul was an evangelist who pioneered churches throughout Asia Minor. His letters to the Galatians, Ephesians, Thessalonians, Philippians, and others were to congregations he had helped establish. Paul did not simply arrive in a community, preach the gospel, and then leave. He realized his converts needed an established church home to be disciplined.

The same is true today. Evangelists who desire to have lasting results need to partner with fellow pastors in soul-winning endeavors and in establishing new churches.

During the past 41 years of our ministry, my wife Connie and I have helped pastors in many new works. We've often gone from large citywide crusades where 30,000 attended during the week to a small town where the sponsoring pastor had less than 100 in attendance. We've always said, "There is no city too large or too small where we can't win lost souls."

During these years over 500,000 people have stepped forward to dedicate their lives to Jesus Christ. Today many of these converts are in ministry as pastors, evangelists, and missionaries.

We praise God for the close relationships we've had with pastors, especially those who were pioneering churches. It is important for evangelists to help pastors who are in the early phases of their ministry.

Not only is it scriptural for evangelists to help start churches, it is practical. Here are five suggestions for evangelists who desire to build lasting works for God.

1. Tithe your schedule.

If God is blessing your ministry and things are going well, devote at least 1 week in 10 to helping new churches.

2. Do your research before preaching the first time in a new area.

How well do you know the pastors and the area? Where will you stay? How much advertising will be done?

3. Rally your prayer partners.

If you're going into a tough area, you'll need intercessors to back you in prayer. Write or call the pastors and friends you already know and request their prayers against the enemy's stronghold.

4. If possible, underwrite the cost of housing and advertising.

Missionaries use funds to go overseas; why not use funds to help establish a new church?

5. Turn the hearts of the people toward the pastor.

When you arrive with fresh sermons, songs, jokes, and illustrations, you will be praised and appreciated. But because you will move on to another place, it's necessary for you to turn the hearts of those attending the church toward their pastor. Building up the pastor as a man of God will help establish your new converts.

If the apostle Paul had failed to establish churches, two-thirds of the New Testament would be missing. His letters to the churches he helped to plant continue to strengthen us today.

Some time ago stone masons were making improvements on the Washington Monument. While workers were removing wood-overlays in the lobby at the base of the monument, they uncovered the beautifully carved statement made by one of the original 19th-century workmen, a Christian graffiti—

Attest: "Whoever is the human instrument of God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory more lofty and abiding than this"—B.F.B. (the carver's initials).

God's anointed evangelists are monument builders for eternity—and the best way to multiply the numbers of new converts is by helping establish new churches.


—Lowell Lundstrom is an evangelist and pastors Celebration Center in Burnsville, Minnesota.

corporation. The weight of the corporation rests solely upon his shoulders.

5. **People skills are vital for survival on the evangelistic field.**

The evangelist who does not get along with pastors has few return meetings. If he cannot get along with the people, he has few results. People skills,

therefore, are vital for an evangelist and crucial for a pastor.

The board and congregation of First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, elected me as their senior pastor. In March 1998, I celebrated my 12th anniversary—12 wonderful years together with God's blessing. 

ENDNOTE

1. Although this article presents the evangelist in the male gender, the discussion is equally valid for the female evangelist.

Alton Garrison is pastor of First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, Arkansas.



What Pastors Should Know When Road Warriors Come to Town



An evangelist's duty to a congregation and its pastor is to promote and enhance the bond between them by building on the foundation the pastor has laid.

B Y J I M R E N T Z

Although we served as pastors for over 17 years, my wife and I are now in our seventh year as evangelists and consider ourselves *road warriors* in the lifestyle we now share. Our years as pastors were invaluable for learning and understanding what it is to serve the body of Christ. Neither has our perspective dimmed by the last 7 years as evangelists. We well remember what it is like to serve as *trench fighters* on the home front. And our tenure as evangelists has taught us much about what pastors should expect when they call in *reinforcements*.

Scripture is clear on this subject. There are several purposes for evangelists: the

perfection of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edification (building up) of the body of Christ, to announce the good news—to preach the gospel (see Ephesians 4:12). In practice, Scripture places an objective before the evangelist not only to preach salvation but also to strengthen the believers. Since the pastor and evangelist share these objectives, the two callings might best work together toward these common goals.

Hopefully, the pastor's pulpit rings from service to service with compelling pronouncements of the gospel. As well, the pastor has a vision of where the church should be going and growing. What, then, is the role that the evangelist should be expected to fill in the life of the congregation the pastor is already nurturing?

A visitation by an evangelist is most

often referred to as a *revival*. This term sometimes grates on a pastor because it seems to imply that the congregation lacks vitality. This implication sometimes prevents pastors from calling in an evangelist in the first place. It is not unusual for pastors to take the position that they do not need an evangelist—that they are evangelist enough for their congregations. Some pastors may not appreciate or understand how their congregation can benefit from the work of an evangelist. It is important for both ministries that the pastor and evangelist understand how their separate callings are meant to work together.

Revival can simply mean: a restoration to acceptance, use, activity, or vigor after a time of obscurity. *Obscurity* means lacking in light. Let's remember that each of us

Trust Is a Two-Way Street

God's plan is for pastors and evangelists to be partners in ministry. During the past 40 years, my husband Lowell and I have worked side by side with several thousand pastors in many types of meetings: church revivals, Bible camps, district-sponsored retreats, and citywide crusades. Our partnership with pastors has brought thousands of people to Jesus Christ.

In September 1996, the Lord directed us to pioneer a new work in the Minneapolis area, and He has blessed Celebration Center with exciting growth. Hosting singers, missionaries, and speakers has helped us see the need for trust between pastors and guests even clearer.

Because the evangelist is the invited guest, the pastor must take the first step in this trusting partnership: Never invite an evangelist to your church until you have heard him personally and checked him out fully. It's wrong to invite a man to preach and then treat him with caution and skepticism.

For example, in the early years of our ministry, Lowell and I were invited to a large church in Iowa. God blessed the revival, and many were coming to Christ. One night we accepted a businessman's invitation to lunch after the service. The next morning the pastor confronted Lowell: "I heard you went out to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. So and So."

Lowell replied, "Yes, is something wrong?"

The pastor replied, "I don't want my evangelists going out to eat with my people."

We were shocked by his comment. Then the Spirit of the Lord gave Lowell the courage to say, "Pastor, if you don't trust me with your best deacon, then you shouldn't trust me to proclaim God's Word from your pulpit. If you have any doubts about my character and conduct with your members, you should never have invited me to your church."

The pastor softened his attitude. We continued the revival with even greater results and remained friends with that pastor until his homegoing 35 years later.

A pastor can check out an evangelist with a few phone calls to the guest's district superintendent and the past several places he has preached. Ask pointed questions about the evangelist's message, manners, and character.

The second part of this soul-winning partnership falls on the evangelist, who needs to trust the pastor to support him spiritually and financially.

A good bridge to forming a trusting relationship can be achieved by scheduling a 1-night rally or Sunday meeting before a full-length event is set. This permits the evangelist and pastor to see if their ministry philosophies and personalities match well enough to plan a longer meeting.

Trust is a two-way street. It only works well when both pastor and evangelist have confidence in each other and will work together as a team.

—Connie Lundstrom and her husband Lowell pastor Celebration Center in Burnsville, Minnesota.

walks in a different light. What one discerns well another may not see. The evangelist can bring to a congregation a change in perspective, a fresh viewpoint, a new light, or perhaps the same light with a different focus.

There is always someone the pastor's message isn't reaching. This doesn't infer the pastor is lacking in pulpit skills. But as individuals, we have differences, even eccentricities, in our interests and comprehension. If an evangelist rekindles a fire for the gospel in even one person, then the visit was worthwhile. It could take the visits of many evangelists together with a pastor's efforts to reach the lost of a community.

In practice, Scripture places an objective before the evangelist not only to preach salvation but also to strengthen the believers.

An evangelist's ministry should support and emphasize the pastor's work, strengthening and extending it in agreement and harmony. The evangelist is


not to bring discord, dissension, or disharmony to the visited congregation. His or her duty is to present an anointed, unadulterated gospel with enthusiasm and wisdom. An evangelist's duty to a congregation and its pastor is to promote and enhance the bond between them by building on the foundation the pastor has laid.

Scripture records in 1 Corinthians 3 a division in the church. Some people identified with Paul, some with Apollos, some with Peter, and some with Christ. Paul, Apollos, and Peter influenced people's lives for the building up of the Body. Paul wrote: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (verse 6). So should it be between the pastor and evangelist. There is no rightful place for the evangelist who comes to put on a show, to promote the latest fad, or to manipulate with sensationalism.

The pastor should expect the evangelist to be a partner in the presentation of the gospel. They are equals in the eyes of the Lord and should respect each other as such. The evangelist has certain advantages, as does the pastor. These advantages should

be capitalized by each only to the extent they benefit the congregation.

What is the duty of the pastor and congregation to the evangelist? I can answer this from experience: Remember, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Esther and I can always sense the prayer effort that has preceded our evangelistic outreach. Pastors should encourage their congregations to prayerfully support the evangelistic meetings. When congregation members have prayer equity in a revival, their participation is greater, and the blessings flow (see 1 Chronicles 7:14).

An evangelist and a pastor in tune to the Holy Spirit and sensitive to the cares and needs of church attendees cannot fail to bless them. My desire is that the pastor and the evangelist become closer partners in the end-time harvest. 

*Jim Rentz,
Calvary Church
Ministries,
Baton Rouge,
Louisiana*



Confirming the Word with SIGNS & WONDERS

Wherever revival winds are blowing, wherever God's fire is burning,
and wherever Jesus' name is exalted, miracles, signs,
and wonders are evidenced among God's people.

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Jesus never ceases to amaze me. When a crack addict bound by a \$300-a-day habit comes to the altar, weeps in repentance over his lost condition, receives prayer, and walks away, never to return again to his former addiction, I am amazed. When a cancer patient is anointed with oil, prayed over, X-rayed the next day and the tumor has disappeared, I am amazed. When a New Ager saturated with 20 years of false indoctrination slips into a service, makes her way to the altar, opens up to the King of kings and Lord of lords, and rises in love with Jesus, never to return to the metaphysical, I am amazed. When a prostitute cries out to God, receives forgiveness, and walks away, arm in arm with the Lover of her soul, I am amazed. When a new believer is filled with the Holy Spirit and begins speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives him utterance, I am amazed. When the demon

possessed scream out as they are confronted by the authority in Jesus' name and pass from torment to peace within seconds, I am amazed.

Reports of supernatural wonders are pouring in from all over the world. God's anointing is flowing. Wherever revival winds are blowing, wherever God's fire is burning, and wherever Jesus' name is exalted, miracles, signs, and wonders are evidenced among God's people. Everything God does outside our realm of understanding—beyond the natural—is supernatural.

holy, when we allow the purifying fire of God to burn away all the chaff in our lives, when we allow God freedom to expose every secret place, when we become pliable in His hands, then God's supernatural works will follow. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7,8). Believers should expect these supernatural works.

God has often used people as His vessels through whom to flow supernatural-

***Everything God does outside our realm of understanding—
beyond the natural—is supernatural.***

It's a mystery. Unexplainable. Mind-boggling. I love to see God in action. My response is in harmony with the Psalmist's: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23).

Miracles are intended to grip the attention of those in attendance and to point them to their unseen Savior. Miracles will take place. When we become

ly—lives such as the apostles Paul, Peter, and John; Charles Finney; Evan Roberts; George Jeffreys; Smith Wigglesworth; Kathryn Kuhlman; and a host of others. But as a healing or deliverance occurs, pride has a tendency to well up.

For example, whenever a major miracle takes place in a church, in come the army of onlookers and reporters. They

Giving Opportunity for Every Believer To Be Filled

The work of the evangelist is being widely received today because of the impact it is having on the body of Christ. Consequently, evangelists are being used in great measure to lead people to salvation and to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The evangelist's role, according to 2 Timothy 4:2, is to keep a sense of urgency; to preach the gospel and share the riches of the Word of God; and to correct, rebuke, and encourage God's people. As evangelists continue to fulfill their significant call, allowing the Holy Spirit to actively draw and convict, God's presence is producing changed lives and a hunger for more of God.

"Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17, NIV). As people begin to experience the life-changing presence of Christ, they are eager to pursue all that God has for them. This leaves room for the Holy Spirit to continue His work in them through the Baptism. Because the altars are filled with people giving their hearts to Christ for the first time, rededicating their lives, or being healed by the power of God, evangelists have incredible opportunities to not only instruct about the things of God, but to actually give time for people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

R.A. Torrey wrote: "In regeneration, there is the impartation of life by the Spirit's power, and the one who receives it, is saved; in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, there is the impartation of power, and the one who receives it is fitted for service."¹ Evangelists are recognizing the need for all God's people to be adequately equipped for His service.

As evangelists maintain their sense of urgency, preach the gospel, and allow the Holy Spirit to move, the baptism in the Holy Spirit becomes not an issue on the back burner, but an element of fire in the Christian walk that is enhancing the growth of the church. Evangelists, recognizing the need for the power of the Holy Spirit in believers, are continuing to make room for teaching about the Baptism and giving opportunity for every believer to be filled with the Spirit.

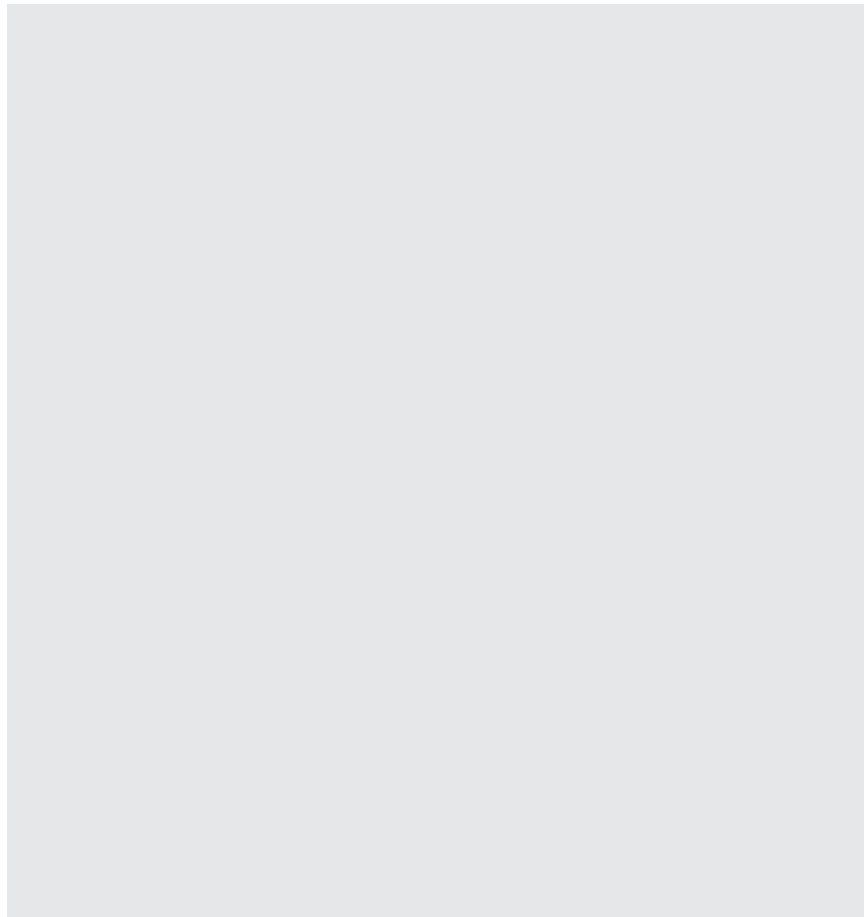
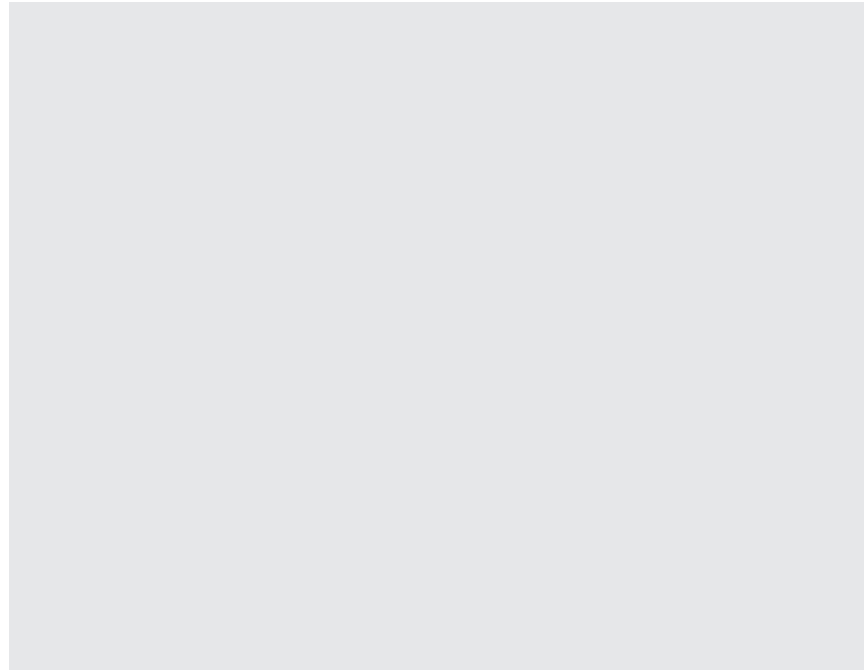
ENDNOTE

1. Torrey, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 174–176.

—Julaine Christensen, *Current Fire Ministries, Papillion, Nebraska.*

begin to interrogate everyone. "How did it happen?" "Where did it occur?" "Who was the instrument?" "What kind of prayer was prayed?" Everyone points to the pastor, the evangelist, or another

servant of God. The one responsible for speaking the prayer of faith is singled out. "He's the one." "She did it." "There's the man God used to heal that cancer." "She's the one that laid hands on the demoniac."



Like metal to a magnet, people are drawn to individuals used by God. Those used by God have the responsibility to deflect any honor and glory off of themselves and onto the One who is the rightful recipient of praise—Jesus Christ.

A prime example of people deflecting any glory over God's supernatural acts is found in Acts 14:1–18. With a loud voice, Paul said to a cripple, "Stand upright on thy feet." The Bible reports a total healing, a supernatural act of God. The cripple jumped up and walked. Verse 11 records the crowd's response: "And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Paul and Barnabas were treated as gods, even to the point of being called Jupiter and Mercurius. The locals were about to offer a sacrifice to them when they deflected all praise and gave the glory to Jesus. They even used this opportunity to preach repentance. Their message contained a strong admonition to the people to turn from their vanities unto the living God.

Another scriptural example is Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost when all were marveling at the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Rather than elevating those involved or the unusual manifestations they were experiencing, Peter responded with a strong message of repentance.

Likewise, evangelists must move quickly within the atmosphere of a miracle to relate spiritual truths that lead people to the knowledge of Christ. In this way supernatural wonders serve as doors to the unknown. They are a direct link to the plan and purpose of God.

Scripture also records the repercussions of not deflecting the honor due to God. Another man was treated as a god but failed miserably in his responsibility. Herod relished the praises of men: "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote

Anointing Power in the Pulpit

As you enter the pulpit, are you hesitant, or are you filled with Holy Spirit expectancy? The anointing of God makes all the difference—the presence, comfort, power, and assurance that God is there, that He is going to do something.

Pursuit precedes provision (see Luke 11:9,10). The anointing in the pulpit is not just determined by 1 or 2 hours of prayer before the service, but rather by the character and practices of your life in the previous weeks and months.

Some Steps Into His Presence:

1. *Prayer.* A life without deep devotional prayer is like a well without water. Prayer must be the priority of your life, accompanied by being saturated with the Word of God. Beware of substitutes and distractions. Unforgiveness and iniquity will hinder His anointing (see Proverbs 4:23; 1 John 3:21,22).

2. *Fasting with prayer.* Fasting brings discipline and sensitizes you to the person of the Holy Spirit and to the will of God. “Fasting...is the best way to help meet the conditions of humility and to seek God’s face.... One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is to become more attentive to God.”¹

3. *A desire for more of God.* Desire ignites fire. “Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present, or there will be no manifestation of Christ.”²

4. *Compassion.* Power exercised without love is brazen and brassy (see 1 Corinthians 13). Jesus is our example. He always ministered with care and compassion.

5. *Purity.* A polluted well does not flow with living water. There is no pollution at the source of the outflowing (Jesus). It is only as you move away from the source that stagnation and impurity begin. Stay close to the Source.

6. *Humility.* Your motives must be right with God. “If pride could make a devil out of an angel, what might it do to you?”³

7. *Communion with God.* Every day walk with God. Talk to Him. Sing to Him. Pray without ceasing. It was said of Smith Wigglesworth that he never went 30 minutes without stopping to pray and praise the Lord.

“I shall be anointed with fresh oil” (Psalm 92:10). Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Let every evangelist seek the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit.

ENDNOTES

1. Elmer Towns, *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1996), 17.

2. A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Eastbourne, England: Kingsway Publications, 1982), 17.

3. John Kilpatrick, *When the Heavens Are Brass* (Shippensburg, Pa.: Revival Press, 1997), 35.

—Jim Ripley, *Jim Ripley Ministries, Olympia, Washington.*

him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost” (Acts 12:21–23). Herod sought the honor of man above the honor of God. The worms of pride and self-conceit destroyed him as he failed to give God the glory.

In the eyes of people, the evangelist’s homiletical expertise, dynamic messages, reasoning powers, talents, and singing skills may seem worthy of the highest praise; but in God’s eyes, the true picture is seen. It is not our personality, platform, or program that gets the job done; it is the power of Almighty God.


God gives evangelists the breath to sing and ability to preach. He created the hands we use to lay on the sick. If we are handsome in stature, it was God who knit us together in our mother’s womb. If our

messages move the masses, it is because Jesus saved us, and the Holy Spirit anointing produced such clarity of thought and awesome results. If God uses us mightily in healings, if supernatural acts swirl around our ministries, remember, Jesus took the beatings; He was bruised; He was wounded; He gave His life on the cruel, rugged cross, not us.

God’s supernatural works are once again evident in our services. We are at the beginning of a powerful spiritual awakening where major miracles will be commonplace. God is confirming His Word: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

Let’s learn a lesson from Paul, Barnabas, and Herod. Stay humble. Give

the glory to God.

We serve a supernatural God who performs supernatural acts. They should be expected. The power of God is flowing. Lives are being touched. But as evangelists of the gospel, we must determine in our hearts to make disciples. I want to know that people who have been touched by God are living for God—that they are Blood-washed, consecrated, Holy Spirit-filled, on-fire, bold witnesses for Jesus Christ. 

Steve Hill is an evangelist ministering at Brownsville Assembly of God, Pensacola, Florida.



*The Evangelist
and the 21st-
Century
Church*

THE LOCAL CHURCH CRUSADE



Move of GOD

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*"Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory' " (Exodus 33:18).**

As a global community, we are at the end of the millennium. Much of Western Europe, the Orient, India, the former Eastern Bloc, and the former Soviet Union remain in spiritual darkness. And although the light shines in Africa, South America, and Central America, over half of the population in these regions still lives in spiritual darkness.

The moral dilemma the United States faces is perplexing to say the least. Nothing seems to shock us anymore. But if spiritual leaders think our nation appears unconcerned, they may have misread the signs. Our nation is desperate for divine revelation and intervention.

The president, the legislature, lawyers, doctors, educators, the labor force, the sales force, computer scientists, social scientists—they're all desperate for God. Every city in the world is desperate for a move of God. Heathen people, religious people, wealthy people, poor people, violent people, important people, and street people are desperate for God.

With communities in such a state of spiritual desperation, the opportunity for spiritual renewal is ripe. That's when the pastor and the evangelist make an imposing combination against spiritual darkness.

When you hear Pastor John Kilpatrick and Evangelist Steve Hill of the now famous Brownsville revival speak, one thing transcends their individual experiences: they were both desperate for a move of God. And when two spiritual leaders come together in agreement, something divine is going to transpire (see Matthew 18:19).

COUNT THE COST

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the

foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish' " (Luke 14:28–30).

Pastors must count the cost of revival. Historically, protracted meetings are placed on the calendar with as much emphasis as next month's baby dedication.

MACEDONIAN CALL

Acts 16:9 records Paul's vision of a man from Macedonia calling out to him: "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

To admit our need for help is an act of humility. That in itself is a revival for some. To admit our need and dependence upon God and other ministries God has placed in the church is the beginning of revival. So perhaps the approach pastors should take is the way of the Macedonian.

CHOOSE THE EVANGELIST

When God begins to speak to the heart of a pastor about revival, the pastor must prayerfully decide on which evangelist to invite. Some may feel that no one is needed from the outside. But the itinerant evangelist can bring fresh insights from the Word of God.

Pastor, once the decision is made, call the evangelist and discuss with him or her the vision God has laid on your heart.

Questions pastors should ask when considering an evangelist:

1. *Will this evangelist entertain a Macedonian call to my city vs. just another date on the travel calendar?*

Evangelism is a job, but it must first be a calling that stays fresh in the heart of the evangelist. If evangelists ever reach the place where they believe they know how to conduct revival meetings without the intervention of God, then the ministry presented will be nothing more than flesh.

2. *Does the evangelist have an agenda for my city?*

Oftentimes an evangelist has a burning agenda for a particular city. Pastors should not assume they are the only ones who have a burden to meet the needs of a community.

3. *Is this evangelist willing to work as hard, while he or she is here, as the rest of us?*

Ministers are first of all servants (Mark 10:44,45). They are called to spend and be spent for the Kingdom. If the evangelist has no set agenda for a city, then the pastor can set the agenda: morning prayer meetings, noon teaching sessions, literature distribution.

A pastor should share the evangelist with the community. With God's help, they can stir things up during the day to insure victory in the evening services.

TIME LINE

Once the pastor and evangelist are in agreement over the terms of their coming and the meeting is established, a time line must be set.

Here are some things pastors can do that will prepare the way for the evangelist.

1. *The pastor and staff must focus on the meeting.*

Double-mindedness cannot be entertained when it comes to revival (see James 1:6-8). It is understandable that there are a myriad of obligations the pastor must meet as leader of the church. However, a series of protracted evangelistic meetings must be focused and kept before the staff and people.

2. *The pastor must preach toward the meeting.*

A series of sermons on the great revivals in history can build people's anticipation of and awareness of the need for an evangelistic crusade. A series of messages on the fruits of a move of God will build a hunger for spiritual change. Remember, there already is a quiet desperation among the people for a move of God.

3. *The pastor must lead the church in intercessory prayer.*

Anything accomplished apart from prayer will come to naught. Dick Eastman states in his book *No Easy Road*: "Indeed, no force transmits human love more than intercessory prayer. No greater gift could man give society than bended knee. In the last analysis when all history is written

A series of sermons on the great revivals in history can build people's anticipation of and awareness of the need for an evangelistic crusade.

and we stand before God, we will know what really saved this age. When we talk with God in eternity, we will quickly learn everything of worth that was accomplished was connected to an intercessor's prayer."

The whole church should be encouraged to pray at least 2 months before the meeting and set aside 1 day a week for fasting. Leading up to the crusade, preservice prayer meetings, if not already begun, should be headed by the pastor and staff. Wednesday noon

prayer meetings will also keep the focus on revival.


Prayer walks on Saturdays through the neighborhoods surrounding the church should be initiated. In conjunction with the Saturday prayer walks, free tickets to the meetings can be distributed. And when the actual crusade begins, a team of prayer warriors should intercede each night in a separate room for the services.

Remember, pastor, the world, the nation, and the city you represent are

The pastor and the evangelist make an imposing combination against spiritual darkness.

all desperate for God. Are you willing to assume this burden in hopes that

maybe, just maybe, your church's evangelistic zeal will be the spark that ignites the fire that will sweep your community into the kingdom of God?

Are you ready to pray with Moses: "Lord show me your glory"? In other words, are you desperate? 

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

Rich Wilkerson is an Assemblies of God evangelist and is founder and director of Peacemakers, a mass evangelism program to the 39 largest cities in America. He is pastor of Trinity Assembly of God, Miami, Florida.





Developing Evangelistic Leadership in the Church

BY BILL BRIGHT

Helping to fulfill the Great Commission is the single most important task of the Church. Therefore, developing evangelistic leadership to carry out that mission should be a top priority.

Adding to that sense of priority should be an awareness of the unique time in which we live. After almost 2,000 years, we are within reach of actually fulfilling the Great Commission. Many of us Christian leaders believe that with God's help it can and will be done by the end of the year 2000.

God's help is already evident. Witnessing opportunities are unprecedented. For example, we now have a rare window of open doors in heretofore closed societies such as those in former communist nations. And in the United States and abroad we have a freedom and general tranquillity that are conducive to evangelism. How long will this window remain open? Ominous storm clouds are in much of the world, and we do not know how long God will hold them back. Therefore, we must move with swiftness and resolve in a great sense of urgency.

The Lord has provided incredible resources with which to finish the job. This includes high-tech tools such as radio, television, film, and videos, not available to previous generations. For

example, just one of our tools, the *Jesus* film, the full-length movie on the life of Christ taken directly from the Gospel of Luke, is seen daily in hundreds of cities and rural areas. Often it is projected on bedsheets spread before village crowds on moonlit nights in the farthest corners of the world. As of January 1, 1998, over 1.3 billion people had viewed it in 440 languages in 222 countries. Millions have indicated decisions to trust Christ.

Where there is no vision for evangelism, a church dies spiritually, along with the population it could have reached.

The goal of our *Jesus* Video Saturation Project is to make the story of our Lord and the gospel available to every home in America. Church workers are freely leaving this same movie on videotape in homes. Using an effective follow-up program, response percentages have been remarkable. Many churches throughout America and overseas are using this highly effective, low-cost video strategy as their own and are blanketing their neighborhoods and cities with the knowledge of the Lord. (Anyone wanting more information on this can call 1-800-29-JESUS.)

With film, videos, one-on-one sharing, and working with hundreds of missions organizations and thousands of churches of most denominations, the aim is to give every person worldwide an opportunity to

accept Jesus Christ by the end of the year 2000. This includes not just unreached people groups in the far exotic corners of the world but right here at home—our neighbors and communities—where aggressive local church evangelism is so badly needed.

From these realities it should be clear that two of the most important traits to develop in church evangelistic leadership are vision and urgency.

Vision. Vision must be instilled in evangelistic leaders. Where there is no vision for evangelism, a church dies spiritually, along with the population it could have reached. A leader should clearly see and be captured by the immediate relevance and imperative nature of the Great Commission. The leader should not be a small thinker but have a big vision, trusting God with big plans and goals to reach the lost for His glory. Our vision should be so large that its accomplishment is impossible without God's intervention. Constructing a vision capable of achievement with our mere available human resources can prevent us from trusting God, with whom all things are possible.

Urgency. The leader also needs a sense of urgency. This does not imply that we want to get ahead of the Holy Spirit, for He alone is the One who draws people to Christ. But we want to be in step and keep up with the quick work He is doing in the world today. The leader needs to be in tune with the

times, motivated, and quick to seize and act upon the evangelistic opportunities the Lord may provide, such as effective means of communication.

In evangelism we must see ourselves as servants of the people and communities we want to reach, expending our lives and energies on their behalf as our Lord Jesus did for us.

Probably the single most important attribute to be developed in an evangelistic leader is that he or she must be a person of prayer. Spiritual victories are won and souls are saved in the prayer closet. God's army is the only army that fights on its knees. An evangelistic effort, either individual or group, should never be undertaken unless it is undergirded by intensive prayer. To this, I strongly recommend the biblical discipline of fasting which, with prayer, helps us focus on the Lord. Denying our fleshly appetites helps

us humble ourselves and meet the conditions of 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Many other traits that should be developed in evangelistic leaders are the same ones that should be developed in any church member. However, in leaders I would especially stress the following:


- Be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit, walking in obedience.
- Have a Christlike love for souls.
- Have a love for God's Word and be a serious student of the Bible.
- Have a solid understanding of the basic truths of the Christian faith.
- Be trained to lead people to receive Christ and to train others.
- Have a servant's heart.

Servanthood. The apostle Paul considered himself a slave [servant] of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1), who humbled himself and became a servant of all (Philippians 2:7). We must emulate our Master and be slaves to Him and to one another.

Our Lord Jesus gave one major prerequisite to leadership—servanthood: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be

first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26–28, NIV).

Our motivation should always be to serve and not be served. In evangelism we must see ourselves as servants of the people and communities we want to reach, expending our lives and energies on their behalf as our Lord Jesus did for us.

Churches that develop evangelistic leaders who have vision, a sense of urgency, a love for souls and for God's Word, and a servant's heart; who are prayer warriors, filled with the Spirit, and properly trained will be the most effective in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. These servant-workers now helping build God's kingdom will someday hear our Lord say these precious words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." 

Dr. Bill Bright is founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ International, Orlando, Florida.



Prayer with Fasting: The Key to Evangelism

Prayer with fasting is a spiritual atomic bomb in its effects and is the most significant key to evangelism and fulfilling the Great Commission.

Churches and evangelistic leaders with disciplined lives of prayer with fasting will see exciting new breakthroughs in their evangelistic outreaches and the spiritual climate of their churches. I am praying for 2 million people to pray and fast (with liquids) for 40 days for national and world revival and for fulfillment of the Great Commission. Church leaders and members can also focus on their communities.

Why fasting? It is a biblical practice; and as we deny our fleshly appetites, fasting helps us to humble ourselves and meet the conditions of 2 Chronicles 7:14. Why 40 days? The Lord Jesus set the example before He began His ministry. Also when He gave the Great Commission, He commanded that we teach what He taught. That includes fasting 40 days before we undertake a special ministry.

My first fast of that duration in 1994 was the most exhilarating time of my life. I have never experienced such intimacy with the Lord.


If one is not led to fast for a full 40 days, then do as the Spirit leads. Also in 1994, Christian leaders began to meet for 3 days of fasting and prayer for revival. Immediately after our 1994 gathering in Orlando, the Christian media began reporting outbreaks of major revival in churches and colleges throughout America. We have since met in 1995, 1996, and 1997 with ever-increasing participation; another gathering is planned each year, at least, to the end of the year 2000. The 1997 event had almost 3,000 satellite downlink sites participating from churches, colleges, prisons, and other locations.

Perhaps one of the greatest results of Christian leaders' fasting and prayer is Mission America, a partnership of most major denominations and parachurch groups representing millions of Christians in approximately 200,000 churches—unprecedented since the first century.

I urge all church members, especially evangelistic leaders, to begin this biblical discipline. Also, place November 12–14, 1998, on your calendars and join us either by satellite or in person for *Fasting & Prayer '98* in Houston. For more information, call 1-888-327-8464.

—Dr. Bill Bright

The Evangelist and



*Scatter the
precious seed
wherever the
opportunity
arises.*

the Harvest

BY TOMMY BARNETT

Jesus still calls men and women, even as He did 2,000 years ago. Obedience to that call requires the revocation of self-rights and the surrender of one's personal sovereignty to Him.

When I was a teenager some outstanding athletes who attended my dad's church announced they were going into the ministry. The congregation cheered. The response was less enthusiastic when I, a 69-pound boy, announced God had also called me into the ministry. Although many years have passed, memories linger of the humble event that led to my commitment to help fulfill the Great Commission.

I had often observed Dad sow seeds of the gospel, water them with love and

kindness, and nurture them with unrelenting drive. Surely the same Holy Spirit who guided Dad would be with me. My Bible confirmed there was no age discrimination in God's service.

The invitation to hold my first revival—in my uncle's church in Seminole, Texas—was secondhand. Dad was not available, but he offered my services, describing me as a “chip off the old block.” The response was a tentative, “We don't want the chip; we want the block.” Nevertheless, equipped with Dad's sermons, I was sent. The first night two young couples came down the aisle to accept salvation.

So excited I couldn't sleep, I saw a scene being played out in my spirit: multitudes of men and women were coming to Christ. I had prayed for 50 souls in that tiny church's revival, and 4 had already come. Now I believed for 46 more. God miraculously answered my

youthful prayer. Later, in contemplating that harvest of 50, I wondered why I had not asked for more—maybe 100?

I moved from the years of evangelism to pastoring two great churches. Both churches began small, but the touchstone remains the same: “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29).

I realize each day and with every new anointing that the expected harvest is predicated on allowing Christ to walk with my feet; work with my hands; love souls with my heart; and, by invitation, live in His presence. The Holy Spirit is my closest Friend and resident Truth Teacher. The Father's resources cannot be exhausted. “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Timothy 1:12).

God has entrusted us with reaching the world with the message of salvation.

Cultivating an Evangelistic Vision

Any minister of the gospel who desires to cultivate an evangelistic vision must spend time at the feet of Jesus. There the Lord can help us understand His heart for the lost.

Coupled with the need to be preachers who pray, we need a personal encounter with the Word. How easy it is to fall into the trap of preparing messages without taking time each day to let God speak to us personally. As we experience the touch of God on our lives, our effectiveness in the pulpit will greatly increase.

While we may deal with many topics and issues that bless and benefit believers, we must not forsake preaching salvation messages followed by an invitation for people to receive Christ as their Savior.

We can further cultivate our vision by discipling evangelistic partners. Whether we are a pastor, evangelist, or missionary, Scripture instructs us to equip the saints “for the work of the ministry” (Ephesians 4:12). This could be done by taking someone with us street witnessing, planning soul-winning outreaches where people in our churches share their testimony, and providing training sessions for those wanting to reach the lost.

Someone once said that if all the unsaved people of the world would line up outside our door, the line would reach around the world 30 times. Every minute of every day people are dying without Jesus and going to a place called hell. May God help us as proclaimers of the good news to develop an evangelistic heart and vision.

—Greg Hubbard is an evangelist from West Springfield, Massachusetts.

Our methods may vary—media, programs, outreach, and as individual witnesses—but the message is unchanged.

Are we in God's calling program—the call to sow, cultivate, and celebrate His harvest? We, as pastors and evangelists, are called to model His example. We are to be personal soul winners, even as we open the Scripture and challenge people to go and do likewise. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Proverbs 10:5).

Jesus was moved with compassion on many occasions. Are we? The word *compassion* signifies *co-passion*, or your pain in my heart. The task is monumental, but, according to Augustine, "Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward for this faith is to see what we believe"—an ever-increasing harvest.

As a pastor and evangelist I have learned to enlist the help of fellow laborers by training them to be soul winners. When I invest in the life of others, their accomplishments become mine.

Example is not one thing; it is everything. My family and church family's


commitment and dedication to His call create future generational harvest. And I am convinced that first of all I must sow biblically and creatively by scattering godly seeds at home.

Vicariously, I live through my children. My two sons are both pastors with diverse congregations. The oldest, Luke, is building a church in Ohio comprised of members of various socioeconomic standing. Matthew serves as copastor at the Los Angeles International Church, working among gang members, those from many different ethnic backgrounds, the disenfranchised, and the inner city's hurting. My daughter Christy is involved with young mothers in our Phoenix church.

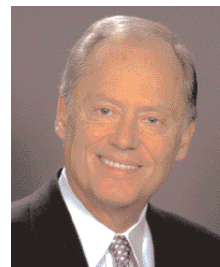
I challenge you to put multiplication principles into your seed sowing of the good news of Jesus. Use life examples. Many of Jesus' teachings were imparted by His use of parables—a method enabling people to understand truth. Parables, narrated as stories, are true to life on earth but reach heavenward.

I am convinced Jesus shared the Parable of the Sower to shed heaven's

light on a familiar subject: sowing seeds and reaping a harvest. The soil on which the seed falls is not the concern of the sower. Jesus' mandate is to sow and water. God alone gives the increase. Therefore, the future of each faithful sower portends our Lord's greatest harvest. Dare we lose the harvest as the dawn of the 21st century approaches?

Sow liberally, won't you? Scatter the precious seed wherever the opportunity arises. Sow and cultivate with the full assurance that faithfully planted seeds will germinate in God-prepared soil. His Word never returns void when sown by the anointed and appointed, for His glory and an ever-expanding harvest of souls. 

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



*Many issues have changed. To speak effectively
to people's hurting hearts requires understanding
the issues with which they grapple.*

Profile of an Evangelistic



I am often asked how I can successfully preach evangelistic messages and do the work of an evangelist? My response includes three areas: preparation, presentation, and persuasion.

PREPARATION

Few things are as important in the ministry as preparation; every minister understands its importance in sermons. No minister should preach with an inadequately prepared message. However, other areas need preparation as well such

as the head and heart.

Head. Preparing our heads speaks to understanding. To minister effectively in the new millennium, we must understand the people, their culture, and the times.

No greater diversity has existed in our churches than today. America has become a multicultural society, which has also impacted our churches. They are becoming multiracial and multinational.

I often preach at our International Christian Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, which is an international congregation comprised of English-speaking believers—

Americans, Europeans, Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, Africans, and other nationalities. I ministered at Braeswood Assembly of God in Houston, Texas, recently where I found virtually the same multinational mix. The world has come to our churches, and we need to gain an understanding that will enable us to present the gospel message to these diverse congregations.

Not only is the Assemblies of God more ethnically diverse but also more economically and socially diverse. We must understand to whom we are preaching so our message speaks to

people—whoever and wherever they are—socially, culturally, and economically.

Many issues have changed. To speak effectively to people's hurting hearts requires understanding the issues with which they grapple. While sin is still the core issue, its manifestations are often different today. New Age philosophy, Eastern mysticism, the drug culture, the proliferation of pornography on the Internet, new cultural views on marriage—these are issues we face when preaching to America today. Therefore, we must be prepared to confront today's issues with the eternal message of the gospel.

Heart. Our most important preparation is

look to us with love and respect.

The American church has made many of its evangelists celebrities; we dare not live like one. Jesus ordained the Twelve “that they should be with Him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14). Evangelists can only be effective in life and ministry if they have “been with Jesus.” This is the heart preparation time. It is not optional or unimportant but required and essential. According to the *New Living Translation*, Jesus chose them that they might be His “regular companions.” We must spend time as companions with God before we consider ourselves qualified to proclaim His message.



of the heart. Without a right heart, we can't have a right ministry. I frequently have opportunity to speak to young men and women in Asia who are preparing for the ministry or who have just begun their ministry. I always speak about the heart issues of the ministry: nurturing their relationship with God, keeping a pure heart and mind, and maintaining honesty and integrity.

In American society, suspicion immediately comes to the forefront when the word *evangelist* is mentioned. Therefore, the message to the evangelist is simple: “*Live right.*” A heart fixed on Jesus won't break the hearts of those who

PRESENTATION

How do we present ourselves, and how are we perceived? We must be seen as men and women of conviction, compassion, and commitment as well as communicators of the gospel.

Conviction. People must believe that we believe. They must see us as men and women of conviction, not ministers who are trying to convince them. They must see honesty more than oratory. This requires baring our souls and being transparent if we are to gain the acceptance needed to bring sinners to Christ.

Compassion. Hurting people are looking

We must be seen

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communicators

of the gospel.

Keeping Evangelistic Ministry on Course Into the 21st Century

The historical marker said it was 250 yards from where I stood to the watery grave of the U.S.S. *Huron*, America's last naval vessel made of iron. Like the Titanic, it was believed to be virtually unsinkable, yet 98 men died that fateful day in the late 1800s.

The most powerful ship in the American arsenal, the *Huron* left New York harbor headed for Cuba to conduct military exercises. The winds were not favorable, but the confidence level was more than enough to compensate. After all, the Navy's finest captain, Commander Ryan, was at the helm. His knowledge of the ship and seas overrode the warnings of high winds that signaled a storm brewing in the Atlantic.

He knew this ship could ride out any threat of weather. What he didn't know was that there was an error that was undetectable at the point of origin. The ship's compass was off true north ever so slightly. Commander Ryan left the harbor under overcast skies with no stars visible to guide him. With the heavens hidden and nothing to expose the error, he sailed on.

Ryan's eyes searched vainly for assurance that what he was hearing in his ears was wrong. *The sound of crashing waves was simply the bow breaking through the huge swells, wasn't it?* After all, he was miles out in the Atlantic away from any shoreline. *I'll just have a look, anyway*, he thought. He raised his eyeglass and there, barely visible in the darkness, was white water from waves crashing onto the enormous rocks of the Outer Banks of the North Carolina coast.

"My God," he mumbled, "how did we get here?"

Too late to change its course, America's strength and pride was on the rocks. What was an error measurable in only inches, as the ship crept out of New York harbor, was measured in miles off the coast of North Carolina.

At the point of origin everything looks fine; but at the end of the journey, the little things that draw us off course will be our undoing, leaving us muttering, "My God, how did we get here?"

The success or failure of evangelism in the 21st century is dependent upon the point of origin. Have we embarked upon a path of distorted truths skewed by false doctrine? Has our message been tainted with embellishments and commercialized with materialism until the truth can hardly be found?

Time has seemingly been compressed to the point that we are moving at an ever-increasing rate of speed toward the inevitable end. If evangelism took a hit in the 80s because of the age-old supposition that success covers a multitude of sins, and if you are financially prosperous you are approved of God, then we can expect to see even worse damage and fatal error in the direction being taken by those whose spiritual compasses are off the true course. The slightest error in doctrine at the point of origin may seem unworthy of attention, but as time passes it takes believers so far off course that in the end it is blatant and causes irreparable damage to the truth and those in search of it. We must first recognize the error in the compass—our doctrine—and then change course to correct the error.

The search engine of the Holy Spirit can reveal the slightest discrepancy in pure doctrine. If evangelists will heed the voice of the Holy Spirit and the warning signals from elders and peers, they will prevent the destruction of the innocent and preserve the anointing on their life and ministry.

The evangelism trends of the 21st century will follow the direction taken at the point of origin—for good or evil. And the gap will continue to widen, ending either in faith or failure.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11).

—Dave Roever, Roever Evangelistic Association, Fort Worth, Texas.

for someone who cares. In His inaugural address, Jesus spoke from a heart of compassion, declaring that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to "preach the gospel to the poor...heal the brokenhearted...preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18,19).

People are searching for compassion, not condescension. We must pray until we care and then pray that we can con-

vey that compassion to the hurting.

Commitment. Congregations are looking to us for commitment. It is fair for people to wonder about our commitment if we preach salvation, call people to the altar, and then put on our coats and walk out the back door. If we call the lost to repentance, we should make a commitment to stay with them at the altar until they have prayed through to salvation. If we preach the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we should make the

commitment to stay and pray with seekers until they receive the promise of the Father.

When we preach the message and call people to decision, we enter into a relationship with them—a relationship that requires our commitment. Commitment will engender greater success in ministry, and people will respond to those who make a commitment to them.

Communication. God has called us to be effective communicators of the

gospel, not commentators on society. Consider three issues in the area of communication:

Visual. When I was a young Christian, it was not unusual to see an evangelist with a green suit, green tie, green shoes, and green Bible. The entire outfit could just as easily have been red or purple. As far as I could determine, the two requirements of an evangelist were to be a great preacher and a bad dresser.

We must understand to whom we are preaching so that our message speaks to people— whoever and wherever they are—socially, culturally, and economically.

Times have changed and evangelists look, for the most part, like ordinary people in ministry. Our appearance must not detract from our message. Dress appropriately for the setting. When I preached open-air Good News Crusades in Thailand, I never wore a coat and tie—they were inappropriate for the setting. For the same reason, I never wear a Burmese sarong when preaching in America. The general rule is to avoid style extremes so the message is heard more than the man is seen.

Another area of the visual has to do with delivery. Each person has his or her own style. Long ago I determined I would be who I am and not attempt to emulate someone else's style. It is perfectly acceptable to be unique in your style if that is who you are. Regardless of style, though, remember two important things: (1) Connect visually with the congregation. Look at people when preaching, for it personalizes the message and causes them to feel you are preaching to them rather than reciting a message. (2) Gestures accentuate points, maintain interest, and bring focus to what you are saying. Animation brings the message to life and enables you to relate to the congregation better.

However, gestures do not have to be dramatic.

Vocal. Vocal pertains to how we speak rather than what we say. Like delivery, this is a personal and individual matter. Our language should be understandable, grammatically correct, and not offensive.

I am a Southerner, and my accent and expressions are a part of my vocal delivery. Individuality is important.

Speed and pitch are also considerations. I struggle in the area of speed. Sometimes I must slow down to maintain understandability. More speed means less oxygen and the need to gasp for breath, which creates the familiar “hah” at the end of some sentences. That is not the anointing—just a need to slow down and breathe.

Verbal. Verbal has to do with our message, which must be Bible-based and need-driven. Preach to the heart. Preach for the record, not for the audio or video recording.

Two primary considerations are necessary in the verbal: clarity and the Holy Spirit's conviction. Preach the Word of God with clarity, and you can depend on the Holy Spirit to convict the hearer.

We must spend time as companions with God before we consider ourselves qualified to proclaim His message.

Stories, examples, and word choice help bring clarity to a message, paint pictures in the hearers' minds, and create a greater interest and focus on the message.

PERSUASION

Evangelistic preaching is persuasive preaching. We preach to persuade the sinner to give his or her heart to Christ, for the backslider to return to the Lord, for the seeker to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Two issues to consider in persuasion are to be relevant and resolute.

Relevant. The message must be relevant to the altar call. Don't preach on

everything but salvation and then give a salvation altar call. The evangelist's message is the good news that Jesus has come to seek and to save the lost. We preach a full gospel of Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer, and soon-coming King. This message is relevant to the lost, the sick, the dying, the empty, and the brokenhearted.

Also, the message must be relevant to the hearers' felt needs. When I preach an evangelistic meeting in Thailand, I seldom preach on heaven or


hell because Thai people do not think much of tomorrow. They are today people who are not concerned with the future and what happens after death. However, every day they are at the temples and spirit houses, bringing the same hurts, pain, fears, sin, and guilt to those altars as Americans bring to the altars of our churches. My message must be relevant to the issues in their lives.

Resolute. When God has given us a message and an altar call, we must be

resolute in its implementation. I am concerned about the general altar calls I am hearing today. If we preach a salvation message, we must give a clear and resolute salvation altar call. Too often we are concerned about who or how many will respond, so we give a general altar call to guarantee that the altars will be filled.

The preparation and delivery of the message is my part; the convicting and drawing is the work of the Holy Spirit. If I have prepared my heart and have the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon my ministry, I can trust Him to do His part. I can neither take the credit when the altars are full nor take the blame if few come.

Nothing is wrong with calling forward all who want and need to come to the altar. However, we must be resolute in our appeal to sinners and backsliders, not quickly moving on. Be sure the Holy Spirit has had adequate opportunity to do His work in hearts before moving on to a broader appeal.

The need for evangelistic ministry becomes more acute as we move rapidly toward the 21st century. Pastors and evangelists must embrace one another's gifts and work in partnership. Every evangelist is not called to be a pastor. However, every pastor is expected to do the work of an evangelist. If we would be successful in our evangelistic ministry, it is essential that our messages incorporate proper preparation, presentation, and persuasion. 

Ron Maddux, who has served as an Assemblies of God missionary for the past 21 years and as area director for Peninsular Asia, has recently been appointed area director at large ministering to all nations of Asia Pacific.



Making Your Invitation Effective



*In that crucial moment of decision, the most
important thing you can do is wait, coax, plead,
impel, and encourage the lost to be saved.*

On July 3, 1996, I watched my father breathe his last breath on earth. Cancer was listed as the cause of death, but an altar invitation extended in May 1956, was the beginning of his eternal life.

"I felt something the moment I sat down. I can't remember the message spoken, but I remember when the invitation was given. I found myself standing at the front, tears streaming down my face. I was genuinely converted that day and never was the same."

These words spoken to me often when I was a boy describe my father's conversion. Dad was not the only one in our family who was converted. Over a 6-week period, the altar invitation went out nightly, and my mother, uncles, aunts, and cousins were converted.

According to Gerald Strober in his book *A Day in Billy's Life*,¹ more people said they wanted eternal life than anything else. The evangelical pastor and evangelist are in a unique position to show the unregenerated how this can be obtained and provide them with an immediate opportunity to receive it.

Critics of the public invitation claim that its usage can only be traced back to the ministry of Charles Finney (1792–1875). Such an accusation is historically incorrect. God's invitation to Adam was, "Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:9). Only those who obeyed Moses' command and stepped forward publicly received atonement for their sins (Exodus 32:26,30). And the first-century evangelists called on sinners to present themselves publicly as candidates for repentance, faith, and baptism. Evidence that apostolic evangelists called for public decisions for Christ was their ability to number their converts (Acts 2:41).

Stephen Olford, mentor to Billy Graham, said, "In evangelistic work, more confusion exists over the matter of the invitation than any other matter." And speaking about the public invitation, W.A. Criswell said, "For a man to preach just for the sake of preaching is a travesty on the truth of God. We ought to preach with a purpose and plead for a response."

What are the keys to effective altar invitations?

1. *Identify with human need.* "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"

(2 Corinthians 5:21). When God came to reach humanity, He became a man. We cannot become removed from people, or else we won't be able to reach them. How can we speak of God hanging on a cross, bleeding to death for sinners, without it causing tears in our own eyes? It must motivate us to plead as God would with sinners for their conversion.

2. *Call for a decision.* Intellectual assent is not enough; only decision brings conversion (2 Corinthians 5:20). Preaching causes people to consider Jesus. His voice calling them stirs up emotions, but they must open their hearts' doors willfully (Revelation 3:20).

John R.W. Stott's exhortation to the 20th-century church is an important one: "We must never make the proclamation without then issuing an appeal.... It is not enough to teach the gospel; we must urge men to embrace it." In his 1911 *Yale Lectures on Preaching*, John Henry Jowett concluded, "In all our preaching, we must preach for verdicts. We must present our case, we must seek a verdict, and we must ask for immediate execution of the verdict."

All evangelistic sermons recorded in the Book of Acts include proclamation and invitation. And Jesus' first discourse began with the proclamation, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Next came the invitation: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14,15). Every listener was called upon to respond in this twofold manner.

3. *Call for confession of Jesus as Lord.* Any sinner who has truly understood the gospel will stand forward to confess Christ. When Christ ministered to people—the woman with the issue of blood, Zacchaeus, the man with the withered hand—He called for public confessions.

"In evangelistic work, more confusion exists over the matter of the invitation than any other matter."

— Stephen Olford

Many times when Billy Graham speaks he explains, "At the close of my message, I'm going to ask you to step from your seat and come to Jesus." Throughout his sermons, he builds the bridge between the message, a person's decision, and a public confession of Christ.

The evangelical pastor and evangelist are in a unique position to show the unregenerated how [eternal life] can be obtained and provide them with an immediate opportunity to receive it.

4. *Make clear what people need to do.* Trim your message to leave time to ask for a volitional commitment. Then pray with people, allowing the confession to crystallize in their hearts and thank God for what He has done for them. Be sure to explain that conversion does not take place because they come forward, pray with you, or sign a commitment card. Conversion takes place when people decide to trust in Jesus only for their salvation.

According to R. Allen Streett in his book *The Effective Invitation*,

"The Old Testament concept of repentance (Hebrew, *shub*) has to do with turning back or making an about-face (1 Kings 8:47; Ezekiel 14:6, 18:30). The New Testament word *metanoō* emphasizes an inward decision or change of mind. When these two concepts are combined, a complete picture of biblical repentance emerges. You must call people to repent, believe, and follow Christ openly and unashamedly. These three points should be included in every gospel invitation."

Two basic fears literally wipe out most invitations: (1) fear of people, and (2) fear of failure. While most ministers agree on the necessity of evangelizing a lost world, many are hesitant to offer altar invitations in their own congregations. Paul urged Timothy to, "do the

work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:5). Lewis A. Drummond said, "the clear implication of this passage is that a pastor cannot fulfill his ministry unless he fulfills his role as an evangelist."

In that crucial moment of decision, the most important thing you can do is wait, coax, plead, impel, and encourage the lost to be saved.

5. *Have counselors trained and ready with follow-up literature to disciple new converts.* Only when a new convert is led to a certainty of conversion, daily devotions, water baptism, church fellowship, consecrated living, systematic giving, dedicated serving, and the covenant of membership is God's full plan of discipleship fulfilled.

6. *See the necessity for the invitation long before it is given.* God persistently stirs those who hear our message (2 Corinthians 6:1,2). This truth alone should cause us to offer an altar invitation every time we preach. The picture of God on His knees pleading with sinners needs to fill our minds. It's a picture of God's grace.

Always remember: "Now is the day

of salvation" (verse 2). The realization that people have no guarantee of tomorrow and that there does come a time when they cannot come to Jesus should drive all fear from our hearts when it comes to extending a public altar invitation. Jesus said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:37,38).

I encourage you to wait when giving the altar invitation. Don't be in a hurry. In that crucial moment of decision, the most important thing you can do is wait, coax, plead, impel, and encourage the lost to be saved.

Robert Coleman said, "A sermon that does not convey this urgency lacks evangelistic relevance. Through the human instrumentality of the invitation, the servant of the Word, in reliance upon the Holy Spirit, should do everything possible to move the hearer to take the right course of action." C.E. Autrey, in his book *Basic Evangelism*, said, "It is not enough to instruct the lost and warn them of impending doom; they must be persuaded."


While most ministers agree on the necessity of evangelizing a lost world, many are hesitant to offer altar invitations in their own congregations.

James H. Jauncy, a professional psychologist, defines persuasiveness as the ability to "express enthusiastically a belief, which we hold ourselves strongly." And Andrew Blackwood defines a persuasive person as "a soul on fire."

7. *Don't give offense.* There is no need to mislead people (2 Corinthians 6:3,4). Many are reluctant to offer an altar invitation because they have heard invitations that were misleading and unbiblical. We should be all the more motivated to give the true, biblical call to salvation.

8. *Pray.* Pray until you can say with

the apostle Paul, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:1–3).

As you commune with Christ through prayer, the concern the Lord has for the souls of people will become your concern. After reaching this point, much of the battle will be won. As Charles Spurgeon said, “A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue.” 

ENDNOTE

1. Gerald Strober, *A Day in Billy's Life* (Grand Rapids: Old Tappan: Spire, 1967), 187.



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THE EVANGELIST AND THE 21st-CENTURY CHURCH

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- Adapted from a list compiled by James O. Davis, D.Min., Assemblies of God national evangelists representative, Springfield, Missouri.*

FUNDING MISSIONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH



A local church's heart for the lost in its community directly relates to its burden for a lost world. A church that commits to supporting missionaries and praying for the lost around the world will have an increased vision for reaching its immediate surroundings.

Jesus said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).^{*} Some have mistakenly interpreted Acts 1:8 to imply that we must first reach our Jerusalem, then Judea, Samaria and the remotest parts of the earth. That is not the wording of Scripture. Jesus did not say, "First...then" but "both...and." Our commitment to reaching the lost must be not only far-reaching but simultaneous.

As we approach the close of the millennium, we are afforded an increasing variety of means to spread the gospel around the world. The availability of fast and affordable travel has provided thousands of American church members the opportunity to personally visit the mission field and take part in building projects, literature distributions, and other support ministries.

A church that commits to supporting missionaries and praying for the lost around the world will have an increased vision for reaching its immediate surroundings.

The heart of our missions force is (and always will be) our resident foreign missionaries with life callings and our national brethren in fraternal fellowships throughout the world. These people live in those countries to fulfill the vital task of reaching the lost and then conserving the harvest by building churches that endure.

Like frontline soldiers in war, resident missionaries have a critical dependence on the support ministry of the home base. Here at home we "hold up their hands" with faithful intercessory prayer. Through our giving we enjoy (as the apostle Paul beautifully describes) the "favor of participation in the support of the

saints" (2 Corinthians 8:4, NASV).

A major reason the Assemblies of God was formed in 1914 was to facilitate the coordinated support of missionaries around the world. The great strength of our missions support has not been a centralized missions fund but designated giving by local churches to missionaries called of the Spirit to go into all the world. In recent decades other sources of funding have surfaced, such as legacies and missions-funding organizations, but these entities remain minor in comparison with the primary Assemblies of God missions support base...the local church.

Possibly the most vital tool in our missions funding has been the missions faith promise. Two ongoing major missions events that facilitate and interrelate with faith promise giving are the missions convention and Missions Sunday.

THE MISSIONS CONVENTION

The number of churches in our Fellowship who hold missions conventions is steadily increasing. In the past 8 years, 2,040 new churches have begun annual missions conventions. A growing number of churches are having two missions conventions each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. A missions convention focuses a congregation's attention on a worldwide missionary vision and reminds believers of their responsibility in fulfilling the Great Commission.

The highlight of most missions conventions is Faith Promise Sunday, when each church member is given the opportunity to make a commitment to the missions program of the local church. From these combined commitments, churches provide ongoing support to missionaries. This regular, faithful monthly support is the lifeline of supply to the missionary living on the foreign field.

MISSIONS SUNDAY

For many years the Assemblies of God has designated the first Sunday of every month as Missions Sunday. Many churches choose this day to receive monthly faith promise offerings and keep the needs of missions before the people.

Some useful tools are available to help inspire a congregation's missionary vision on a monthly basis. The first *Pentecostal Evangel* of each month is devoted to foreign missions.

Missions videos, available on a subscription basis, provide missions updates in two formats. Missions World Newsbreaks are 2-minute segments of inspiring, up-to-date news from around the world designed to enhance the Sunday morning service on Missions Sunday. Missions World Reports are 4- to 5-minute video segments featuring Assemblies of God missions events and ministries throughout the world. These are designed for evening services, Sunday school classes, and missions conventions. Choir arrangements of missions songs with video and soundtrack accompaniment also are available from the Foreign Missions Communications Department.

While these items are very helpful, I believe the most effective, and inexpensive, means of keeping faith promise giving coming in was taught to me by Pastor Charles Crabtree (now assistant general superintendent) when I served with him as youth pastor in Des Moines, Iowa. Whenever we received Sunday morning tithes and offerings, he taught me to say, "Now it's time to receive God's tithes, our offerings, and *faith promises*." Having faith promises mentioned every time the Sunday morning offering is received keeps the concept before the people at a cost of only seconds per week.

THE FAITH PROMISE CONCEPT

The faith promise concept was born in the heart of Pastor Oswald Smith of the People's Church in Toronto, Canada. When Pastor Smith was a young man, the Lord dealt with his heart in a missions convention to promise more than he thought he could give. As a step of faith, he obeyed the Lord's voice, and shared a great testimony about God's miraculous provision that enabled him to keep that financial commitment to missions.

While Pastor Oswald Smith popularized the term "faith promise," the concept is taught in Scripture by the apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, Paul shares the inspiring testimony of the sacrificial faith giving of the churches in Macedonia.

Occasionally, the principle of faith promises has been taught from a limited perspective that misses certain aspects of giving as well as a scriptural balance. While testimonies abound concerning God's divine supply to people who have made faith promise commitments, not all faith promise giving involves God supplying "something extra" beyond what He has already put in our hands to give.

Paul's teaching concerning the Macedonian churches is clear. They gave in two ways: *according to* their ability, and *beyond their* ability (2 Corinthians 8:2,3).

Because of their joy and liberality, the Macedonians gave according to their ability, even though they were in deep poverty. Their values and priorities were demonstrated by their commitment to the needs of their fellow saints. Paul emphasized that the reason God provides "sufficiency in everything" is so that believers may have an abundance for "every good deed." We should always be ready to give and work so that we will have resources to help those in need.


Faith is demonstrated not only in believing God for "something extra," but in giving what we already have in obedience to God's Word. Because of our faith in the power of the gospel, we give to send workers around the world.

Paul also says that the Macedonian Christians gave "beyond their ability." How can people give beyond their ability? Very simply, because God is personally involved in their finances. While we are repeatedly warned in Scripture not to test God, the opposite is true concerning our finances. Instead we are told, "Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it" (Malachi 3:10).

Obedience concerning tithing and giving is one of the most powerful ways people can observe God's divine activity in their personal lives. Certain aspects of this vital biblical truth have

been abused and exploited in recent years, especially by some parachurch ministries. But perversion of the truth does not deny its reality. God's Word is true. "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Pastor Crabtree often said, "God will give much more *through you* than He will ever give *to you*." This truth echoes Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:10,11: "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion." Notice that what is multiplied is not our bread for food (for our own consumption), but our seed for *sowing*.

A farmer sows seed in the springtime with faith for a harvest in the fall. He trusts the soil, the weather, the seed, and God's natural laws to bring a harvest. We do the same with the seed of the gospel. As we do what we can to personally have a part in fulfilling the Great Commission, we demonstrate faith in the power of the gospel to bear a harvest in this world. God will use our faith and obedience to increase His kingdom and glorify His Name. 

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

Randy Hurst is communications director for Assemblies of God Foreign Missions.



The Dangers of the Gospel of



Accommodation

A SERMON GIVEN BY DAVID WILKERSON AT AN

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HEADQUARTERS CHAPEL SERVICE.

BY DAVID WILKERSON

I am not coming to you as a pastor but with a prophetic word. God so shook me recently with this message that I should bring it somewhere, sometime in Springfield. This morning the Lord, by His Spirit, spoke to my heart that this is the time. He has called me to be one of His watchmen, and I have wept over this and prayed that He will help me deliver the message in a spirit of love. This is not a chastisement but a warning for the Assemblies of God.

A NEW GOSPEL

Accommodate means to adapt, to make suitable and acceptable, to make convenient. A gospel of accommodation is creeping into the United States. It's an American cultural invention to appease the lifestyle of luxury and pleasure. Primarily a Caucasian, suburban gospel, it's also in our major cities and is sweeping the nation, influencing ministers of every denomination, and giving birth to megachurches with thousands who come to hear a nonconfronting message. It's an adaptable gospel that is spoon-fed through humorous skits, drama, and short, nonabrasive sermonettes on how to cope—called a seeker-friendly or sinner-friendly gospel.

To begin with, those terms are unscriptural. The gospel of Jesus Christ has always been confronting—there is no such thing as a friendly gospel but a friendly grace.

This new gospel is being propagated by bright, young, talented ministers. They have

come upon a formula which states you can go into any town or city; and if you have the right formula, within a short time you can raise a megachurch.

If you are a young man and have certain skills, you find those skills and a part of the city that would best suit you. You move into that area, poll it, and find out what the nonchurchgoers want:

"You don't like choirs. Well, would you go to a church that didn't have a choir?" Yes.

"You don't like to wear suits. Would you go where it's informal?" Yes.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has always been confronting—there is no such thing as a friendly gospel but a friendly grace.

Then you go to your computer and design a gospel that will not confront but will shoot out the desires and the needs of the people. After you have gathered a handful of people, you keep interviewing them to find out what they want; then you design your message to help people cope with their needs. The program you design is intended to make the church comfortable and friendly for all sinners who wish to attend.

This gospel is fast becoming the most prosperous and flourishing of all religious movements. Thousands attend these churches. The pastor is the CEO, and it becomes a business. They make no bones about it: They are

A gospel of accommodation is creeping into the United States. It's an American cultural invention to appease the lifestyle of luxury and pleasure.

following Madison Avenue tactics and can make a success of it. Their formula for quick church growth is cleverly packaged and is being sold especially to young ministers—those who want to be a part of the big boys and what's happening on a fast track. They want it to happen quickly.

PAUL'S WARNING

Paul warned of the coming of another gospel and another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4). He warned the church that it's

really not another gospel but a perversion of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. If you hear any other gospel, he said, let that preacher be accursed. In other words, no matter how pleasant, how pious, or how sincere, if the message is not the death of sin through the cross of Jesus Christ, let it be accursed.

I tremble when I read in the Scriptures that in the last days Satan is going to come right into the church posing as an angel of light. He's going to take ministers who, at one time, had the

touch of God, and he's going to transform them into angels of light to become his tool of deception. That's frightening. It causes me to fall on my face before God for such false, deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. No marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it's no great thing if ministers also are transformed as the ministers of righteousness whose end shall be according to their works.

Paul said they are going to glory in the flesh, in their bigness, their numbers, their influence, and their contemporariness. They will boast they are contemporary, that there is a gospel that is out of style that doesn't reach human need anymore. They will glory in the world's acceptance. Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The context of that warning was: "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it" (verse 14).

His warning was to beware of the wolves who are going to say it's really not that narrow and straight—they are going to come posing as submissive sheep. Jesus put His finger on the cause: ambition—ambitious ravaging wolves. In the Greek it means "starved for recognition and quick gratification, quick growth."

It is possible, through unholy ambition, to be transformed from a man of God, who has been seeking God and getting a word from heaven, to an unholy ambition and a tool of Satan.

Jesus left no doubt about His meaning. For example, He was addressing a struggling pastor who has worked for years and hasn't seen the kind of growth he wants to see. A young man with an accommodating gospel moves into town

and within a very short time has a megachurch. People are flocking there because there is entertainment; it's a gospel of fun. I've been in some of them. It's the gospel of entertainment that has no conviction whatsoever. There is very little in their gospel that speaks to sinners of repentance, brokenness, and cross-bearing. A Christ is preached, Jesus' name is mentioned, but Paul said their's is another gospel, another Jesus.

Let every pastor heed this warning: The moment you begin to consider the "competition," seeds of accommodation will be planted in your heart.

Paul warned that if you are caught in this trap, if you want that hook of entertainment, that hook of sudden growth, this is the hook: The enemy will put in your path a teaching.

I have two preacher sons. One of them confessed to me, "Dad, I was that

close to being sucked in because I fasted and prayed and didn't see the growth I wanted to see, and I saw these others grow. That hook was there, and I almost bought it."

That is something this Movement and every movement is going to have to look at and deal with: It is possible, through unholy ambition, to be transformed from a man of God, who has been seeking God and getting a word from heaven, to an unholy ambition and a tool of Satan. Let every pastor heed this warning: The moment you begin to consider the "competition," seeds of accommodation will be planted in your heart. Suddenly, Satan will put in your path a wolf in sheep's clothing—a man who will try to seduce you into ungodly ambition and achieving church growth at any cost. Yet the truth is, it could cost you your soul.

THE RIGHT FORMULA

If you find the right formula, according to the accommodation gospel, you can succeed in any field of endeavor.

An editorial in the *New York Times* (March 1, 1998) was entitled, *How To Manufacture a Best-Seller*. It told the story of John Baldwin, a 53-year-old carpenter and a would-be writer, who had struggled for years to make a living from writing. He determined to become famous and rich overnight by writing a best-selling medical thriller. He studied five or six best thrillers. After 7 years' research he found 10 steps to producing a best-selling medical novel. He honed it with some Hollywood writers and agents, and here is the 10-step formula he used:

1. The hero is an expert.
2. The villain is an expert.
3. You must watch all the villain's activities over his shoulder.
4. The hero has a team of experts behind him, working in various fields.
5. Two or more on the team must fall in love.
6. Two or more on the team must die.
7. The villain must turn his attention from his initial goal to the team.
8. The villain and the hero must live

to do battle again in the sequel.

9. All deaths must proceed from the individual to the group.

10. If the story bogs down, just kill somebody.

John Baldwin had the formula but no story, so he read of research by John Marr who was studying the epidemiological causes of the 10 plagues, hoping to explain their causes scientifically. The two men formed a partnership, and using Baldwin's 10-step formula, together wrote a 640 page manuscript called *The Eleventh Plague*. Harper Collins bought it for almost \$2 million.

Baldwin, who has no passion for writing, said, "If I get the formula, I'm going to be a multimillionaire and famous." Well, he's going to make another \$3 million on the movie rights, and he's laughing all the way to the bank. His philosophy: "If you have the right formula, you can be a success at anything."

You see, this is the gospel of accommodation—the formula. You get the formula, you get what people want, and

you can be a success. I am here to tell you that a formula-based, accommodating gospel is contrary to everything in the Scriptures.

GOD'S METHOD

Certain men of God met at Antioch to send out men to preach the gospel and establish churches (Acts 13). Here is God's method:

1. They ministered to the Lord and fasted. This was their planning session—worshiping, fasting, waiting on the Lord, and calling for direction from the Holy Ghost. They did not move until the Holy Ghost spoke. There were no formulas, no surveys, no door-to-door asking people what they wanted and then serving it to them.

2. They prayed—no strategizing, no network, and not one step until the Holy Ghost spoke His mind. Then and only then did they lay hands upon them, anoint them, and send them out in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

Paul lived his whole religious life on religious formulas, and he said they

didn't work. He gave up on formulas and said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Paul boasted unashamedly, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:23). He was saying, "Gentlemen (he was talking to his peers), they want us to accommodate. The Jews are looking for signs in our gospel. The Greeks want the wisdom. They want to know how to cope, but I'm not compromising. There's only one message. Our gospel has been and will be the Cross and its demands as well as its victories. As for me, I'm determined to preach nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified."

WHAT THE GOSPEL OF ACCOMMODATION DOES

I see three things in the gospel of accommodation:

1. *It is the accommodation of man's love for pleasure.* "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall

come. For men shall be lovers...of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1–4). The Greek for *pleasure* is "sensuous, lustful, voluptuous, exciting, gratifying, sensual pleasure." If you move toward this gospel of accommodation, you are going to have to accommodate the people's lust because they are not going to give up their love for excitement. They've made gods of sports, pleasure, and lust. Unless that is confronted by the gospel of Jesus Christ, unless there is a truth that comes forth, you have to accommodate this lust that is in the American lifestyle.

If anyone moves toward this gospel of accommodation, you are going to have to accommodate the people's lust because they are not going to give up their love for excitement.

I was shocked by an article in the *New York Times*.¹ Philip Wogaman, President Clinton's pastor, said, "Sexual misconduct does not automatically render a leader immoral. Morality should also be judged by indicators like courage, concern for the poor, fostering world peace, running the economy responsibly, and furthering racial equality. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are merely cultural expressions." In other words, Mr. Clinton has been told that he has enough good indicators to overrule another that would be immoral in his life.

God said that men who preach doctrines like these resist the truth; they are men of corrupt minds counterfeiting the faith.

In disbelief I watched a televised Sunday night service of a seeker-friendly church—seeker-friendly by its own admission. To a packed church where thousands attend, the pastor said, "This is fun night, a David Letterman night." The youth pastor came out and did his monologue as David Letterman. Then

they showed 10 of the most boring things teenagers do during preaching. Three of the 10 were throwing spitballs, yawning, and picking their noses. The crowd went crazy. After the service, the pastor brazenly announced, "We're not here to offend people, but to make church comfortable for everyone." I wept.

I ask you, how long do you think that audience would stay in church if the pastor was gripped by the Holy Ghost, convicted for "entertaining" people toward hell, and suddenly preached a message entitled, "Be sure your sins will find you out"? How long would people keep coming back if a gospel of holy living and separation from the world was preached? Two things would happen: (1) Those who are misguided, hungry, and didn't know any better would weep and run to the altar. (2) Those who are judiciously blinded by their pleasures in madness would flee from the church and never come again. The church doors would close.

I keep this foremost in my mind and before my eyes, because every minister of the gospel one day has to face it when he stands before the Lord. He will say, "Son of man, I made thee a watchman.

You were to hear the words of My mouth and give them warnings from Me. You were to tell the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die.' And you gave them no warning nor spoke to warn the wicked to turn from their wicked ways to save their lives. These same wicked men died in their sins, but their blood I'll require at your hands."

2. *This gospel of accommodation accommodates all man's aversion to self-denial.* The gospel of Jesus Christ is one of self-denial. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Self-denial is not something you give. It's someone you give up—the giving up of yourself, giving up everything you are. It's a living sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ to present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. God has every right to say to His church, "If you expect to give Me your body, your resurrected body, all through eternity, I have every right—it's only reasonable of Me and your reasonable service—to ask your body why you're here on earth. I want every part of you. I want you to be spiritually

minded. I want to possess you.”

The gospel we preach must bring people under the total possession of the Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, it’s a gospel of accommodation.

The seeker-friendly gospel accommodates the body. The human body belongs to Him. What we see in America is a neognosticism where you take your

physical body on one side and do as you please as long as your spirit is right with God. This is coming even out of the White House, this dividing of personality. No, we are one personality, and it all belongs to Jesus Christ. This neognosticism is destroying the faith of many throughout the nation.

3. *There is an accommodation of*

man’s offense to the gospel. The Scriptures state, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense.” Paul spoke of the offense of the Cross. This is the heart of God’s anger. We’re not called *to* the Cross but to go *through* the Cross—to experience the same thing Jesus did, not only coming to the Cross but dying and going into the grave with Jesus Christ and then being raised from the dead to a newness of life.

[Paul] gave up on formulas and said, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

It’s cruel, pastor, to lead sinners to the Cross, tell them they are forgiven by faith, and then allow them to go back to their habits and lusts of the flesh, unchanged and still in the devil’s shackles. If the preaching of grace doesn’t have as its goal the producing of a walk of righteousness, then it’s another gospel, another Jesus.

I listened in horror to a man, who attended one of the largest seeker-friendly churches, being interviewed by CBS. He said, “I come to this church because I’m comfortable. I’m never made to feel uneasy. I bring my Jewish friends and my business friends, and I know nothing will ever be said that will offend them. The best part of it is, the whole thing only lasts an hour.”

It’s cruel, pastor, to lead sinners to the Cross, tell them they are forgiven by faith, and then allow them to go back to their habits and lusts of the flesh, unchanged and still in the devil’s shackles.

Take it from me: You can get your big church and be one of the big boys, but

it's going to cost you your soul if you preach with a focus only on earthly things, rather than on the things of God.

I've lived in New York City 35 years. We have 103 nationalities from all walks of life—from the poorest to the richest. Probably 300 or more from the United Nations live there. But I look over a congregation (so does my dear friend, Jim Cymbala, in Brooklyn) and see men who have just walked in from the porno shops and are wild animals. I see a businessman friend who was CEO of a multimillion-dollar company, but he started snorting coke, lost everything, and is now a bum on the street. He sits in the congregation. A little 14-year-old girl with AIDS is up on 8th Avenue performing lewd acts before dirty old men. She comes to church and keeps saying, "Pastor Dave, I've got to get out. I've got to get help."

I'm not about to put up a silly skit and preach a 15-minute message on how to cope to a multitude of people who are dying and going to hell. I tremble at the thought.

[Satan] is going to take ministers who, at one time, had the touch of God, and he's going to transform them into angels of light to become his tool of deception.

People don't like to hear this, but we're headed for perilous times—just a few years away from a collapse like the world has never known. When that happens, all who preached prosperity are going to disappear because the people will say, "Your gospel has failed me." When that time comes, I want to grasp onto Jesus, and I want everyone I've preached to to have faith in the keeping power of Jesus Christ. I want them to know Him in His fullness. I want to know that I've done it in love, in grace, that they would know the difference between the holy and the profane.


May God, in Jesus' name, spare the Assemblies of God forever. If I have ever

given a prophetic message in my lifetime that God intended for a purpose, it is now.

Many are being deceived. If they are not awakened, what I warn you about will happen.

I pray that God will keep the Assemblies of God in its original purposes. In New York City, He has proved that the people come to hear a straight gospel, and thousands will come where the Word of God is being preached without compromise and yet with grace. May the young men who are discouraged in the Movement not

try for a shortcut but be broken and on their faces before the Lord.

May we get our eyes off growth and onto a new revelation of who Jesus is. 

ENDNOTE

1. *New York Times*,
1 March 1998,
sec. A, p. 16.

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pastor of Times
Square Church,
Manhattan, New
York.*



Maria Woodsworth-Etter: A Powerful Voice in the Pentecostal Vanguard

*During an 1883 meeting in Fairview, Ohio,
Maria wrote that the people confessed sin and “prayed for
a baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.”*

BY WAYNE E. WARNER



When the Assemblies of God came on the scene in 1914, there were few questions about where the Fellowship stood on the often divisive subject of signs and wonders. And one who helped keep that subject on a positive note with her dynamic preaching and remarkable faith was the legendary evangelist Maria B. Woodworth-Etter.

By 1914 the 70-year-old Mrs. Etter had grown hoarse from preaching scores of tent meetings coast to coast, but she was hardly ready to slow down. She was not yet ready to turn over her weather-beaten tent and railroad discount book to newcomers such as Aimee Semple McPherson and Smith Wigglesworth.

Because of the open-arms acceptance of Assemblies of God congregations and others, Maria would keep preaching right up to her death in 1924. But before she gave her mantle to another, she established what is now Lakeview Temple in Indianapolis.

SIGNS OF WOODWORTH-ETTER'S MINISTRY

Throughout early Pentecostal history, we see Maria Woodworth-Etter's footprints from coast to coast. All who have studied Assemblies of God history know that the organizational meetingplace was in the old opera house in Hot Springs, Arkansas, April 1914. What is not generally known, however, is that some of the founders—including E.N. Bell, Howard Goss, and D.C.O. Opperman—sponsored evangelist Etter in revival meetings in the same opera house during the fall of 1913, drawing big crowds of people who came because of the promised signs and wonders.

Reports of the meetings in the *Word and Witness* and the *Christian Evangel* (now *Pentecostal Evangel*) gave credence to her ministry and sparked invitations to such widely scattered places during the next 10 years as Meridian, Mississippi; Atlanta; Chicago; Fremont, Nebraska; Cincinnati; San Francisco; Dallas; Sikeston, Missouri; Ottumwa, Iowa; Topeka; Los Angeles; Kansas City; Denver; and Phoenix.

The 1915 Topeka meeting saw a dramatic healing of 10-year-old Louis Romer who, at the age of 92, is still around to tell about it. Suffering with what was known as St. Vitus' dance (chorea), Louis shook so badly he couldn't feed himself, and his toes bent under his feet, preventing him from wearing shoes. He had little hope outside a miracle, for life expectancy of chorea victims in that day was only 13.

Louis, who now lives in Lowell, Oregon, remembers that August camp meeting as if it happened only yesterday. "Sister Etter laid her hands on my head, and I felt a cooling of my nerves as a tingling warmth went through my body."¹

Then his hands and feet straightened. "I felt so good I cried," Louis said. "All of this happened in less time than it takes to tell it."²

Mrs. Romer knew it was a miracle. She and Louis went shopping for a pair of shoes. Even the *Topeka Capital* was caught up in the healing when they referred to Louis in a headline as "Boy

Cured by Miracle." He was never afflicted with the shaking again and seemed to be attracted to challenging work and hobbies that require a steady hand: marksman, sailor, electrician, and lapidary.³

IN THE VANGUARD OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Evangelist Woodworth-Etter in 1880 began her dynamic ministry—despite the fact that she had little formal education and didn't start preaching until she was age 35. She had a husband who didn't share her call to the ministry and wanted nothing

for a baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire."⁴ Fifteen people came to the altar screaming for mercy and fell over in trances. Even at that early date, Maria called it "the Pentecostal power," adding that "these outpourings of the Holy Ghost were always followed by hundreds coming to Christ."⁵

In a huge meeting in Alexandria, Indiana, Maria reported that the power of God took control of about 500 of the 25,000 people, causing many to fall to the ground. "The Holy Ghost sat upon them," she wrote. "I was overpowered."⁶



Interior view of the Woodworth-Etter Tabernacle, Miller Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

more than to stay on their Ohio farm. Even though few women were in the pulpit at the time, Maria didn't doubt her call.

She had gone coast to coast at least three times by 1894. In her earlier ministry she emphasized conversions and was very successful in meetings sponsored by Methodists, United Brethren, Churches of God (Winebrenner), and other groups. Then in 1883 people in her meetings began going into trances similar to what happened in the Early Frontier meetings.

She was soon dubbed the "Trance Evangelist," though she believed the experience was the baptism in the Holy Spirit or "receiving the power." During an 1883 meeting in Fairview, Ohio, Maria wrote that the people confessed sin and "prayed

By 1885 she had developed a theology that included salvation, holiness, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, healing, and the imminent return of Christ. She was also big on prophecies—part of the excitement that helped fill an 8,000-seat tent from city to city.

An 1887 newspaper quoted Maria in an Illinois meeting, giving her a powerful voice before the beginning of the Pentecostal movement.

"The power which was given to the apostles in their day had never been taken from the church. The trouble was, the churches had sunk to the level of the world and were without the unlimited faith that will heal the sick and make the lame to walk. She prayed for the return of the old days and more faith in Christ among the people."⁷

The power demonstrated in her 1889–90 Oakland meeting was nothing new, she claimed. A San Francisco *Examiner* reporter wrote, “The evangelist described in a fervid manner the Day of Pentecost and claimed that the power that caused her converts to act as drunken men was the same today as in that wonderful day.”⁸

confirming His Word with mighty signs and wonders following.”¹⁰

When she held a meeting in Louisville during the summer and fall of 1888, the *Courier-Journal* reported, “Fifteen persons asked to be prayed for preparatory to fully receiving the Holy Spirit.” In commenting on a meeting she held in Indianapolis in

THE EARLY PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

It is difficult to determine just when Maria Woodworth-Etter found her place in the Pentecostal movement, but we know she was very active by 1912.

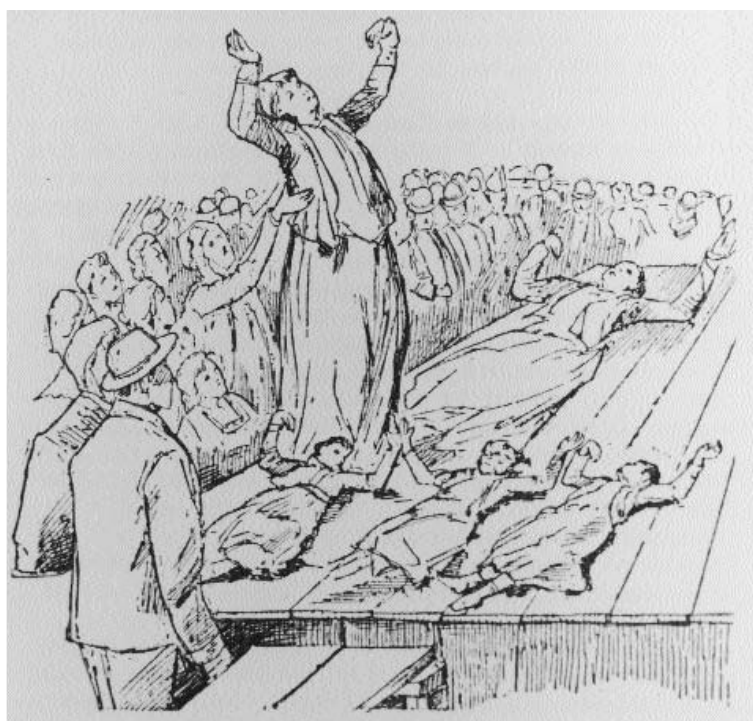
In the beginning she said she held back because of what she felt was false teaching in the Movement. In her opinion, some of the people went to extremes on speaking in tongues, and others wanted the Holy Spirit to work their way, not His. She said her rule was simple: “Let the Holy Ghost work in any way that agrees with the Word of God.”¹³

Apparently Maria was able to work out differences with other Pentecostals as most of them warmly accepted her the rest of her life. She looked at the Pentecostal movement as the greatest thing to happen to the church since the Day of Pentecost. Without a doubt, her 19th-century campaigns helped prepare the way for the 20th-century outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

After a rather quiet period between 1904–12, Maria hit the sawdust trail with the vigor she demonstrated in her 1880s campaigns. The role Maria played between 1912 and her death in 1924 is unique, providing a veteran “name” evangelist for the young Movement. Pentecostals called for her from all over the country. Others around the world read her books that reported high-powered meetings, remarkable conversions, healings, and a great number of church plantings. In addition, Maria used books to publish her sermons.

One of the calls she accepted came from Fred F. Bosworth, a young pastor in Dallas, who later became a well-known evangelist himself. Despite the fact that the 1912 meeting proved to be a key Pentecostal meeting, the Dallas newspapers practically ignored the thousands who were meeting daily and nightly for almost 5 months. Bosworth, however, kept the news flowing into Christian publications around the world.

R.J. Scott, a Christian businessman associated with the Azusa Street Mission, traveled to Dallas to check out Maria’s Pentecostal ministry. He liked what he heard and invited her as the main speaker for the Worldwide Camp Meeting he was



Artist's sketch of Maria Woodworth-Etter on platform of tent at St. Louis during the summer of 1890 as people are “under the power.”

Ten years before Charles F. Parham’s Pentecostal experiences in Topeka, Kansas, Maria wrote about a meeting she conducted there. The city was stirred, sinners were converted, and “a number of bodies were healed of different diseases, and a number laid out as dead under the power of God.”⁹ Then during the winter of 1893–94 she conducted a meeting in Los Angeles. Here is a summary of that meeting as published in her 1894 book:

“While we stood between the living and the dead, preaching the gospel on the apostolic line, earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, proving to the people that Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, according to the Lord’s promise, He was with us,

1891, Maria wrote, “A number of God’s children received the anointing for service. They obeyed the command of Jesus, ‘Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye shall be endued with power from on high.’”¹¹

If 19th-century believers would meet God’s conditions, as the 120 did on the Day of Pentecost, Maria often preached, they would have the same results.

“A mighty revival would break out that would shake the world, and thousands of souls would be saved. The displays of God’s power on the Day of Pentecost were only a sample of what God designed should follow through the ages. Instead of looking back to Pentecost, let us always be expecting it to come, especially in these days.”¹²

planning for the spring of 1913 at Arroyo Seco, near Pasadena.

The Arroyo Seco meeting became another key Pentecostal gathering in the early years of the revival. Evangelist A.C. Valdez, Sr., was a teenager at the time of the Arroyo Seco meeting, and when he was in his eighties he fondly looked back to the meeting. Maria was sickly herself and sometimes had to be carried to the crude platform. But Valdez added, “There was nothing sickly, pale, or weak about her ministering. Once her equally ill husband joined her, she raised her small hands and the power of the Holy Spirit electrified us all.”¹⁴

Two children who never forgot Arroyo Seco became well-known Pentecostal evangelists, Watson and Zelma Argue. They were filled with the Spirit in a children’s service, and Zelma wrote that Maria was insistent that those who received prayer lift their hands to praise and give glory to God. And when they did, she added, the power came down.¹⁵

G.T. Haywood, a well-known and influential black Pentecostal, published a report in his paper about the Worldwide Camp Meeting. He cited the many who were healed during the meeting “through the instrumentality of His humble servant, Sister Etter.... On one occasion many were healed as Sister Etter raised her hands toward heaven while she was leaving the tent.”¹⁶

The Woodworth-Etter train rolled into Chicago late in 1913, and several Pentecostal missions cooperated with the Stone Church in a campaign. Anna C. Reiff, editor of the *Latter Rain Evangel* and former secretary to John Alexander Dowie, described the meetings as Chicago’s “mightiest visitation of the supernatural she has ever known.” Evangelist A.H. Argue echoed that remark, stating it was the “mightiest visitation from God of these latter days.”¹⁷

HONORING SISTER ETTER

A great number of people in the early years of the Pentecostal movement looked at Maria as a saint. Historian Carl Brumback said she “looked just like your grandmother, but who exercised tremendous spiritual authority over sin, disease, and demons.”¹⁸

M.M. Pinson praised Maria in a 1913

If 19th-century believers would meet God’s conditions, as the 120 did on the Day of Pentecost, Maria often preached, they would have the same results.

article published in *Word and Witness*, stating that she was not trying to build up a “one-man” organization but is “trying to spread the full gospel as recorded in the Book of Acts. She takes her stand with other leading Pentecostal preachers against false manifestations, which is right, and she takes her stand for the real Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit with the signs following.... God is healing people in answer to prayer by this woman.”¹⁹

Another early Pentecostal leader, Robert J. Craig, pastor of Glad Tidings Temple, San Francisco, and cofounder of what is now Bethany College, Scotts Valley, California, wrote a report on Maria for the *Weekly Evangel*. He urged ministers to use her life and ministry as an

example. “If the Pentecostal ministry would study her life and count on God, expecting the supernatural to be revealed in each meeting, what a mighty agency ours would be in the hands of God.”²⁰

Despite the accolades, Maria was aware that if some men in the Pentecostal movement could get their way, she and other women would have been behind the scenes and given little authority. David Lee Floyd, who attended Maria’s meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1913, told me that the local leadership—which included E.N. Bell, D.C.O. Opperman, and Howard Goss—appreciated Maria’s ministry but was careful not to give her “too much authority.”

THE WOODWORTH-ETTER BOOKS

Many who read Maria’s colorful journal-type books put them next to the Bible in importance. Fred Bosworth, for example, helped spread her fame and credibility by wishing that “all the saints in the Pentecostal movement had a copy of Sister Etter’s book. It is such a help to faith!

There has been no such record written since the 'Acts of the Apostles' recording such continuous victories by the Lord in our day over sin and sickness."²¹

Stanley Smith, a member of the famous Cambridge Seven missionary group, which included C.T. Studd, wrote a testimonial about Maria's *Acts of the Holy Ghost*, which was reprinted in her 1916 book, *Signs and Wonders*. "It is a book I value next to the Bible," he wrote. "I venture to think that this ministry is unparalleled in the history of the Church."²²

Apparently many other people valued Maria's books "next to the Bible." W.J. Mortlock, a minister and editor for Maria, wrote in her 1922 *Marvels and Miracles* that her big books had sold 25,000 copies from about 1912–21. And that was during the beginning years of the Pentecostal movement.

But that's not all. Abridged editions and other book portions were published in French, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Egyptian, Hindustani, and other dialects of India and South America.

A Swiss woman, Mlle. Biolley, translated *Signs and Wonders* into French in 1919. Robert Label, a French Pentecostal minister who wrote the preface to the 5th edition,



Thomas Paino, Sr., and Lyda Paino

commented that the Pentecostal revival in France can be attributed in a certain measure to the ministry of Maria's books.

SISTER ETTER AND THE PAINO FAMILY

The Assemblies of God family most identified with Maria Woodworth-Etter's ministry were Thomas Paino, Sr., his wife Lyda, and their descendants. Tom's surrender to serve God came when he was in World War I officers training in the middle of the influenza epidemic when lives were being snatched right and left. He vowed that he would serve God if his life were spared.

After the war Paino took his ailing first wife from New York to Indianapolis for Maria's prayer. Mrs. Paino had been converted in a Methodist street meeting; and although she did not survive her illness, the reach of faith succeeded in getting Tom Paino inside his first Protestant church. He was astonished. "At the


meeting I heard singing, shouting, messages in tongues, and interpretation. The people testified how they were saved, filled with the Spirit, and healed.”

Paino would relate the story many times about God putting a hunger in his heart that night. “No one had to ask me to go to the altar. I wanted what God had given these people.”²³

Later, when Paino became an outcast from his own Catholic family, he returned to the warm confines of the Woodworth-Etter Tabernacle in Indianapolis. Here he met and married Lyda, and soon they began ministering with Mrs. Woodworth-Etter. Little could they realize that someday, following Mrs. Woodworth-Etter’s death, they would take over the church she had founded.

The church building had seen better days when the Painos arrived that first Sunday early in the great depression. They counted only 20 people, but the story in Indianapolis is that the Painos—with important help from their children—stuck with the old tabernacle and saw a great church established. Today Lakeview Temple overlooks busy I-465, and it is a monument to the faith of Maria B. Woodworth-Etter and her protégés, Thomas, Sr., and Lyda Paino. (Ronald J. Bontrager, current pastor, succeeded Thomas Paino, Jr., in 1994.)

Not only is Lakeview Temple an important landmark, but these three pioneers—if they could—would be pleased to follow up on the seven members of the second and third Paino generations who have followed their parents and grandparents into the ministry. The torch that God lighted in the heart of Thomas Paino, Sr., in Maria’s meeting nearly 80 years ago is being passed on to other generations.

We should not forget Maria B. Woodworth-Etter and her contribution to the worldwide Pentecostal movement. 

Maria B. Underwood married P.H. Woodworth in the 1860s but divorced him in 1891, charging him with adultery. Following his death, she married Samuel Etter in 1902; with the marriage came the hyphenated name. Some of this material

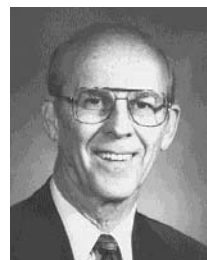
has been adapted from my book, The Woman Evangelist, The Life and Times of Charismatic Evangelist Maria B. Woodworth-Etter (Scarecrow Press, 1986).—Wayne E. Warner.

ENDNOTES

1. Wayne E. Warner, *The Woman Evangelist, The Life and Times of Charismatic Evangelist Maria B. Woodworth-Etter* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1986), 180, 234.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Maria Beulah Woodworth, *The Life, Work, and Experiences of Maria Beulah Woodworth* (St. Louis: by author, 1894), 54. I have found only one reference to speaking in tongues [in her 1885 book] prior to 1900. She told of her husband’s conversion in 1885 when he “seemed to speak with other tongues.”
5. Ibid., 202.
6. Ibid., 202.
7. Decatur (Ill.) *Daily Republican* (September 10, 1887).
8. *San Francisco Examiner* (January 9, 1890). Woodworth added in this interview that “ministers who fall into line with the meetings are led out to seek more power.” In the April 13, 1890, edition the *Examiner* told of people seeking the power, “fervently praying to be baptized in it.”
9. Woodworth, 364.
10. Ibid., 428. This meeting in Los Angeles continued 5 months.

11. *Louisville Courier-Journal* (August 24, 1888); Woodworth, 359.
12. Woodworth, 437-38.
13. *Maria Woodworth-Etter, Marvels and Miracles* (Indianapolis: by author, 1922), 501.
14. A.C. Valdez, *Fire on Azusa Street* (Costa Mesa: Gift Publications, 1980), 41-42.
15. Zelma Argue, “Act Your Faith,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (July 19, 1959): 8-9.
16. Maria Woodworth-Etter, *Signs and Wonders* (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1980), 253.
17. Anna C. Reiff, “The Day of Chicago’s Visitation,” *Latter Rain Evangel* (August 1913): 2-3.
18. Carl Brumback, *Suddenly...From Heaven* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 27.
19. *Word and Witness* (Dec. 20, 1913). This issue also published the “Call” to Hot Springs, Arkansas, which resulted in organizing the Assemblies of God.
20. *The Weekly Evangel* (December 16, 1916).
21. F.F. Bosworth, “The Wonders of God in Dallas,” *Word and Witness* (August 20, 1912): 3.
22. Woodworth-Etter, *Signs and Wonders*, 7.
23. Warner, 263.

Wayne Warner is director of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Missouri.



INTERVIEW WITH STEVE HAAS

Shattering the Silence: The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church



In His own life Jesus gave evidence that the new Kingdom of persons voluntarily subservient to His lordship would be in tension with the temporal kingdoms of earth. Jesus said, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." Today, Christ-followers around the world face persecution simply for what they believe. In varying degrees they face massacre, rape, torture, family-division, harassment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death.

The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church will be celebrated on November 15, 1998. Steve Haas, U.S. coordinator for the 1998 IDOP, spoke with Enrichment to help raise awareness of this worldwide issue and to discuss how churches can become involved.

The church is the worldwide body of people committed to Christ. When we add the word persecuted, we refer to those people who are being harassed for their faith. They face torture, rape, community disintegration, imprisonment, slavery, beatings, and death.

WHAT IS THE "PERSECUTED CHURCH"?

The church is the worldwide body of people committed to Christ. When we add the word *persecuted*, we refer to those people who are being harassed for their faith. They face torture, rape, community disintegration, imprisonment, slavery, beatings, and death. Some 200 million face this as a reality daily, and 400 million face severe to moderate forms of discrimination simply because they believe in Jesus Christ.

SHARE A RECENT ACCOUNT OF A BELIEVER SUFFERING PERSECUTION FOR HIS/HER FAITH.

Actually, they are numerous. One brother has been serving a 3-year sentence in Vietnam for sharing his faith with a community. He was beaten (and was actually filmed being beaten), laughed at by the villagers, and imprisoned. His sentence was reduced by 6 months because of the international awareness his case created, but he decided to stay in prison for the duration of his sentence because of the number of people who had come to Christ within the prison.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE PLEASE.

Sudan is full of examples—really so numerous that names become a blur. Families in small Christian communities are seeing their communities disintegrate

due to Islamic raiders from the north. Often the men are killed because they represent opposition, women are raped, and children are enslaved. Children in open slave markets bring money, which gives salaries for the soldiers who capture them—about \$25 for males and slightly more for females because they can serve as concubines.



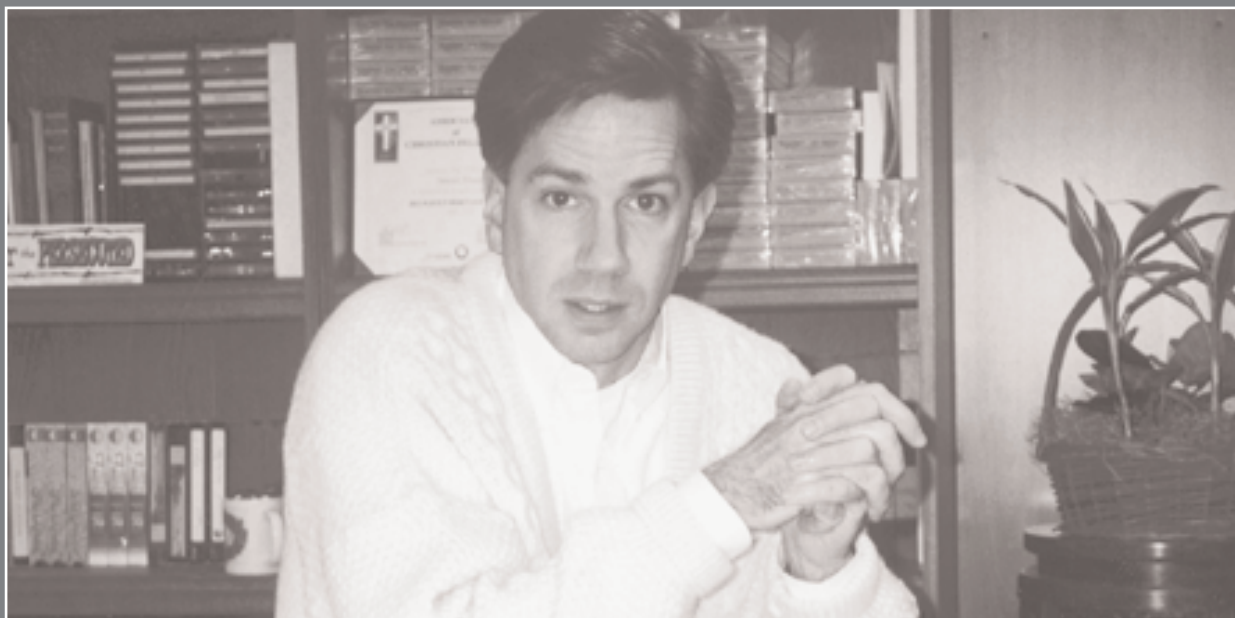
WERE YOU PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS FROM THE 1997 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH?

Results exceeded our initial expectations and projections. We saw over 60,000 churches come before the throne, asking the Lord to intervene in

hear about what's happening and the effort the church is expending on behalf of persecuted church organizations and the agencies who are helping. These countries are helping—not to mention the amount of advocacy that reaches the ears and the minds of government leaders.

(888/538-7772). For a nominal charge, churches can have all the tools at hand to make this an issue, to awaken a congregation, and shatter the silence of the local church.

(2) Band together. Utilize the network and creative resources that individuals have. Make this an issue,



many of the cases where Christians are being persecuted. They showed a sense of solidarity with those who are beleaguered for their faith.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH THIS YEAR IS NOVEMBER 15. WHAT ARE YOU ANTICIPATING?

We are expecting a much larger showing of churches. As they take this issue to heart, meditate on what is happening here and there, and the role they must play, they're going to be talking with other churches. If every church, in fact, talks with two others, we will have half the churches in this country praying on behalf of the persecuted church.

This is an international movement. We had 110 countries participating in 1997 and expect many more this year. The impact of this internationally is unbelievable in terms of countries that

WHAT IS THE MISSION AND AGENDA OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH?

The mission is to awaken followers of Christ and others to the plight of persecuted Christians, calling the Church to compassion and prayer and putting us in action. Our focus is threefold: (1) To awaken the Church and concerned others to the reality of Christian persecution worldwide. (2) To lead in prayer for those who are being persecuted. (3) To direct people to appropriate activities that support and aid the persecuted church.

HOW CAN THE CHURCH GET INVOLVED ON THIS IMPORTANT DAY?


The simplest, most important thing is to pray. The way to do that is:

(1) Get informed. An ideal resource kit is available by calling 888/LetsPra

not only personally but to the community and the church.

(3) Contact one of the many Christian religious freedom organizations and relief groups that support the persecuted church worldwide. These organizations can be found by visiting our website at www.persecutedchurch.org, which would actually help you do all three of the things mentioned.

ANY CLOSING THOUGHTS?

The Book of Esther refers to "such a time as this" when Mordecai impressed on his adopted daughter the importance of standing up for her people. I believe that phrase could adequately describe the tenuous times which millions of believers are facing for their faith. Now is the time for believers to get to know them, pray for them, and back them up. 



Proclaim Good News

BY STANLEY M.
HORTON

**The good news is
that God comes with
power, yet with the
tenderness of a good
shepherd.**

Who was the greatest New Testament evangelist (preacher or proclaimer of the good news, the gospel)? Jesus. He went to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14*) and set the example for all evangelists, for there is no true evangelism apart from the power of the Spirit.

Was Jesus an evangelist? Indeed He was. The Hebrew of the Old Testament confirms it. He chose to declare His evangelistic ministry at Nazareth by reading from Isaiah 61: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Luke 4:16). “To preach good news” is the Greek *euaggelisasthai* from which we get our word *evangelize*. Jesus, of course, was reading from the Hebrew. The Hebrew verb used by Isaiah in 61:1 is *basser*; translated in the King James Version “preach good tidings” or “bring good tidings.” It is an intensive form of the verb *basar*: Jesus was not casual or wishy-washy in His evangelism. The work of evangelism is too important for that. It needs to come from an intense desire to have people hear and accept the good news. That desire was there in the loving heart of Jesus, even though the people of Nazareth did not accept it at the time.

Isaiah used *mebasser*, a participial form of the same verb, of Zion as a messenger of good news to the cities of Judah ruined by Sennacherib (Isaiah 40:9). The good news is that God comes with power, yet with the tenderness of a good shepherd (40:10,11). The whole 40th chapter shows the power and greatness of God, who is our unwearied Guide. Jesus may have had this passage in mind when He spoke of himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

God promised to give Jerusalem a messenger of good news, a *mebasser* (Isaiah 41:27). The Hebrew indicates something exciting. The context shows a contrast between idols and the true God who speaks, who gives prophecies and fulfills them. The pagan gods cannot tell or reveal anything. Other religions may talk about evangelism, but they do not have anything like the good news of God, the good news of the gospel.

Isaiah brought this out further, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news (*mebasser*), who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings (*mebasser*), who proclaim salvation” (52:7). God wants the evangelists, the bearers of good news, to proclaim the good news of God’s salvation. The New Testament quotes this verse and applies it to the gospel of Christ (Romans 10:15; cf., Ephesians 6:15). Nahum also saw “on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news (*mebasser*), who proclaims peace” (Nahum 1:15).

Peace (Hebrew *shalom*) is another term that speaks of good news. In the Bible it is always more than quietness or absence of strife. It is a positive word that includes salvation, well-being, health, wholeness, and the blessings by which God gives us success in serving Him. Evangelists declare the wonderful promises of God.

Forms of *basar* are often used for news of victory. When it is God’s victory it is always good news, and evangelists must declare that God is Victor and will always be Victor. But when the *mebasser* brought the news to Eli that the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, Eli did not take it as good news. He fell backward, broke his neck, and died (1 Samuel 4:17,18). Yet it was good news that God did not allow Eli’s sons to use the ark as a magic token in a heathenistic way. It proved to be good news, too, when the Philistines put the ark in the temple of their grain god idol, Dagon, and the idol fell and broke. Then a plague on the Philistines showed that the power of God is greater than anything the Philistines worshiped (1 Samuel 5:1-12). The Philistines finally had to admit that God was Victor, and they sent the ark back.

Later the Philistines considered the death of Saul good news (1 Samuel 31:9), and though it was a defeat for Israel, it was still a victory for God. God often used Israel’s enemies to punish them. This was God’s judgment on Saul’s pride and disobedience. It also prepared the way for David to take the throne and establish the kingdom—something Saul failed to do.


When Absalom rebelled and David was forced to flee from Jerusalem, Absalom's death meant victory for David's forces and David's restoration to the throne. The men who brought the message to David thought it was good news, but David did not, for he loved Absalom in spite of his son's sins (2 Samuel 18:19–33). Though Nathan later rebuked David for continuing to grieve instead of doing the work God had given him to do, in a sense, we can see something good in David's grief. God does not rejoice over the death of sinners either, for He does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

If we really feel that God does not want anyone to perish, then we should make it our delight to join David in proclaiming the good news of righteousness (Psalm 40:9) and of God's salvation "day after day" (1 Chronicles 16:23; Psalm 96:2). David did this declaring God's "glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples" (Psalm 96:3). Even the Old Testament saw hope for the Gentiles.

On one occasion David said, "The Lord announced the word, and great was the company ['the host'] of those who proclaimed (*m^ebasseroth*) it" (Psalm 68:11). This was a word of victory and brought praise "to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens" (Psalm 68:19). He is a God of power and majesty, an awesome God who "gives power and strength to his people" (Psalm 68:35). No wonder the Psalmist ended with

"Praise be to God!" We too can shout hallelujah (Hebrew for "Praise the Lord!").

Do we see, as David did, a large company of people who tell the good news? Or are there too many Christians who look to ministers to do the work of evangelism, of spreading the good news? Only as we all become evangelists will the world hear the Word and Jesus' promise be fulfilled, "This gospel [good news] of the kingdom [God's victorious rule and reign] will be preached [made known, spread widely] in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end [the consummation, the fulfillment] will come" (Matthew 24:14).

We can become that large company if we join in proclaiming the good news that "the Spirit and bride [the Church] say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17). That Jesus adds, "I am coming soon," makes the glorious task of evangelism even more urgent. Yet we know there is no better news than the assurance that Jesus is coming again. We cannot help but say with John, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." 

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

Stanley M. Horton, Th.D., is project coordinator for the Pentecostal Textbook Project, Springfield, Missouri.

Only as we all become evangelists will the world hear the Word and Jesus' promise fulfilled, "This gospel [good news] of the kingdom [God's victorious rule and reign] will be preached [made known, spread widely] in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end [the consummation, the fulfillment] will come" (Matthew 24:14).



"Baxter? Woodson here. Say, I'm working on this week's sermon and I'm wondering. Where do we stand on El Nino—yea or ney?"



Theology of Evangelism

BY ROBERT E.
COLEMAN

***That God has spoken
redemptively to
humankind anchors
evangelism in the very
nature of revelation.***

Toward the close of World War II, I was at an ROTC summer training camp near Mineral Wells, Texas. One gloomy day a newspaper courier came through our company area and cried out: "Good news! We're winning the war." Before long the whole camp was alive with excited conversation about the news.

Tidings of victory cannot be greeted with indifference, nor the message self-contained. How much more thrilling is the joyous sound of the gospel of Christ—the good news of His victory over the power of death and hell¹—"the astounding declaration"² that God himself has personally intervened in human history through the mighty conquest of Jesus Christ (see John 3:16). Making this fact known is evangelism.

THE REVEALED WORD

What makes the announcement so compelling is its divine source. Contrary to the notions of popular humanism, the gospel does not originate as a human deduction, the valiant groping of humanity after a higher life. It comes as a message sent from heaven, the revelation of God's quest for His people, ever seeking to save the lost.³ To persons perishing with no sense of direction or certainty, that is good news indeed.

Where we begin in theology largely determines where we end. If we begin with human speculation, we will end with frustration and failure, for humanity's darkened intelligence and perverted will can never attain to the incorruptible nature of divine truth. Until God speaks, human beings are utterly adrift on a sea of self-deception.

The written deposit of this heavenly teaching is the canon of inspired Scripture.⁴ The Bible speaks "without error in all that it affirms, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."⁵ Herein is the objective authority for all Christian theology. "It is impossible," as Calvin observed, "for man to obtain even the minutest portion of light and sound doctrine without being a disciple of this

Book."⁶ Not surprisingly, then, systems of thought that circumvent or compromise scriptural verities do not produce strong evangelistic concern.⁷

That God has spoken redemptively to humankind anchors evangelism in the very nature of revelation. At the same time, the saving magnitude of the Word carries an urgency that it be told to every creature. From this mandate issues a theology immediately related to the propagation of the gospel. It draws upon the whole scope of Scripture and "the total meaning of the Christian faith."⁸ It focuses the purpose of all that God has revealed. In this case, evangelism is the measure by which any Christian doctrine must be validated.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Most of us tend to impose upon God our own human limitations, thereby belittling His gospel. The Word proclaimed is but the reflection of the God who has spoken. He is utterly unlimited and infinite in himself. God is everywhere in all His works, yet contained by none. The past and the future are always present in Him. Never changing, with full knowledge of all things and able to do whatever He pleases, the Lord God omnipotent reigns forever.

Yet it is impossible for God to act otherwise than in accordance with absolute integrity. He can never be untruthful, unjust, unholy, or unloving. Whatever God does is perfect.

Best of all, God is personally concerned for His creation. An overwhelming sense of confidence and hope is created in the heart of those who accept this truth, for it means that He is our Father. He understands. He cares. He delights to make himself known. He gives us His hand, not the hand of cold doctrine and abstract truth, but the hand of a real person. The One who took upon himself the form of our flesh and walked among us in the person of Jesus now continues to minister to us in the Holy Spirit.

Though the Trinity, as any mystery, cannot be

fully explained, it affords a means by which the structure of God's perfection can be interpreted. God might be seen as the Father in administration, as the Son in revelation, and as the Spirit in operation. Or building on the concept of His self-disclosure, God is the Revealer or cause in the Father; He is the Revelation or act in the Son; and He is the Revealedness or effect in the Spirit.⁹ However inadequate may be our formulations of God's triune nature, evangelism is the expression of the Trinity in action.¹⁰

Recognition of divine sovereignty is implicit in salvation theology. If God is, then everything that exists or happens must acknowledge His lordship. Only God is great, and before Him every knee must bow. "Look unto me," He declares, "and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22).

Failure to see our lives within this context makes the gospel meaningless. This is the basic fallacy of theological liberalism and all other schemes of human self-sufficiency that begin with the premise: Know thyself. Human beings must know themselves, but unless they first recognize their Creator and Lord, they are in no position to evaluate themselves or their neighbors. Only as persons behold their image in their God and Savior can they know who they are and what they are destined to be.

THE PREDICAMENT OF HUMANITY

When the gospel brings people to see themselves "in the light of God's law and holiness," they realize how short they have fallen from His glory.¹¹ They have turned to their own ways and rejected the absolute claims of God upon their lives. In doing so, they have followed the same course as Satan and his demons.

This assertion of independence lies at the heart of sin. A sinner "sets himself up in God's place,"¹² presumptuously acting as if he can do as he pleases. Such an attitude is nothing short of idolatry, the worship of humanity as a false god. Its ultimate expression is seen in the defiant rejection of God's only begotten Son (see John 1:11; 3:19,36).

The contagion of this blasphemy has pervaded humanity, alienating affections, darkening the intellect, perverting the will. Human nature is at utter enmity against God. This moral disease has spread throughout the human race, bringing degradation and strife to all society.

Sin cannot be ignored by a just God, since it

is an affront to His holiness. His wrath upon iniquity cannot be annulled as long as the cause of evil remains. Since life is continuous, all the spiritual consequences of sin continue on forever in hell. Those who object to this teaching, on the ground that it diminishes God's nature of love, fail to comprehend the undivided nature of His being. If God's judgment did not fall upon that which would destroy His beloved, His sovereign love itself would be called into question. "It is not because God's love is limited but because it is unlimited that hell as well as heaven is made necessary."¹³

Evangelism strikes the heart of sin. A theology that does not come to grips with this cause of all human woe is irrelevant to the world's need. Though the disclosure of human rebellion, and its consequence, may be bad news, still the gospel shines through it all, for God judges that He might save.

THE INCARNATE SAVIOR

The redeeming work of the Trinity assumes incarnate form in His Son (see John 1:14). Jesus is not God apart from the human, nor the human apart from God; but He is God and human united in one personality. In this perfect union of eternal consciousness, Christ becomes the reconciling center of the gospel. All that took place in salvation before His coming was in anticipation of Him. All that has taken place since His coming has been accomplished in His name (see Acts 4:12).

Any system of doctrine that does not affirm the deity and humanity of Christ has no evangelical substance. In fact, "if the gospel records about Him are not entirely true, and if Christ is not really what He claimed to be, then there is nothing left of Christianity."¹⁴ To say that His claims were invented by His followers is to discredit both Christ and His disciples and to make the New Testament a travesty.

God's essential message in Christ centers in documented facts—the kind of news that can be proven in "real history."¹⁵ That Jesus lived and died and rose again is a matter of public record. The gospel is no theological abstraction but a living, visible person who stands before us and says, "Follow me.... I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 1:43; 14:6).

His redemptive mission reaches its culmination at Calvary. Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the cross, suffering in our stead, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"

*Only as persons
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(1 Peter 3:18). Though no theory of the Atonement can adequately explain what transpired when Christ died, it is clear that something happened in the heart of God, entirely changing His relationship with sinful humanity. Christ, by the offering of himself, made a full, perfect, and complete satisfaction for the sins of the world. God loved us and gave himself for us. This is God's grace. Nothing deserved. Nothing earned. God simply moves in and does for us what we could not do for ourselves.

The bodily resurrection of Christ and His subsequent ascension into heaven brings the Cross forcibly to human attention. For when One dies who has the power to rise from the grave, in all honesty we must ask why He ever died in the first place. To this penetrating question, the gospel answers unequivocally: He "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SPIRIT

It is the Holy Spirit who makes the Word of God come alive. He effects in us what Christ has accomplished for us. Since the beginning of time, the Spirit has been at work unfolding God's redemptive purpose, and His ministry focuses supremely on the Son whom He always exalts.

As Christ is lifted up, and we see ourselves in the light of the Cross, the Spirit moves us to repent and accept the gift of salvation. The gospel call is to turn from sin unto God, casting ourselves upon Him in childlike trust. Unless there is such a conversion, no one can enter the Kingdom. The responsibility to respond to His Word clearly rests upon the person, though the enabling power is through God's grace.¹⁶

Through faith in Christ the believer is introduced to a life of forgiveness and righteousness (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). The transforming grace of the Spirit indwelling the heart is so real that it is likened to being "born again" (John 3:3). There is an actual impartation of the divine nature so that the regenerated person begins to live in the Savior.

While the guilt of sin is remitted in justification, the Christian still must strive against the effects of sin. This is described in the ongoing work of sanctification, whereby the believer is progressively conformed to the character of the Lord. As

Human beings must know themselves, but unless they first recognize their Creator and Lord, they are in no position to evaluate themselves or their neighbors.

Bloesch puts it: "Justification is the narrow gate, while sanctification is the straight way."¹⁷ Both aspects of the gospel are essential.

The way holiness of life is interpreted varies widely among theologians. Generally, the attainment of complete sanctification is viewed as being only partial in this life, but nothing less should be our goal. Regardless of what has been experienced thus far, there is more beyond. The Christian life is always growing "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

To the degree the Spirit of God fills the believer, life takes on the character of Christ. It is this inward dynamic that makes Christianity a savoring force for holiness in the world. Out of it flows compassionate deeds of mercy and bold evangelistic outreach.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

The faithful evangelistic ministry of the Word calls forth the Church, the fellowship of the redeemed. All who live by faith in the Son of God become part of "this communion of the saints." There are no isolated Christians.

Despite its human shortcomings, this community is "the agent of the kingdom of God,"¹⁸ the means by which His reign comes and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. It is a ministering body, like that of Christ in the flesh, continuing now in its life the work of the Lord.

Each member of the Body has a vital part in the mission. There are diversities of gifts and offices, but every believer is a servant in the priesthood of Christ. Whether one is considered clergy or laity makes no difference. When this is forgotten, the potential workforce of the Church flounders in inertia.

Our theology must lay more stress upon Christ's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19,20).¹⁹ The command is not to make converts but to make disciples—persons who will learn of Christ. It is a summons to follow Him, to seek His kingdom above all else, to deny self, and to take up His cross. By placing the emphasis on becoming like Him, Christ assures that His church will grow in His character and become active participants in His mission.

As disciples make disciples, Jesus knew that ultimately the whole world would be reached with the gospel. His faithful witnesses would storm the gates of hell and shatter the principalities of Satan. Victory is certain; the celebration has already begun. In His Word you can hear them singing and shouting around the throne of God (see Revelation 5:9; 7:9) "saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15; see 5:9–14; 7:10–12; 12:10; 15:3,4; 19:1–7).

Evangelism, as the heartbeat of all Christian theology, directs our energy toward that inevitable goal to which history is moving, when the completed Church, the blood-washed bride of Christ, will be presented "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). This is more than a doctrine of hope. It is the ringing affirmation that Jesus Christ is victorious over all.

Someday the trumpet will sound, and, with all His hosts, the Son of Man shall descend from heaven in trailing clouds of splendor. Such a theology puts a spring in the step and a song in the heart. For whatever may come in our present experience, however agonizing the sufferings of the world, we know that God is working through every circumstance to accomplish His purpose. So rather than be distracted by

the struggle, let us fix our attention upon the victory. The King is coming. While it does not yet appear what we shall be, "we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). With this vision ever before us, let us go forth to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. The Lord God Almighty reigns, and in Him we too are more than conquerors. ■

ENDNOTES

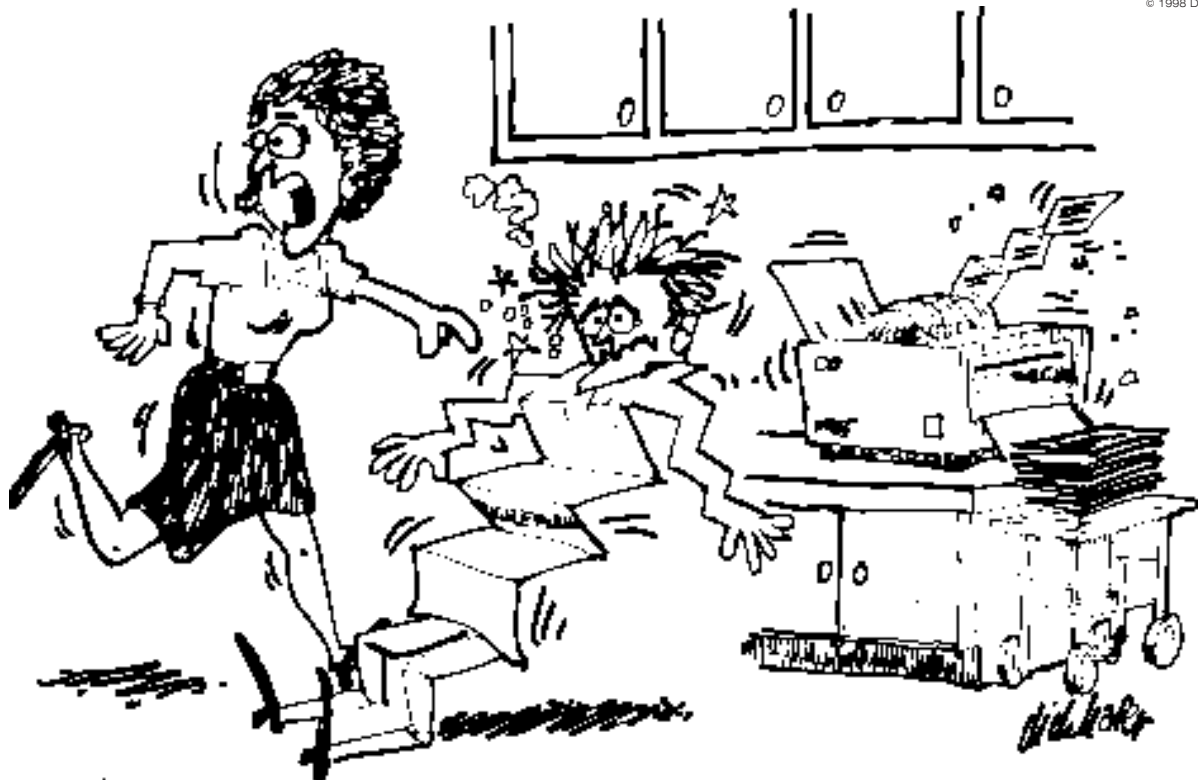
1. Interestingly, *euaggelion*, meaning good news or gospel, was a word in the Greek world to announce victory or to express gratitude for victory, though the term had wider applications denoting glad tidings. In Michael Green, *Evangelism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 56.
2. Edwin Lewis uses this description of the gospel because it is good news so utterly without comparison to any news heard before, *Theology and Evangelism* (Nashville: Tidings, 1952), 12–13.
3. John Stott, *Basic Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 9.
4. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian*

- Religion*, trans. by Henry Beveridge, I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 66.
5. *The Lausanne Covenant*, Section 2.
6. John Calvin, op. cit., 66.
7. A good case in point is the modern ecumenical movement contained within the World Council of Churches. For a documented study of this evolution, see Arthur P. Johnston, *World Evangelism and the Word of God* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974).
8. T.A. Kantonen, *The Theology of Evangelism* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1954), 4.
9. T.A. Kantonen, op. cit., 25. This analysis based on Barth's statement on the Trinity, "God reveals himself as the Lord."
10. John Bunyan, *The World To Come*, or *Visions of Heaven and Hell*, included in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (Philadelphia: W.A. Leary, n.d.), 240.
11. J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1961), 59.
12. T.A. Kantonen, op. cit., 27.
13. Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology, II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 224–25.
14. Sapher Philip Athyal, "The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ," *The New Race of Evangelicalism*, 63.

15. Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1968), 92.
16. A good discussion of this issue is in J.I. Packer, op. cit., 11–36; cf., Robert E. Coleman, *The Mind of the Master* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, 1977), 80–84.
17. Donald G. Bloesch, op. cit., 43.
18. Howard A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977), 12.
19. See my note on this in *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, 1964), 108, 109.

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"PASTOR! Marsha got too close to the folding machine!!"

Managing Church Conflict Creatively

PART 4: Decision (Acts 6:1-7)

BY RICHARD D.
DOBBINS

Creative integration would be the optimum way of managing conflict: devising a new approach that no one coming into the meeting had really seen, but that the whole group is helped to see as they look at the situation together.

Frequently, a compromise can be worked out. That's one way of creatively managing conflict, and it offers a win-win situation where everyone feels pretty good about the end product. But don't overwork compromise; it's not always realistic or even possible. Remember Solomon. There was only one baby. When he sought to compromise by giving each mother half of the child, the real mother quickly realized this issue couldn't be resolved by compromise.

It is often necessary to require folks to pick a side and then require the winners to make it work. How should you respond? "OK, folks, this is how the group feels we should manage this situation—together." This outcome is more difficult; there are perceived "winners" and "losers." You will need to encourage those whose solutions weren't chosen. Let them know how valuable they are to the implementation of the group's decision. Reassure them that their ideas are worthwhile now and in the future because there are always going to be challenges which need open minds; you look forward to their contribution to future discussions on this or other issues.

Perhaps the most creative resolution is to try to find an integration of as many different points of view as possible. Creative integration would be the optimum way of managing conflict: devising a new approach that no one coming into the meeting had really seen, but that the whole group is helped to see as they look at the situation together.

This was the apostles' way in managing that first crisis of the New Testament church: the care of widows and orphans. None of the apostles—Peter, James, or John—had considered the possibility of having deacons. All they knew was that the widows were murmuring and complaining.

They allowed the widows to murmur until their complaints were aired and desensitized. Then they stayed with that conflict and deliberated different ways of resolving it. And out of the

Maturity never shows itself any brighter than when it shines in the midst of conflict. The mature person sees that God specializes in managing messes.

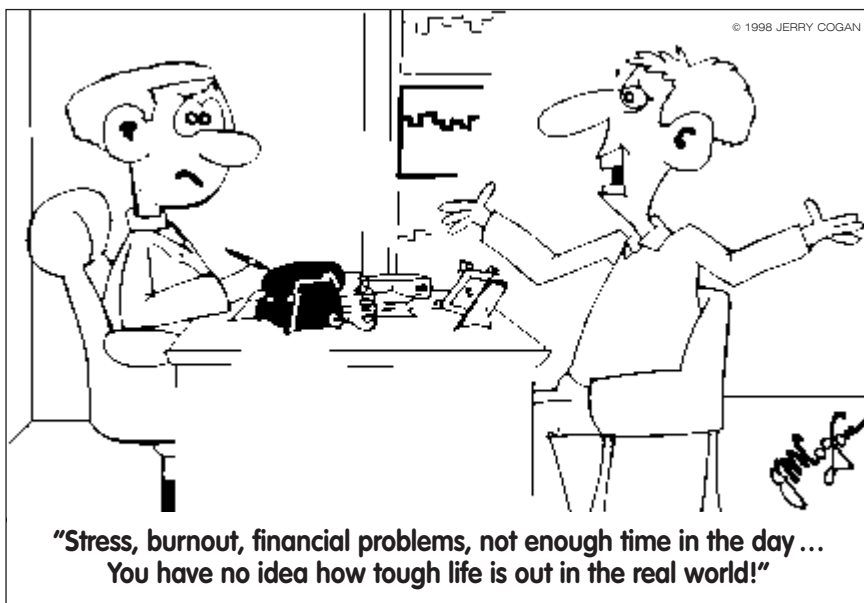
first major conflict of the church came the whole idea of lay ministry. That was an idea that none of them had when the widows first began to gripe. If there hadn't been the conflict, the creative dimension of lay ministry might never have been added to the church. For, out of the first major conflict came the office and ministry of "deacon."

Brock Chisholm, former director of the World Health Organization, declared, "So far, in the history of the world, there have never been enough mature people in the right places." Maturity never shows itself any brighter than when it shines in the midst of conflict. The mature person sees that God specializes in managing messes. Instead of focusing on the mess, the mature person sees what good and creative things God can bring out of it. God is, after all, the master of peace...in the midst of chaos. Your crisis isn't the first one He's had to manage.

You may be trying to make an untimely decision—in the midst of a situation about which nothing can be done at the moment. Here is how to recognize such a situation and a healthy way to temporarily "table" it. It is a very practical application of the scriptural directive to come to God "casting all your cares upon Him."

First, determine whether anything at all can be done about the situation. Sometimes there is simply nothing that can be done. As a group, give the problem to God in prayer.

Next, if a resolution seems possible, decide whether this particular group can bring it about or if you need outside help. Remember God will never hold you accountable for things that are



beyond your control. So, decide if this is something you will ever be able to do.

Then ask: can anything be done about it right now? By whom? If your group can manage the task, assign a member or members to tackle the problem and report back to you. If someone outside your group or committee is better suited to managing the situation, decide who among you should approach the person(s) who can bring about change. Set a date for completion of this contact.

As you struggle with some of the difficult business of the institutional church, remember that this gorgeous planet came into existence as a result of an earlier catastrophe.


Finally, determine when something can be done, if not now, and make note of it in your planning calendar to remind you of the appropriate time for action. Then, as a group, “cast” this problem on the Lord for the time being. These are the steps to “casting your cares” on the Lord—a process you will undoubtedly need to go through time and again.

As you struggle with some of the difficult business of the institutional church, remember that this gorgeous planet came into existence as a result of an earlier

catastrophe. When God looked at what Satan had made of earth, when it was “without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2), He was moved within His Spirit to restore it and create something beautiful. In the same way, when the enemy has stirred up conflict in His church, God’s

Spirit moves mature people to manage that conflict creatively. He will do it as often as necessary to protect and preserve His kingdom here on earth.

Step back and divest yourself of ego-involvement. Ask God to bring His creative will out of your chaotic situations. Ask Him to help you and the others involved in your church’s decisions to bring open minds and mature attitudes to the desensitization and deliberation process—so that eventually His creative will is made manifest in the decision you reach together. Reread the story of Acts 6:1-7 and marvel at the good that came out of the first major crisis in the Church. Make yourself as open as you possibly can to whatever good He chooses to bring out of your deliberations, and encourage others to do the same.

When this happens, everybody wins—especially the kingdom of God. 

Richard D. Dobbins, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and founder and clinical director of EMERGE Ministries in Akron, Ohio

We Gave Some to be Evangelists . . .

Dear Evangelist:

The congregation recognizes and honors you as a God-called, God-sent minister teamed with the pastor (Ephesians 4:11) to bring spiritual maturity to church members and to build up the body of Christ into spiritual unity.

We do not expect you to bring revival. The congregation and pastor will prepare prayerfully and scripturally for the upcoming meeting. We will be postured to hear what God has to say through you upon your arrival and will personally submit to God's Word through obedience.

Come to us spiritually ready, full of faith and expectancy of the Word, and filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5). We anticipate you to arrive emotionally, socially, and spiritually ready to minister to people of all races, for our congregation consists of every culture and ethnic origin.

You are our God-sent evangelist to preach God's Word. Faith in the Word of God brings true conversions and human changes. Preach God's Word, for we are hungry and ready to walk with you in the great adventure of the

Word of faith. *We would see Jesus!*

We feel it is important for you to maintain active membership in a local assembly and sustain a loving, proper relationship with your family. We want you as a role model for our church families as we try to develop proper households. Therefore, our evangelist should be the head of a godly household (Acts 21:8,9).

The congregation desperately requires your gift to challenge their lives and to lead them closer to God. As a confirming note of gospel repetition, they need to hear another person say the same things the pastor has said repeatedly. This is an exciting affirmation of divine truth required to bring life to God's Word.

We want to hear what God has spoken to your heart for our body of believers. Please understand we are struggling with issues of life and faith, health problems, spiritual discipline, family disorders, personal economic disasters, and questions only God can answer. We need you to be God's instrument to help us

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 106)

BY EARL J.
BANNING

We expect you to be God's instrument to help us along the way—to answer questions people are asking.



and Some to be Pastors

Dear Pastor:

I grew up in a pastor's home and have vivid memories of evangelists. Thankfully, those memories are wonderful and lasting. With few exceptions the revival services always accomplished their intended goals—to revive (as in “live again”) the church.

I have seldom seen actual evangelism occur on the church premises. My dad, a pastor, did evangelism in the country of Mexico with H.C. Ball, A.C. Bates, E.R. Anderson, and others. I saw evangelism in the raw, bringing good news of life to those who were dead in their sins and had no need for revival. The difference between *evangelism* and *revivalism* is as different as night and day.

Inherent in the Pentecostal view of evangelism is self-sustenance. "Poor preach, poor pay," some used to say. Offerings became the evidence of approval and success or failure. For many evangelists, finance became the determiner of God's will to go or to stay. With no alternate source of income, a week's rest

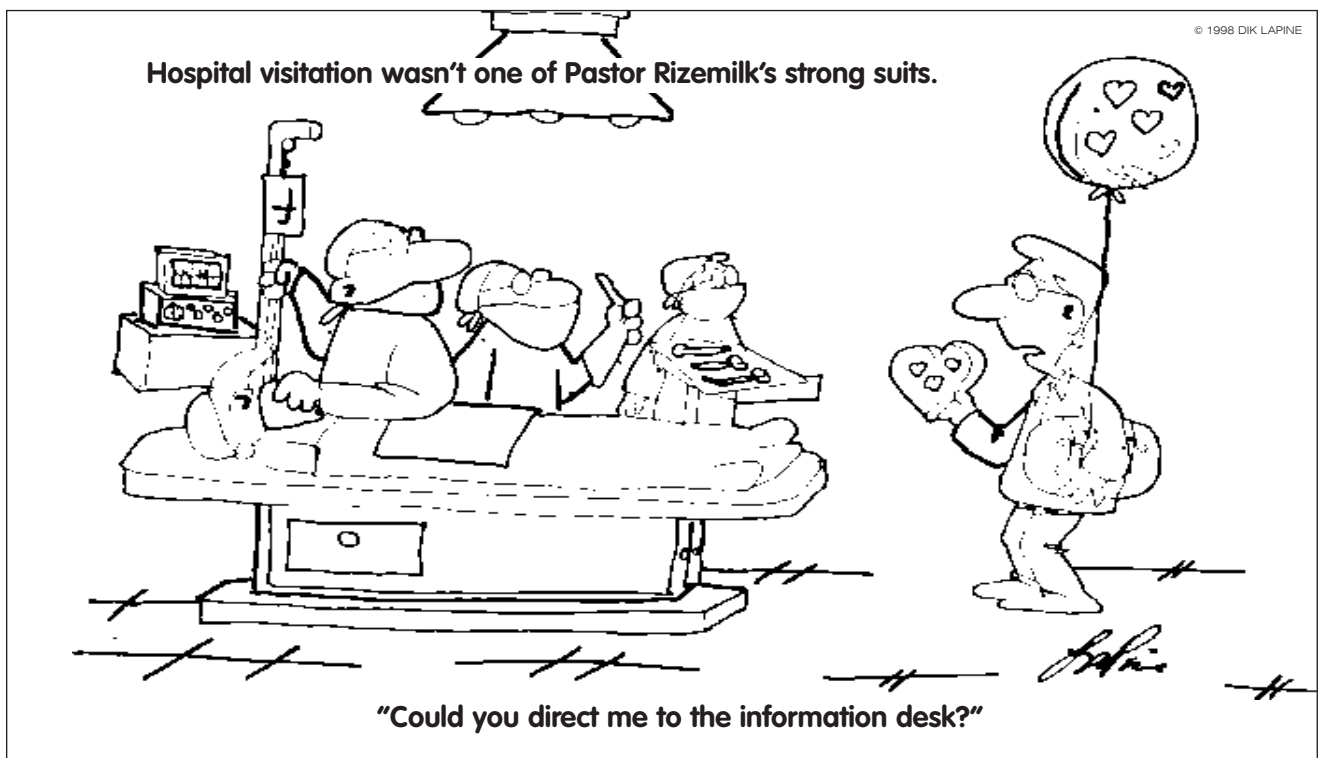
meant a week without financial income, and that was not possible. Evangelists have no congregation to rely upon for continued support, no salary during vacation. While it is every minister's duty to be financially wise and prepare for those unfunded days, I was reminded often that the best evangelists always lived by faith and never asked for minimums or predetermined honoraria. The thought of selling my services prevented me from asking for set financial arrangements. However, I knew if I ever stepped out of evangelism to pastor, I would follow the certain path of pastors preceding me—at least to know the financial arrangements *before* accepting the pastorate.

Missionaries raise their funds before departure to the field, a requirement of the Division of Foreign Missions. Yet, for some reason, many pastors feel it is unethical for evangelists to do the same thing. After ministering for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 107)

“Poor preach, poor pay,” some used to say.

BY DAVE ROEVER



along the way—to answer questions people are asking. Prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in preparation and delivery of your sermons. Please refrain from delivering sermons that contain social, academic, and cultural hype. We desperately need to hear from God.

We wish you could sense the spiritual hunger and human anticipation we share in planning for this meeting. We are praying for our unconverted family members and friends and expecting their

submission to Christ during this meeting. Please call or write in the planning stage of our meeting. This will help you in your preparation and give you a better understanding of what we are believing God to accomplish through you.

We invite you to join us as we pray for souls before each service. Here you will sense the passion we have for God to bring salvation to our families and friends.

Do not be concerned about your finance during your visit. We are preparing to bless you with generous offerings.

Please observe the “ministry-related products only” policy when offering your materials for sale. We do not want our foyer to look like a department store.

have discovered what we desperately need most from God, but you will sense this as you envelope yourself in intercessory prayer. When you minister we will know that we are hearing from God.

We desperately need time at the corporate altar—time to pray, sing, and weep together as we pursue God’s personal directives in response to His Word.

Do not feel you have to do all the ministry of laying on hands. We have a God-anointed pastor, associate pastors, godly deacons, and prayer elders who are spiritually trained and proficient in intercessory prayer. Perhaps you can cover more spiritual ground by calling upon others to assist you in altar ministry.

Come to us spiritually ready, full of faith and expectancy of the Word, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

We recognize the pastor as the spiritual leader of the church; please honor him/her in all matters related to time schedules, conclusions, announcements, offerings, and other issues.


Team-partner with the pastor, and the congregation will follow you as the guest and ministerial gift partner in Christ. A kind and honest word of commendation regarding the pastor, associate staff, choir, etc., will be appreciated as you greet the congregation at the point of introduction.

We love you and expect to hear from God through your sermons, songs, prayers, and overall ministry. Relax and be yourself. We will follow a spiritual servant leader who is mature and personally in love with Jesus and finds great joy in presenting Christ in all His glory and grace. *We would see Jesus.*

We are praying and want you to join us in prayer, which is a divine exercise in acquiring God’s wisdom. We may not

Be assured of our prayers after our revival services. Your sermons and personal ministry will linger until Jesus returns. We trust you will want to return and that we will want you to return for ministry in God’s timing.

Would you maintain some level of continued communication with the pastor? Then we could knowledgeably pray for you and your needs, and you could continue to monitor our well-being as you partner with us in prayer.

These are a few of the things pastors wish every evangelist knew about their congregations before revival meetings in the local churches. 

Yours for souls,

Every Pastor

Earl J. Banning is pastor of Braeswood Assembly of God, Houston, Texas.

I learned that the effort could not be left to hope offerings for my crusades (citywide efforts). We budgeted for the crusade and prepared for souls to come to Christ at the same time.

However, I still do not demand a set fee and have no contracts to offer when I minister in churches. Mostly, I have learned to build strong relationships with pastors, and mutual respect reduces the surprise factor in the envelope at the end of the meetings. In fact, among the churches in which I have the joy of ministering, the years have brought nothing but trust and respect


related products only” policy and recognize the abuses by some, but my concerns go much farther. What is the goal in having the *revival/evangelistic* services? Does the church have a plan of attack? What preparations in prayer and finance have been made? What will the evangelist do all day—visit the prisons, schools, detention centers for youth, hospitals, and any other place to ease the suffering of the community? Challenge the evangelist with opportunities of ministry throughout the city and use his or her God-given talents to the max!

Keep open lines of communication concerning things uncomfortable to you and hear the evangelist’s side of the

storehouse, the church. Yet, the extension of ministries through public evangelism is a valid gift to the church and should be supported by church members’ offerings beyond their tithes and offerings to their church giving.

Some find fault with evangelists’ means of transportation. Their moneys are not invested in offices only. The ability to travel is the fundamental prerequisite for accomplishing their missions. Unless they are translated by the Holy Spirit, they will cover the cost of travel equipment on their own. And rightfully so. They don’t pay for the building the pastor preaches in either, and they should not engage in questioning the investment into the building project of the local church.

As for the crossing of denominational lines, evangelists should always be certain of the objective of their motivation. I minister in Baptist churches and served many years as a youth evangelist in the very Baptist Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. No one ever criticized it. Why? It was a popular ministry and shared the basic doctrines of the traditional church. Likewise, the Methodists, Lutherans, and many others—all having a common denominator—can accommodate evangelists who can cross those lines with extremely effective results in bringing harmony to the body of Christ at large and destroy ridiculous prejudices that have ripped open the Body for years. Recognize that cross-denominational, citywide evangelistic efforts build the Kingdom, not an empire.

The question is: Can the church be blessed too much in material blessings to be used for the kingdom of God? I don’t think so. And neither can an evangelistic ministry be too blessed. When one is blessed, all are blessed! 

Yours for the harvest,

Every Evangelist

Dave Roevers is an Assemblies of God evangelist from Fort Worth, Texas.

Evangelists often feel the reins pulled in by pastors if their ministry surpasses the more traditional lines of definition.

with negatives hardly worth mentioning. But the horror stories of some leave me wondering what went wrong.

While I know the relationships between pastors and evangelists remain positive for the most part, occasionally I am at odds over things beyond my understanding. Simple communication could stop most problems before they start. I have offended some of my dearest friends in the ministry and didn’t know it until several years had passed. Suddenly I realized I had not heard from them. When I called and asked, only then would they tell me or write it to me in a letter. Simply to turn off a relationship without explanation is undeserving of both parties.

Opposing views on materials for financial gain by the visiting evangelist is of real concern. I share the “ministry-

story. Insist that he/she hears you out and work together to resolve any confusion without delay. Never speak unkindly of another ministry if these efforts for resolution have not been attempted. This is required of both parties.

Evangelists often feel the reins pulled in by pastors if their ministry surpasses the more traditional lines of definition in denomination and support. By support, I am referring to a broader scope of financial development than love offerings. Through authoring books and developing tape and video ministries, some evangelists have created huge followings, and some have enhanced that with television ministries. Soliciting names from the congregation for mailing lists is unethical and should not be allowed. Many people will support fiery evangelists and never pay tithes to the



Together in Ministry

BY PEGGY
MUSGROVE

In one of the earliest ministerial exercises Jesus called His disciples together and “began to send them forth by two and two” (Mark 6:7). Early on, the disciples learned the strength of companionship in the proclamation of the gospel. In a similar fashion, married couples may experience the power of companionship in ministry.

For over 30 years while my husband served in district offices, I watched young couples begin their ministry together. Couples united in ministry have a unique opportunity to experience the companionship God intended for a man and woman in the beginning. Nothing quite compares to the bonding of a couple who respond to the call of God together in ministry.

It has been more than 40 years since my husband and I left Bible college to go out as a ministerial team. Looking back I realize I was a most unlikely candidate for the ministry. My earliest memories are of the “dust-bowl” days in Kansas and attending church in a country school house. Because of the depressed economy my family moved many times, which took us out of church.

***We determined we were not
in the ministry to make a name for
ourselves. We certainly were not in
the ministry to make money or
because it was an easy lifestyle.***

As a pastor’s son, my husband had a much better understanding of the ministry and all the related ramifications. From our differing backgrounds, equipped with Bible school diplomas and new wedding rings, we began our ministry together. Through the years we have learned several things about being together in ministry.

Early on, it became evident to us that

togetherness does not depend on sameness of personality. Differences are not so noticeable while you are young. Excitement about the new adventures of marriage and ministry override personality differences. But when the dullness of daily living sets in, personal differences begin to surface.

***Couples united in ministry
have a unique opportunity to
experience the companionship
God intended for a man and
woman in the beginning.***

Two people could not be much more different from each other than my husband and I in so many ways. I wake up with the sun, bouncing out of bed, feet on the floor, ready to face a new day. Not so with my beloved. He likes quiet with drawn shades in the morning.

Other differences soon appeared. I liked routine and systematic living; he liked adventure and spontaneity. We had differing expectations for involvement in the church. Even the differences of the male and female points of view sometimes put us on opposite sides of an issue.

What we learned, not without discussion, is that God could take our differences and mesh them together to strengthen us as a couple. Our togetherness did not rob us of our individuality. We had to accept our individual differences, respecting each other’s right to be different, and let God use each of us as He chose.

One of the hard lessons we had to learn was that *togetherness does not depend on being in the same place at the same time.* Any aspect of ministry is very demanding on the ministerial family. For pastors, the

demand may be for long working hours which keep him or her away from family. Itinerary may separate a missionary family just as an evangelist may be away from home for weeks at a time.

Our togetherness did not rob us of our individuality. We had to accept our individual differences, respecting each other's right to be different, and let God use each of us as He chose.

Much of my husband's ministry was from a district office which demanded travel almost every weekend, district tours two

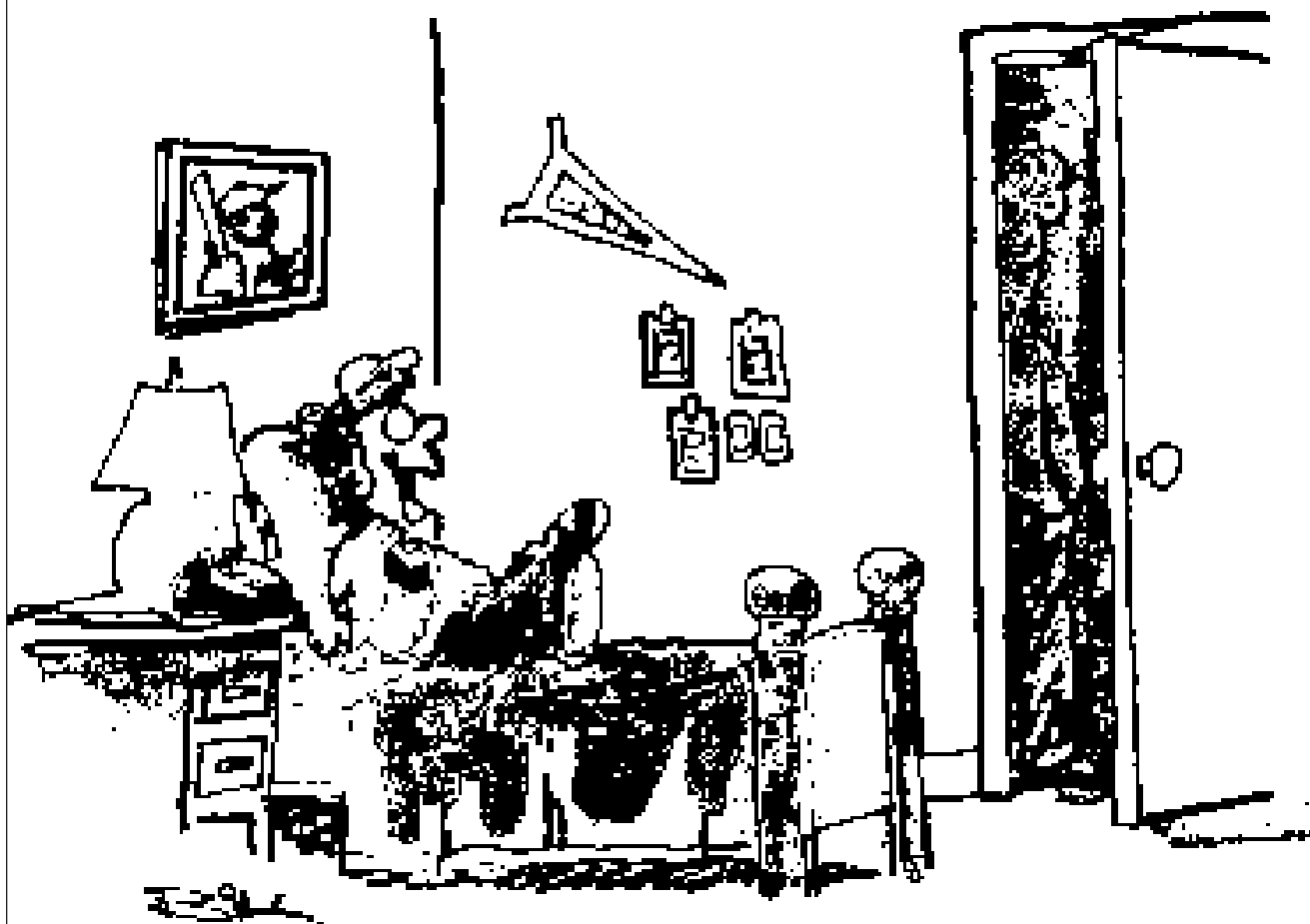
or three times a year, and a rigorous schedule of summer camps. When our children were young, our family traveled some together. As the children became older, particularly in their teen years, they needed the routine of home and involvement in a local church, so we did not travel together through those years.

I struggled with this separation until I accepted the fact family unity did not depend on being in the same place all the time. We were still a family, even though we were separated a great deal.

Father Damien, the Italian priest who worked with the lepers in Hawaii in the last century, dealt with loneliness as evidenced in his letters to his family in Italy. After commenting on this separation he

Togetherness does not depend on sameness of personality.

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"Really, Tommy. Everyone's saying that with my dad as the new pastor, we'll be 'living in a fishbowl.' Isn't that just too cool?"

***One of the hard lessons
we had to learn was that
togetherness does not depend
on being in the same place
at the same time.***

wrote, “We are united by the tender love we bear for one another.” I learned to be thankful for the “tender love” that bonded our family together, even though we were not all together as much as we would have liked. Sometimes I think separation contributed to the enjoyment and appreciation we had for each other when we were together.

Perhaps one of the most valuable lessons we have learned is that *togetherness depends on sameness of purpose*. Early in our ministry my husband helped me to understand the importance of our being united in our ministry. Because of my background of irregular church attendance I did not understand the intensity of demands upon a pastor’s wife. His background as a pastor’s son gave him insight into the necessity of a pastoral couple being united in purpose and commitment. He helped me


understand the expectations of the ministry.

Together we established purposes for our ministry. We determined we were not in the ministry to make a name for ourselves. We certainly were not in the ministry to make money or because it was an easy lifestyle. We were in the ministry for the evangelization of the lost and the education and edification of the church body. As a couple, we had to commit to those purposes together. My husband could not make it in the ministry without a mutual commitment from me. That commitment made early in marriage has carried us through more than 40 years of ministry.

***I learned to be thankful for the
“tender love” that bonded our
family together, even though we
were not all together as much
as we would have liked.***

The couple is the smallest unit of the church. Jesus said, “If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 28:19). A

ministerial couple, committed to each other and the purpose of ministry, has a unique opportunity to appropriate this promise. Their commitment will strengthen the churches and ministries they serve. Their togetherness of purpose will supersede personal differences. Whether together or apart, they know they are working for a common goal.

Many things have changed since my husband and I began our ministry. Methods we used in pastoring in our early years of ministry are totally outdated today. The new choruses we learned then are archaic now. But one thing that has not changed is the commitment a ministerial couple needs as a foundation for ministry—a commitment to each other and to the common purpose of serving together in ministry. 

Peggy Musgrove is director of the Women’s Ministries Department, Springfield, Missouri.

Does Your Insurance Policy Cover Sexual Misconduct?

BACKGROUND

Assume that your church is sued because of an incident of sexual misconduct. You immediately notify your insurance company. A few days later you receive a letter from your insurer informing you there is no coverage under your insurance policy for such a claim. How would you respond? This dilemma confronted a church in a recent case.

FACTS

A woman facing serious medical problems and surgery turned to her pastor for spiritual and emotional guidance. The pastor abused his position of trust by engaging in “grossly inappropriate sexual advances.” The couple ended up having a sexual relationship that lasted nearly 2 years.

The church and its attorney repeatedly asked the insurer to reconsider its position, but the insurer refused to do so—despite the fact that the policy did not exclude the woman’s claim.

Though both parties attempted to conceal their relationship, rumors began spreading among church members that the pastor was having an affair. When confronted by a church employee about the rumors, the couple adamantly denied them. The church made no further investigation and took no action.

The affair eventually ended, and the woman claimed she had suffered “great pain of mind and body” as a result of the pastor’s behavior. She sued her church, claiming that it was responsible for her injuries on the basis of “negligent supervision.” Specifically, she claimed the church failed to respond adequately to the rumors of sexual misconduct,

and its failure to do so caused her injuries.

THE INSURANCE COMPANY’S RESPONSE

The church immediately notified its insurer of the claim and requested a defense of the lawsuit. The church’s insurance policy provided coverage for “bodily injury” and “property damage.” The insurer responded with a letter denying any coverage. The letter read, in part:

We must advise that this policy would provide no coverage for a suit charging sexual misconduct of a pastor. You do not give a date of loss as to when the alleged misconduct took place; but the date would not be relevant. The policy your church has with our company...did not at any time provide coverage for this type of claim.... It provides no coverage for damages as a result of sexual misconduct or for your defense of a lawsuit...because of such charges.

In fact, the church’s insurance policy did not exclude coverage for sexual misconduct claims. The church and its attorney repeatedly asked the insurer to reconsider its position, but the insurer refused to do so—despite the fact that the policy did not exclude the woman’s claim.

A few years later, the woman entered into an out-of-court settlement with the church for \$300,000. However, the settlement stipulated that it would be collected only against the church’s insurance policy. The woman then sued the insurance company to collect the settlement amount.

The insurer by now conceded that the woman had suffered “bodily injury” as a result of the pastor’s conduct. It also conceded that “bodily injury” includes emotional and psychological injuries. However, for the first time the insurer claimed that the insurance policy did not cover the woman’s claim since the church had never notified it that a

BY RICHARD R.
HAMMAR

The court noted that “an insurer which denies liability on specified grounds may not later attempt to deny liability on different grounds.”

claim for “bodily injury” was being made. The insurer further insisted that the settlement was “unreasonable,” and as a result it had no duty to pay it. A court rejected both defenses and ordered the insurer to pay the full amount of the settlement.

THE COURT’S RULING

The court ruled that it was too late for the insurer to claim the church failed to notify it of a bodily injury claim. It noted that “an insurer which denies liability on specified grounds may not later attempt to deny liability on different grounds,” and then observed:

Now is a good time to review your church insurance policy to see what is covered and what is not.

[The insurer] repeatedly asserted the policy did not provide coverage for sexual misconduct claims, even when asked several times to reconsider its denial of coverage. Not until the church and [the woman] had entered into the settlement agreement...did [the insurer] advise anyone of its reliance on the alleged failure to give notice of a bodily injury claim....

In essence [the insurer] asks us to sanction the functional equivalent of a “shell game.” [The insurer] denied liability and refused to defend on the basis of a nonexistent sexual misconduct exclusion to the policy. The church, abandoned by its insurer, was required to expend sums for attorneys’ fees to settle the claims. When recovery was then sought from [the insurer] it disingenuously asserted it was relying all along upon the lack of notice of a claim for bodily injury, which lack of notice the church could have remedied had it ever been apprised of [its insurer’s] secret theory. Under these facts it would be greatly unjust and unfair to allow [the insurer] to escape liability upon the unasserted lack of notice. Having failed to apprise the church of its reliance upon the bodily injury provision when the church was in a position to correct the alleged lack of notice [the insurer cannot] raise the alleged lack of notice of a bodily injury claim as a defense to coverage or its duty to defend.

The court also rejected the insurer’s claim

that the settlement amount was unreasonable. It noted the church was potentially liable for negligent supervision, and an expert witness had testified that a jury would have reached a verdict in a range between \$25,000 and \$1.8 million. It also referred to the “increased expenses and publicity had the case gone to trial.” Under these circumstances, a \$300,000 settlement was not unreasonable.

RELEVANCE TO CHURCH TREASURERS

Consider the following:

1. *Review your insurance policy.* Now is a good time to review your church’s insurance policy to see what is covered and what is not. This case illustrates the importance of knowing whether sexual misconduct claims are covered. Be sure to pay special attention to the “exclusions” mentioned in your policy. Also note any limitations on the amount of insurance available. Some insurance policies exclude any coverage for sexual misconduct claims; some provide coverage, but only for the church (and not for the person engaging in the misconduct); and some limit the dollar amount available for such claims. This case illustrates that a policy covering “bodily injury” should provide the church with coverage for sexual misconduct claims—unless they are specifically excluded.

This case illustrates that a policy covering “bodily injury” should provide the church with coverage for sexual misconduct claims—unless they are specifically excluded.

2. *What if your insurer denies coverage?* Don’t give up. There still may be coverage, or at least a duty to defend. Ask an attorney to review your policy and provide you with an opinion regarding coverage. If the attorney concludes that coverage exists, have him or her contact the insurance company on your behalf.

3. *Settlement agreements.* Church members often are reluctant to sue their church. The woman in this case eventually entered into a settlement agreement with the church which stipulated that the settlement amount could be satisfied only out of the insurance

proceeds. Such an arrangement relieves the church of any potential liability, minimizes adverse publicity, and relieves the plaintiff of any concern about suing his or her church. It is an approach that church treasurers and other church leaders should keep in mind when facing a potential legal claim by a church member.

4. *Notifying your insurer of a loss.* This case also illustrates the importance of promptly notifying your insurer of a loss

and referring to the specific basis for coverage under your church insurance policy. *D.E.M. v. Allickson*, 555 N.W. 2d 596 (N.D. 1996). **E**

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"When I said, 'We'd be celebrating our 100th anniversary next year,' I was, of course, referring to the church."

The Religion of Mormonism

The Priesthood: Mormonism's Foundation

BY KERRY D.
MCROBERTS

Brigham Young, Joseph Smith's successor as prophet and seer of the Mormon Church, invites inquirers into the claims of Mormonism to: "Take the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-Day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test."

According to Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., on May 15, 1829, John the Baptist descended from heaven to confer the Aaronic priesthood upon himself and Oliver Cowdery.¹ At the same time, John the Baptist allegedly promised that in "due time" the apostles, John, James, and Peter, would soon cross over from the immediate presence of God and bequeath the Melchizedekian priesthood to the Mormon prophet and his scribe.

Today, as the heirs of their prophet's priestly order, the Latter-Day Saints claim exclusive possession of the Aaronic and Melchizedekian priesthoods. The significance of this to the Mormon Church cannot be underestimated:

"And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live."²

"The Melchizedek priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things."³

The possession of these two priesthoods not only extends to the Mormon Church exclusive authority to minister "in spiritual things," but the whole of the Latter-Day Saints edifice is founded upon this very claim: "All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood."⁴

HEBREWS VS. MORMON CLAIMS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints stands or falls on the basis of their exclusive claim to the Aaronic and Melchizedekian priesthoods. Does the Mormon Church legitimately (i.e., biblically) possess these two priesthoods as they claim?

Brigham Young, Joseph Smith's successor as prophet and seer of the Mormon Church, invites inquirers into the claims of Mormonism to: "Take the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-Day Saints with it, and see if it will

stand the test."⁵ Nineteen centuries before the founding of Mormonism, the divinely inspired author of the Book of Hebrews addressed the challenge of Brigham Young.

In Hebrews 7:7–10, the Scripture clearly distinguishes the superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood over the Aaronic priesthood. Why? Because Abraham, the father of Levi, paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of Salem (see Genesis 14:18–20).

Hebrews continues: "If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law" (7:11,12).⁶ The word *perfection* (Greek *teleiosis*) means "to make perfect in the moral sense,"⁷ i.e., the Aaronic priesthood was unable to provide propitiation for human sin "because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, "a change" is required in both the Aaronic priesthood and the Law (the Greek word translated *change* [*metatithēmi*] refers to "a change from one state to another—change, transformation").⁸

At the moment of Christ's sacrificial death, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). This signified the "change" or absolution of the Aaronic priesthood, for by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, all who believe now have access to God the Father (see 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). By claiming to possess the Aaronic priesthood, this sinister cult rejects the "once for all" atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord was not a descendant of Levi but rather Judah (Hebrews 7:14). And, therefore, He is our Great High Priest, not on the basis of His ancestry but on the basis of His "indestructible life" (Hebrews 7:16). Thus, He is "a priest forever, in the order (Greek, *taxis*)⁹ of

Melchizedek" (Hebrew 7:17). And because He "lives forever, he has a permanent (Greek, *aparabaton*) priesthood" (Hebrews 7:24). *Aparabaton* appears only here in the New Testament and means, "without a successor; permanent, unchangeable."¹⁰ The priesthood of Jesus Christ is nontransferable "because he always lives" (Hebrews 7:25).

The Mormon claim to the Melchizedekian priesthood is a subtle, demonically inspired (1 Timothy 4:1) denial of the bodily resurrection, ascension, and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

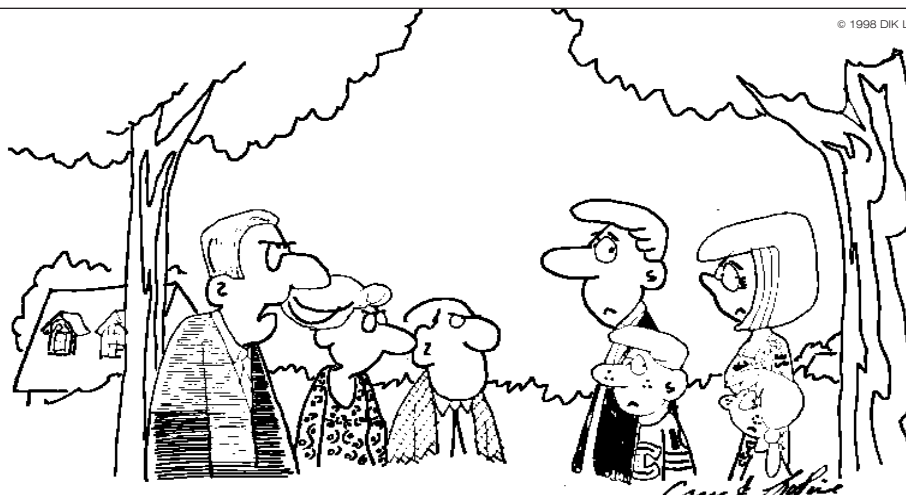
May God's forgiving grace turn Mormons from their destructive teachings to Jesus Christ who "is able to save completely (Greek, *panteles*, meaning, "forever, for all time")¹¹ those who come to God through him" (Hebrews 7:25). **E**

Kerry D. McRoberts is pastor of Kings Circle Assembly of God, Corvallis, Oregon.

ENDNOTES

1. *Doctrine and Covenants*, sections 13 and 27. The Mormon Church considers *The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price* to be inspired revelations of God equal to the Bible.
2. *Ibid.*, section 84:21,22. It is noteworthy that this "revelation" was not received until 1829, 9 years after Joseph Smith, Jr., claimed his vision of the Father and the Son as a 15-year-old boy in the spring of 1820. How was it possible for Joseph Smith to look upon the face of God and live without the priesthood?
3. *Ibid.*, section 107:8. The racist history of the Mormon Church is most evident in their historic claims that black men are to be restricted from joining the priesthoods (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 476-477). The double-minded god of the Mormon Church is continually concerned with the Mormon image. Therefore, Spencer Kimball, the then president and prophet of the Mormon Church, claimed to receive a "revelation" on June 9, 1978, that would apparently rescind previous "revelations,"—allowing for the entrance of black men into the Mormon priesthood. (See Walter Martin, *The Maze of Mormonism*, chapter 6, "Mormonism's Racism," 150, for a thoroughly documented discussion of the racism of the Mormon Church historically.)
4. *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 107:5.
5. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:46. It must be stressed that Young professed: "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call scripture," *Ibid.*, 13:95.
6. Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.
7. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 88.38.
8. *Ibid.*, 13.52.
9. Mormons attempt to point out that Jesus Christ belongs to an "order" of priests of which they are heirs through their prophet. However, the word translated *order* is better understood as "nature, quality, manner, condition, appearance," Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 804. Melchizedek mysteriously appears in Scripture as one without origins or end to his life (Genesis 14:18-20) and he is thus a fitting type of our Lord, (Hebrews 7:11) who is himself the "Alpha and Omega" (Revelation 1:8).
10. *Ibid.*, 80.
11. *Ibid.*, 608.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints stands or falls on the basis of their exclusive claim to the Aaronic and Melchizedekian priesthoods.



"Pastor, you have your favorites! You are always seen with your family!"



Prayer for Pastors

BY DON COLEY

We in the pew care about you and are concerned that you not attempt to fulfill your responsibilities alone.

Dear Pastor:

Each day, countless numbers of laypeople respond on your behalf to the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit. They pray for you and listen not only to the voice of God but listen for it. And when they hear His call, they answer.

Their prayers are as diverse as their backgrounds, but they are as unified as the One who prompts them into action. Some are energized by personal experience; the words of others are formed only in obedience to what He asks. One appeals for wisdom, another for strength or encouragement. Your health and well-being and your family's are regular petitions. The content of many prayers has meaning only in the context of spiritual language.

These prayers flow from the heart of God, but they are offered with the concern of those you serve. We in the pew care about you and are concerned that you not attempt to fulfill your responsibilities alone. Yet we recognize we have made it more difficult for you to share with us. Still, we realize the mantle of ministry is a garment that is not to be worn by the pastor or teacher alone, but it was meant for the entire Body. So we seek answers to the questions of our concern.

When the demands of ministry weigh heavily upon your shoulders, who shares your burden? When spiritual warfare is most intense, do you have capable soldiers to fight by your side? When you need a listening ear to help you work through the hard times of ministry, who sits with you as a quiet confidant, withholding judgment but generously sharing comfort and encouragement? Is there a Joshua in your fellowship to fight battles at your command? Do you have sufficient Aarons and Hurs to raise your arms with sustaining strength until the victory is complete?

There are no easy answers to these questions. It is one thing to acknowledge your need for laity to assist you and quite another to identify those who are capable of fulfilling such trust. Therefore, we pray for you that the gap between need and fulfillment will not be insurmountable.

Heavenly Father, You have called us all to Your work, but You have asked those who serve as

pastors to walk a special kind of obedience. We pray now for our pastors and for all the needs that are unique to their calling. Give them a deep assurance that what they do is worth the cost. Teach them to know what it means to rest in their work.

Send people of faith to minister to our ministers. Call us, the laity, to such a ministry. Give us a glimpse of the pastor's burden. Raise us from our sleep. Disrupt our complacency. Show us the need.

Let us experience the reality of Your presence each day. May we know this because we see Your church act as You have ordained it to act, with each member serving the others.

Cause us to act. Let us experience the joy of serving and sacrifice so that we too will one day hear You say, "Well done."

Lord, we ask You to provide great wisdom to our pastors. Help them to know who among us is worthy of their trust. Lead them to those who are safe and give safety to the sharing. Provide an Aaron and a Hur to each pastor in this Fellowship. Equip each of Your servants with people who are willing to share their own strength. Let this be as natural as Your Word describes the function of the body of Christ.

Heal the hurt in our pastors, which is caused by our sins against them. Redeem past memories when we did not rightly handle their trust, when we violated their confidence. Do not let past scars prevent them from finding assistance for their present burdens. Give discernment to our pastors, Lord, so they will know those with whom they can share, and give them wisdom to know the extent of the sharing. In each instance where they extend their trust, teach them what is appropriate and what is not, when to share and when not to, whom to trust and whom not to.

Bring down the walls of distrust that too frequently were justly built but now serve only to isolate our pastors from Your provision. Defeat our enemy's plans by causing this to happen. Knit Your Body tightly together so that it truly acts as

one. Remove any hindrance from its proper functioning.

Lord, call and send Joshuas throughout our Fellowship—men and women who prevail in battle while our pastors lead, even in those times when leadership is manifested by “sitting and resting.” Teach us Your ways, that so often seem foreign to us, and cause them to become as familiar as anything in our reality. Prepare Your people for this, both pastors and laity. Show us the vision You have of how we should work together. Give us Your mind in this matter, we pray.


**Bring down the walls of distrust
that too frequently were justly built
but now serve only to isolate our
pastors from Your provision.**

We also remember each family member of our pastors, people who have many of the same needs for a sharing and caring laity. Meet these needs, Lord. For the spouse who is struggling to cope, who has little hope of encouragement, we ask for Your provision. Restore the song. Bring into these circumstances people of genuine compassion and renew joy and meaning in the way only You can. We know Your mercies are new every morning, Lord, but sometimes it helps us to experience Your mercies through others’

friendship, and we ask You to dispatch friends—true friends—to us on these occasions.

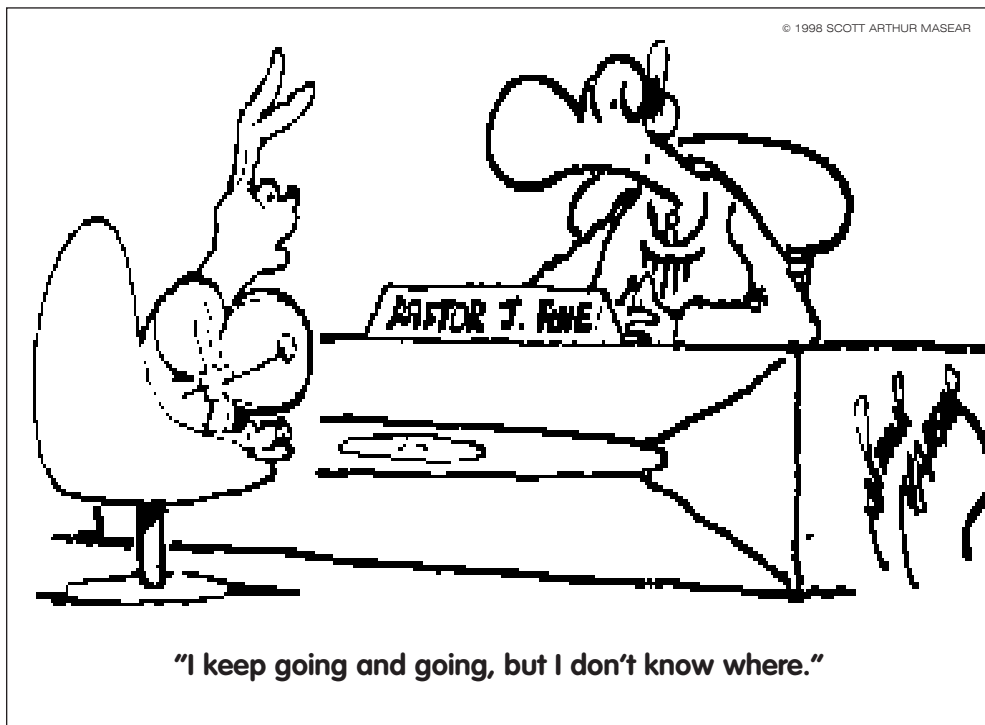
And we remember the children. Lord, provide role models for each pastor’s child or teenager, role models who confirm the reality of Your existence to them. Assist them in coming to a saving knowledge of You as Lord and Savior. Teach them, as You teach us all, the reality of the realm of the Spirit. Give to our pastors the blessing and legacy of families who know and serve You.

Father, we all stand in need of Your sustaining power. Give it generously. Let us experience the reality of Your presence each day. May we know this because we see Your church act as You have ordained it to act, with each member serving the others. Thank You again for the gift You have given to us in our pastors. Thank You for all they do. Keep them in our minds, Lord, by calling us to prayer on their behalf and to share and care for their well-being. Bless them, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Pastor, these words give such an incomplete story of the call He has given to us for you. These concerns are not just ours but His. So we agree with His prompting, and we petition Him as best we know how. May you find in His provision the answer to every need facing you and your ministry at this time. God bless you! 

*Don Coley, a layman, attends First Assembly of God,
San Diego, California.*

**We realize the mantle
of ministry is a garment
that is not to be
worn by the pastor or
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was meant for the
entire Body.**





God's Plan and Power

BY CHARLES E.
HACKETT

Once we let the Holy Spirit's power work through each of us in evangelism, we will have no competition in the arena.

American society is in an upheaval of change and uncertainty. The pace is breathtaking, and the results are heartbreaking. Bad is up, and good is down. Morality and integrity have been left in the ashes of greed and expediency. Spiritual wickedness is in high places, and it is politically incorrect to speak out—even from the pulpits—about the moral crisis today.

To think these factors do not impact your church is a fatal mistake.

What of the church? Holding onto ineffective church ministry and evangelism methods as if they were part of the sacred message is just as fatal. Presenting the message of Christ as an option rather than the only means of hope is inviting judgment and disaster.

America needs prophets who will cry out against the sins of our nation—prophets who understand everything is at stake. We must not be distracted. God is still in charge, and He can intervene and bring about another spiritual awakening.

The central truth is this: God's plan of salvation is perfect. It needs no additions or subtractions. It simply needs to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. The preached Word still brings conviction upon sinners and produces changed lives. We do not need a new gospel but more new approaches.

A generation ago we would preach the gospel in the church; the sinner would come, get saved, and begin tithing; and we would live happily ever after. Now we have a generation with little or no biblical background, who sees the traditional church as unimportant and ineffective. In a crisis they are as likely to call a psychic as a pastor.

Are these the results of too much religion and powerless preaching rather than the transforming power of God? Surveys have proved that interest in religion is definitely going down while interest in the supernatural is rising to new heights. It is time for the body of Christ—believers, not a building or

denomination—to seize the opportunity that is before us.

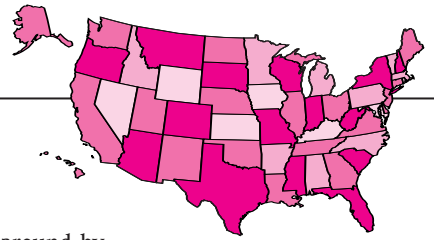
We possess the greatest power—the Holy Spirit—in the world, and face the greatest harvest in history. As we turn His power loose on the local level, God's power will begin operating once more in the pew. We are not limited to a select few well-known people who cannot possibly minister to all the needs in a local community. Once we let the Holy Spirit's power work through each of us in evangelism, we will have no competition in the arena.

Yet, being filled with and using the power of the Holy Spirit is only the first step. The next step—the most important step—is the one we take out the church door. We must take the gospel to the sinner instead of sitting in an empty church building, waiting for the sinner to come to our services.

True, a few people still come into our churches the traditional way, but if we are going to impact our society and see spiritual renewal, we must take Jesus to the marketplace where pain and suffering are rampant. Let people see that Jesus makes an internal, external, and eternal difference in the lives of those who follow Him.

I am grateful for fine buildings and programs, but these are meaningless unless people are being saved. Unless the church is making a spiritual difference in society, it is all irrelevant. Only Jesus can make that change. The central question becomes: Is anyone getting saved? Jesus died to save the lost, and His only interest in church buildings is getting people saved.

No ministry or program is a substitute for people's getting saved. A church that is not leading people to a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ has missed the whole reason for being. How can any church go for a year in a community of thousands of unsaved people and not see one person converted and added to the church body? We must begin saying this is unacceptable, and anyone who pastors a



church that does not reach the lost forfeits the right to pastor.

That is a bold statement, but listen to the truth behind it. What would we say about a doctor who never brought health to one person in a year or a car salesman who never closed one deal in a year? They would not retain their professional status. Our chief business is getting people saved and discipling them in the family of God. If we fail at this, we have failed in everything.

Our nation will never be turned around by politicians, educators, or courts of law. The only hope is the church's moving out of its comfort zone and getting back on the battlefield where the needs are prevalent. That will change society. God is not in a state of despair over America. He has a plan and the power to make that plan work. He is waiting for people like you and me to step forward and step out. **E**

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

God's plan of salvation is perfect. It needs no additions or subtractions. It simply needs to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.





THE BLIND BEGGAR OF JERICO

Mark 10:49,50

INTRODUCTION:

The blind beggar is a picture of what we would fain have every seeker of Christ to become. In his lonely darkness and deep poverty, he thought and became persuaded that Jesus was the Son of David. Though he had no sight, he made good use of his hearing. If we do not have all gifts, let us use those which we have.

MESSAGE:

1. He sought the Lord under discouragements.

- No one prompted his seeking.
- Many opposed his attempts (verse 48).
- For a while he was unheeded by the Lord himself.
- He was but a blind beggar, and this alone might have checked some pleaders. (Let our hearers imitate his dogged resolution.)

2. He received encouragement.

This came from our Lord's commanding him to be called. Several kinds of calls come to men at the bidding of our Lord Jesus:

- Universal call.* Jesus is lifted up that all who look to Him may live (John

3:14,15). The gospel is preached to every creature.

- Character call*—to those who labor and are heavy laden. Many gospel promises call the sinful, the mourning, the weary to Jesus (Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 11:28; Acts 13:26,38,39; 16:31).
- Ministerial call*—sent home by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:30).

3. Encouragement wasn't enough—he still sought Jesus.

To stop short of Jesus and healing would have been folly indeed.

- He arose. Hopefully, resolutely, he quit his begging posture. For salvation we must be on the alert and earnest.
- He cast away his garment and every hindrance. Our righteousness, our comfortable sin, our habits—we must lay aside anything, everything for Christ.
- He came to Jesus. In the darkness occasioned by his blindness, he followed the Savior's voice.
- He stated his case, "Lord, that I might receive my sight."
- He received salvation. Jesus said to him, "Thy faith hath made thee

whole." He obtained perfect eyesight, and in all respects he was in complete health.

4. Having found Jesus, he kept to Him.

- He used his sight to see his Lord.
- He became His avowed disciple (see verse 52).
- He went with Jesus on His way to the cross and to the crown.
- He remained a well-known disciple, whose father's name is given.

CONCLUSION:

This man came out of cursed Jericho. Are there not some to come from our slums and degraded districts? This man at best was a beggar, but the Lord Jesus did not disdain his company. He was a standing glory to the Lord, for everyone would know him as the blind man whose eyes had been opened.

Let seeking souls persevere under all drawbacks. Do not mind those who would keep you back. Let none hinder you from finding Christ and salvation.

Though blind, poor, and miserable, you shall yet see and smile and sing and follow Jesus.

—Charles H. Spurgeon.

Reprinted from My Sermon Notes,
Fleming Revell, Chicago

EMBARRASSED AT CHRISTMAS

1 John 4:10

INTRODUCTION:

It is embarrassing to receive a gift from someone to whom I have given nothing. God gave His best—His Son—as a gift to me; have I nothing to give in return?

MESSAGE:

1. Shall I offer Him money?

- I cannot buy His favor.
- God has no need of silver or gold; He said, "The world is mine and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 50:12).

2. Shall I offer Him my talent?

- I cannot impress the Almighty with my ability.

- He has given me all I have.

3. Shall I offer Him my time?

- My time—each heartbeat, each breath—is in His hands already (Psalm 31:15).
- How small my time must be to Him who has always existed.

4. Shall I give Him my intellect?

- God has all knowledge.
- My wisdom is foolishness in comparison (1 Corinthians 3:19).

5. Shall I offer Him my righteousness?

- "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).
- "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

6. I will offer Him my love.

- This is an acceptable gift, for God yearns for my love (Deuteronomy 10:12).
- When I give my heart, He has all. Then these other things may be used effectively in His service.

CONCLUSION:

When the Father receives the gift of my love, He will be happy, and I will not be embarrassed at Christmas.

—Bill Popejoy. Adapted from the
Pentecostal Evangel



TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE

John 13:34

INTRODUCTION:

The word *love* is used loosely today, but love is more than words. True love requires action. If we love God as He commanded (Matthew 22:37), it will be easy to love others (verse 39). The more we love God, the more we will love others. Love for God causes us to love the unlovely and our enemies.

MESSAGE:

1. Love by concern.

The word *concern* means to be considerate, attentive, involved, interested, and time giving.

- a. Concern for the backslider (Luke 15:11–32). Note how the father for gave his backslidden son (verse 20). The backslider needs forgiveness, not criticism.
- b. Concern for the burdened (Galatians

6:2). Learn to bear each other's burdens, pain, and loss.

- c. Concern for the bereaved—take care of widows and orphans.

2. Loving by care.

The word *care* means attention, helpfulness, awareness, protection, responsibility.

- a. Care for the sinner (Matthew 9:36). Jesus saw sinners and was moved with compassion. Sinners have been blinded by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4) and need care, not criticism.
- b. Care for the sorrowing (Romans 15:1). The strong Christian bears the infirmities of the weak.
- c. Care for the suffering (James 5:16). “Pray for each other.”

3. Love by compassion.

The word *compassion* means love, pity, grace, sympathy, kindness, softheartedness, forbearance, forgiveness, kind

heartedness, patience.

- a. Have a compassionate attitude (Galatians 6:1). If a person fails, be kind and patient toward him or her. (See Ephesians 4:32.)
- b. Show compassion in actions (Luke 10:33–35). The Good Samaritan cared for the man's wounds, took him to an inn, and paid his bills.
- c. Have compassionate affection (1 John 3:17). True love always helps those in need.

CONCLUSION:

It's easy to say, “I love you,” and not really show it. True love acts. The world looks for those who will show love, not merely speak about it. The more you love God, the more you will love and show concern for others.

—Croft M. Pentz,
Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

REACHING THE LOST

Luke 15:1–32

INTRODUCTION:

1. The lost are God's priority and must be ours.
 - a. Heaven rejoices when sinners repent (15:7,10).
 - b. The focal point of this passage is the lost and the urgent need to find them.
2. All three things—the sheep, the coin, and the son—had one thing in common: They were lost.
3. Three reasons why the sheep, the coin, and the son were lost.
 - a. The sheep wandered away.
 - b. Someone lost the coin.
 - c. The son was deceived by the world.
4. Three steps to reaching the lost.
 - a. Be conscious of the lost.
 - b. Care for the lost.
 - c. Be committed to the lost.

MESSAGE:

1. Be conscious of the lost.

- a. The shepherd checked for the lost sheep (15:3,4).
- b. The woman was aware the coin was lost (15:8).
- c. The father kept watching for his lost son (15:20–24).
- d. Being aware and sensitive to the lost around us takes the Holy Spirit's constant reminders.

2. Care for the lost.

- a. The shepherd cared enough for the lost sheep to find it.
 - (1) Every sheep needed to be accounted for.
 - (2) Caring for the sheep was his business.
 - (3) He did not hope the sheep would find its way back.
- b. The woman cared enough to search diligently for the lost coin.
 - (1) She was not content with the nine coins she still had.

- c. The father cared enough to watch for his lost son.

3. Be committed to the lost.

- a. The shepherd, woman, and father didn't give up.
 - (1) The shepherd searched until he found the lost sheep.
 - (2) The woman searched until she found the lost coin.
 - (3) The father watched until his son returned.
- b. Each made finding the lost a priority.

CONCLUSION:

1. Winning the lost will bring joy (Luke 15:7,10,22–24).
2. Winning the lost will bring revival to the church.
3. Soul winning will revolutionize your Christian life.

—William Douglas,
Fort Wayne, Indiana



PARDON FOR THE GREATEST SINNERS

Psalm 25:11

INTRODUCTION:

It is evident by some passages in this Psalm that it was a time of affliction and danger for David when it was penned. His distress makes him think of his sins and leads him to confess them and cry to God for pardon, as is suitable in a time of affliction. The Psalmist pleads the greatness of his sins as an argument for mercy.

MESSAGE:

1. **The necessary realization of misery and need for mercy.**
 - a. The sense of misery must precede the recognition of a need for mercy.
 - b. The need for a sense of the desperation of man's need.
2. **The necessary recognition of unworthiness.**
 - a. Men must recognize that they deserve their misery.

- b. They who come to God for mercy in a right way are not disposed to find fault with His severity.

3. The necessity of coming to God for mercy through Jesus Christ.

- a. The basis for the hope of mercy. Men must come to God for mercy in and through Jesus Christ alone. All their hope of mercy must be from the consideration of who He is, what He has done, and what He has suffered.
 - (1) The person of Christ (Acts 4:12).
 - (2) The work of Christ—His blood cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7).
- b. The reasons for the hope of mercy for the greatest sinners.
 - (1) The mercy of God is infinite.
 - (2) The satisfaction of Christ is sufficient (Acts 13:39; 1 John 1:7).
 - (3) The extent of salvation in Christ (Matthew 9:12).

- (4) The glory of grace (Romans 5:20; 1 Timothy 1:13).

- (5) The offer and promise of pardon (Isaiah 55:1; Matthew 11:28; Mark 16:15,16; John 6:37; Revelation 22:7).

CONCLUSION:

You need not be fearful of coming to God through Christ because of your sins. Therefore, if your souls are burdened and you are distressed for fear of hell, you need not bear that burden and distress any longer. If you are willing, you may freely come and unload yourselves and cast your burdens on Christ and rest in Him. Say, as the Psalmist in the text, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

—Jonathan Edwards. *Abridged from* Jonathan Edwards' Sermon Outlines

THE WISDOM OF THE WISE MEN

Matthew 2:1-12

MESSAGE:

1. **They observed**—"We have seen." (verse 2).
2. **They understood**—"for we have seen" (verse 2).

3. **They acted**—"and are come" (verse 2).
4. **They rejoiced**—"with exceeding great joy" (verse 10).
5. **They worshiped**—"fell down and worshiped" (verse 11).
6. **They gave**—"presented unto him gifts" (verse 11).

7. **They obeyed**—"being warned...they departed" (verse 12).

—Stephen J. Vaudrey,
Springfield, Missouri

TRUE COMPASSION

Mark 6:34

INTRODUCTION:

Compassion is defined as "sorrow for suffering, with the urge to help." Jesus was our great example of compassion in three areas:

MESSAGE:

1. **Eyes of Compassion**
"Jesus...saw much people."
 - a. Jesus saw the people as people who needed help with their problems (Psalm 111:4; Matthew 9:36; 15:32).
 - b. The disciples saw the people with problems (Mark 6:36).
 - c. How do we see the people?

2. Heart of Compassion

"Jesus was...moved with compassion."

- a. Jesus had the heartfelt compassion that caused Him to be moved (Mark 1:41; Matthew 14:14; 20:34).
- b. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33).
- c. We must have hearts of compassion (James 2:15,16; 1 John 3:16,17).

3. Mouth of Compassion

"[Jesus] began to teach them many things."

- a. Jesus spoke words of compassion to the fainthearted (John 7:37,38).
- b. Jesus spoke words of compassion on the cross (Luke 23:43).

- c. We must speak with compassion (1 Corinthians 13:1,2).

CONCLUSION:

Paul Harvey told a story about a lady who bought a little boy a pair of shoes. It was cold weather, and the boy had been walking the streets barefoot. After he received his gift, he ran out of the store forgetting to say thanks. But in a second he was back, and asked the lady if she was God's mother. "No," she said, "I am just one of His children." The boy replied, "I knowed ye wuz kin to Him someways."

—Glenn Shaffer



THE PERSONAL TOUCH

John 3:16,17

INTRODUCTION:

In a mechanized, computerized society, communication can be very impersonal. But when God sought to communicate with humanity, He sent His Son—a living Person—one who could bring heaven within reach.

MESSAGE:

Jesus came:

1. **To be a presence—so others may know (John 17:3).**
 - a. A visible reminder (John 1:14).
 - b. A sign pointing to deliverance (Luke 2:10–12).

- c. An opportunity to know God (John 1:18).
2. **To live an example—so others may see (John 14:6–12).**
 - a. A living message (John 12:44,45).
 - b. A challenge to darkness (John 3:19,20).
 - c. An encouragement to true believers (John 16:33).
3. **To convey a touch—so others may feel (1 John 1:1–3).**
 - a. An expression of concern (Mark 1:40–42).
 - b. A vehicle of healing (Matthew 9:27–30).
 - c. A ministry of love (Matthew 19:13–15).

CONCLUSION:

Wherever Jesus went, He touched people, bringing the reality of God's love to them where they were, as they were. God chose to send salvation with "the personal touch."

God still works the same way. As His messengers, we are to go to a lost world and convey His message through personal involvement with people's needs. While the Word of God can move through mechanical means, God still needs people, filled with His Spirit, to bring "the personal touch."

—*Roberta Bonnici,*
Chesapeake, Virginia

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL

Romans 1:1-7

INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Romans was written to the Christians at Rome. Paul called himself a servant of Jesus Christ. He wrote to show that a person who is saved may know why and may be equipped to show others.

MESSAGE:

1. **The Christ of the Gospel (Romans 1:1–6)**
Christianity is Christ—not a code, creed, culture, or church, but a Person.
 - a. Destined in His prophecy (verse 2).
 - b. Dual-natured in His person (verses 3,4).
 - (1) In His humanity He understands you; in His deity He can help you.
 - (2) In His humanity He feels your sorrow; in His deity He alleviates it.
 - (3) In His humanity He senses your problem; in His deity He solves it.
 - (4) In His humanity He wept at Lazarus' grave; in His deity He cried, "Lazarus, come forth."
 - In His humanity He bore your sin; in His deity He forgave it.
 - (5) In His humanity He knows what it is like to be you; in His deity He

- knows what you are like and accepts you.
- c. Dynamic to His people (verses 5,6).
 - (1) Power in redeeming them (verse 5).
 - (2) Purpose in using them (verse 5).
 - (3) Propagation to himself through them (verse 6).
2. **The Christians with the Gospel (Romans 1:7–13).**
 - a. Revealed within (verse 7).
 - (1) They knew the love of God—"beloved of God."
 - (2) They knew the call of God—"called to be saints."
 - (3) They knew the grace of God—"grace to you."
 - (4) They knew the peace of God—"peace from God."
 - b. Recognized without (verse 8).
 - (1) Their faith was obviously seen at home.
 - (2) Their faith was seen everywhere.
 - c. Regarded with care (verses 9–13).
 - (1) Needed prayer (verse 9).
 - (2) Needed care (verse 10).
 - (3) Needed stability (verse 11).
 - (4) Needed encouragement (verses 12,13).

3. The Charisma of the Gospel (Romans 1:14–17)

Charisma is a divine gift, the dynamic that attracts. It is revealed in:

- a. A concerned person—"I am a debtor" (verse 14).
- b. A committed person—"I am ready" (verse 14). The Coast Guard motto is *Semper Peratus*, "always prepared," and its lifeboats have resulted in the saving of many lives.
- c. A confident person (verses 16,17)—confident of the gospel's saving power for anyone, for any time, forever.

CONCLUSION:

This then is the simplicity of the gospel. Let's keep it simple, as we explain it to others. But remember, as Vance Havner says, "This doesn't mean there is nothing profound about it. There is a height and depth and length and breadth about it that shall engage our wonder throughout all eternity." That's why it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe.

—*John F. Walker*



JESUS—GOD'S ETERNAL SON

John 1:1-14

MESSAGE:

1. Jesus is the Only Begotten of the Father.

- a. Not created (John 1:1,2; Colossians 1:15-17).
- b. "One and only Son" (John 1:14, NIV).
- c. Jesus has no equal and He fully reveals the Father.

2. Jesus is the Firstborn.

- a. He is the firstborn of Mary (John 1:14; Luke 2:7).
- b. He is the firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15).

c. He is the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18).

d. He is the firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29).

3. Jesus is the Firstfruits.

- a. Of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20).
- b. Of those who will be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:23).

4. Jesus is the First and the Last.

- a. He is the complete Savior—at the beginning and at the end (Revelation 1:17).

b. He is the powerful Savior—there to help us start on the way and to finish our course (Hebrews 12:2).

c. He is the eternal Savior—there at the moment of birth and at the time of death (Hebrews 9:11-14,23-28).

CONCLUSION:

The eternal God has revealed himself through His Son Jesus. In Him, we have eternal life.

—Gary Denbow,
Columbia, Missouri

A JOSIAH HEART

2 Kings 22:1,2,8-11,19,20; 23:25

INTRODUCTION:

What brings genuine revival? Revival does not occur in a vacuum—it is a sovereign move of God but has a human element. One of the great revivals in Scripture was during Josiah's reign. Two major components of revival are suggested.

MESSAGE:

1. The role of the Word in revival.

- a. The Word of God was rediscovered (2 Kings 22:8-10).
- (1) The Word of God brought understanding.

(2) The Word of God brought conviction.

b. The Spirit of God was sought (2 Kings 22:13-20).

(1) The Spirit of God brought confirmation.

(2) The Spirit of God brought assurance.

(3) The Spirit of God brought direction.

2. A right heart brings revival.

- a. Josiah had a holy heart (2 Kings 22:2).
- b. Josiah had a repentant heart (2 Kings 22:11).

c. Josiah had a tender heart (2 Kings 22:19).

d. Josiah had a committed heart (2 Kings 23:25).

CONCLUSION:

When Evan Roberts, of the Welsh revival, was asked if God could send another revival, he said only if God could find a person with a right heart. Do you have a Josiah heart? Will you let God give you a Josiah heart?

—Mike Livengood,
Danville, Illinois

GOD'S PRESENCE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Revelation 1:17,18

INTRODUCTION:

Perhaps the worst time in John's life brought him to a decision, and he may have asked, "Will I become bitter or better as a result of this difficult time?" John "on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (verse 9).

When difficult times come your way—when you have prayed every prayer you know, applied everything you have been taught, and still feel isolated on the Isle of Patmos—Jesus will come to you. He came to John three different ways:

MESSAGE:

1. The Comforter (verse 17).

- a. "Do not be afraid."
 - (1) Jesus placed His hand on John.
 - (2) Jesus spoke comfort to John.
- b. "Fear not" is in the Bible 366 times.

2. The Conqueror (verse 18).

- a. "I was dead, and...I am alive for ever and ever!"
 - (1) Jesus came to John as conqueror of death.
 - (2) Jesus is alive for ever and ever.
- b. He is bigger than any problem we have.

3. Carrier of the keys.

- a. "I have the keys of death and Hades."

(1) If Christ has the keys, then the devil doesn't.

(2) Hell has never created a lock Christ cannot open.

b. Christ has all power and authority (Matthew 16:18; 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22).

CONCLUSION:

If you feel alone in your difficulty, let Christ come to you. He will be Comforter, Conqueror, and Carrier of any key you need. He will come to you in your darkest hour.

—Lynn Wheeler,
Fayetteville, Tennessee



THE SECRET PLACE

Psalm 91:1-16

INTRODUCTION:

There are six key words in Psalm 91:1. Two describe God: *Most High*, meaning elevation above all others; *Almighty*, meaning to supply abundantly or to His majestic strength. Two define relationship: *dwelleth*, meaning to remain, inhabit, to “make house,” sit down; *abide*, meaning to continue, dwell, stay overnight. Two declare privilege: *secret place*, meaning a cover, or private place; *shadow*, shade or defense, as a hiding place.

It is in this place that the child of God finds refuge from the pressures of life, but it is much more than this. For in the secret place the blessedness of His love and grace are imparted into the heart and soul so the believer becomes one with his God.

MESSAGE:

1. The secret place is a hiding place

(verses 2-7).

- a. Provides a peaceful retreat from public/private spiritual battles.
- b. Jesus left the multitudes to be alone.
 - (1) In the morning for prayer (Mark 1:35).
 - (2) In the evening for prayer (Mark 6:46,47).
 - (3) All night in prayer (Luke 6:12).
 - (4) In solitary communion (Luke 5:15,16).
- c. Jesus left the multitude when they sought to make him king (John 6:15).
- d. He is also our hiding place in our battles.
 - (1) God instructed David to wait until he heard “the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees” (2 Samuel 5:24, NIV).
 - (2) When the King of Syria surrounded the city, Elisha said, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (2 Kings 6:16).

- e. Benefits of the hiding place

(verses 5-13).

- (1) Security (verses 5,6).
 - (2) Safety (verses 7,10).
 - (3) Stability (verses 11,12).
 - (4) Strength (verse 13).
 - f. In the secret place you will come to know that God’s power is greater than all the combined powers of man and Satan.
- ##### 2. The secret place provides intimacy with God (verses 14,15)
- a. God’s original plan was for humanity to enjoy the benefits and blessings of fellowship with Him.
 - b. When God was going to destroy Sodom, He told His friend Abraham (Genesis 18:17).
 - c. Moses had an ongoing relationship with God during the deliverance from Egypt—“And the Lord said....” (Exodus 6-14).
 - d. In the secret place, God...
 - (1) Reveals himself and His nature.
 - Moses saw His glory (Exodus 34:29-35).
 - Isaiah saw His holiness (Isaiah 6:1-7).
 - (2) Illuminates the truth of His Word.
 - The revelations of God “are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2).
 - (3) Shows the righteousness of His ways.
 - Job met God and repented over questioning God’s sovereign ways.
 - e. In this secret place, there is produced in us...
 - (1) a right spirit.
 - (2) a mature understanding and wisdom.
 - (3) an ability to reflect God’s love

to even the unlovely.

- (4) vulnerability.
 - (5) God’s wise counsel.
 - (6) a “oneness” with the Lord.
 - f. This is a lifetime process; there are no shortcuts.
 - g. The more you know Him, the more you will desire to be like Him.
- ##### 3. The secret place confirms the promise of eternal blessing (verse 16).
- a. Colossians 3:1-14 points to the importance of the secret place. “Your life is hid in Christ with God” (verse 3).
 - (1) “Seek those things which are above.... Set your affection on things above” (verses 1,2).
 - (2) As believers, we are dead to sin (Romans 6:11,12,14).
 - (3) As believers, we are to “put off” (Colossians 3:8,9).
 - (4) As believers, we are to “put on” (Colossians 3:9,10,12,14).
 - (5) We will “appear with Him [Christ] in glory” (Colossians 3:4).
 - b. The secret place helps us realize...
 - (1) heaven and hell are real places. Only by God’s mercy and grace can we find forgiveness for sin and have the hope of heaven.
 - (2) life on earth, at its best, is incomplete and inferior to eternal life.
 - (3) all accomplishments are worthless unless they bring glory to God.
 - (4) time is brief, and our untiring energies should be fulfilling His plan.

CONCLUSION:

The first and most important desire God has for you is to meet Him in the secret place.

—H. Maurice Lednický,
Springfield, Missouri

RESULTS OF THE NEW BIRTH

John 3:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

The new birth is simply accepting Christ. We are made new in Him. He changes our lives. Look at the results of the new birth.

MESSAGE:

1. New creature (2 Corinthians 5:17).
2. New company (John 1:12, 1 John 1:3).
3. New character (Galatians 5:16).
4. New conversation (Proverbs 21:23).
5. New control (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
6. New compassion (John 13:34).

CONCLUSION:

After the new birth, allow Christ to have full control of your heart and life. -Avoid all sin, temptation, and things that may defile this new life.

—Croft M. Pentz



FAMILY FEST DAY

Over the years many children in our Super Saturday bus ministry and sidewalk Sunday school have accepted Christ as Savior. If these children were going to continue following Christ as teenagers and adults, we knew we must reach their families also.

Our Super Saturday bus ministry operates in four main government housing areas in our city. The strategy is to go on-site and build relationships.

During the summer months, we have a Family Fest day at each housing area. Prior to this special day, we saturate the area with mailings and door-to-door invitations. On the day of Family Fest, we put up a big tent. Each service begins with the children who are in our bus ministry singing songs and showing their parents and friends what they have learned. Our choir gives a miniconcert. A message is shared, and families are invited to accept Christ as their Savior. Everyone is invited to our Sunday services, and transportation is arranged. (The next step is to begin a weekly Bible study in that neighborhood for those who are interested.) The day concludes with a cookout, which provides more opportunity for building relationships with the children's families.

God is using these outreaches, and a growing number of families are joining our church.

—George H. Sawyer,
Decatur, Alabama

HELPING PEOPLE ON THE JOURNEY WITH JESUS

Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." But we were seeing people come to our altars and beginning a journey with Jesus, then abandoning that journey. While the heart of our church is evangelism, we soon realized that evangelism must be partnered with discipleship to retain new converts.

We began our discipleship program by training altar workers through an 8-week class. We then developed a series of classes for our new converts.

After praying with an individual, the altar worker fills out a form with several copies. The altar worker keeps a copy and gives the other copies to the altar worker's coordinator and the pastor of evangelism. The last copy—with a map of the church and information about our New Believers' class—is given to the individual at the altar. A copy of the booklet, *Following Jesus*, by Randy Hurst is given to each person. The altar worker is also instructed to call the individual during the week and encourage his or her attendance in the New Believers class.

Our Primary Discipleship course consists of three classes: New Believers, Growing Believers, and Achieving Believers. We produce our own curriculum for these classes. After meeting requirements at the end of a semester, students are recognized in a graduation ceremony in our main service.

In the New Believers' class, new converts learn what the Bible teaches about sin, salvation, and a Savior. We allow time for questions and strive to build relationships with these new believers. We serve coffee and doughnuts and encourage a warm, friendly atmosphere.

In the Growing Believers' class, students learn the books of the Bible, memorize several verses of Scripture, and are given a journal and instructed how to discipline their new relationship with Christ.

Our Achieving Believers' class builds on the principles of the first two classes. Students in this class will attend an outreach ministry in our city as observers and ultimately as workers.

The last step is coupling the students with mentors. We have a training class to teach mature members how to disciple

and mentor a young believer.

Jesus told His disciples first, "Come and see"; then later, "Come and be with Me." Our mentors schedule regular meeting times of discipleship, friendship, and care.

On graduation from this course, students move into our adult discipleship program and membership. Now we read through our altar forms and discover that many are still on the journey.

—James C. Grove, Agawam,
Massachusetts

CARE MINISTRY

Our church uses a simple form to keep track of the congregation. The form has two blocks for visitor information on the left and double-spaced information for regular members on the right.

Each Sunday morning after the offering is taken, the pad is passed down every row. Each member signs his or her name in the first space and writes down any prayer needs in the second space. For example, I sign my name and write down my prayer request for my unsaved family. The needs are typed out and prayed over throughout the week by our prayer ministry, ladies group, and staff.

Visitors fill in the information—names, addresses, telephone numbers, age groups, family information, and comments. Each visitor is contacted throughout the next week.

Under the assistant pastor's leadership, Care Ministry meets each Monday to review the forms. The names of our regular members who signed the form are entered into the computer, and a printout shows those who were absent. Members who have missed three or more Sundays are contacted by phone and a visit.

This simple pad gives our church the tool needed to keep track of every member and visitor.

—Richard and Suzie Eller,
Muskogee, Oklahoma



DON'T-BREAK-MY-HEART SUNDAY

This idea is designed to promote attendance on the Sunday before Valentine's Day.

Begin 3 weeks before Valentine's Sunday. Draw a large heart on red paper and write class members' names on the heart. Cut the heart into pieces and give a piece to each member present. The person who receives it signs it, then place the pieces on the poster of the heart's outline.

Leftover pieces are assigned to various class members to contact the absent persons so that on Valentine's Sunday the puzzle will be complete with all members present.

On Don't-Break-My-Heart Sunday, all classes with complete hearts are acknowledged in the main auditorium and given a box of candy as an expression of appreciation. The idea encourages students to contact every member of their Sunday school class.

—Adapted from 100 Great Growth Ideas by Neil Jackson, Jr., (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 105.
Used by permission.

SERVANT EVANGELISM PROJECTS FOR WINTER

While cold and snow may minimize servant evangelism possibilities, some projects are ideally suited for inclement conditions. Consider the following:

Hot chocolate or coffee distribution. Visit construction workers outside or in unheated buildings. For this, as for other servant evangelism projects, print up a card that explains why you are serving. One might start with, "You looked too cold to pass up...."

Snow removal. Snow blowers are great, but a regular snow shovel will do the trick. A team of three or four men can finish an average driveway and sidewalk in short order.

Desalting car washes. Ever notice the lines at a car wash after a snowstorm? You don't need to do a complete cleaning—just a quick desalting. Portable gas-powered washers are ideal, but this desalting can be done with a couple of garden hoses. With this miniwash, a car can be desalted in a few minutes.

Windshield washing. Set up a windshield wash in the corner of a retail parking lot. Post a large sign to direct customers.

Parking meter feeding. The only thing worse than getting out of your car, stepping into the snow, and having cold wind hit you in the face is enduring all of that and then getting a parking ticket.

—Steve Sjogren.

Ministries Today, January/February 1998. Strang Communications Co.
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I APPRECIATE MY SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

Four weeks before teacher appreciation day, the Sunday school director chooses a person from each class to collect comments from class members concerning why they appreciated their teachers. Each person is given a 3- by 5-inch pastel card on which to write teacher-appreciation comments. The cards are then returned and mounted, one card to the page, on black construction paper.

The pages are then placed in attractive folders. The label on the cover of each folder reads: "I appreciate my Sunday school teacher (name of teacher and date).

On teacher appreciation day, the classes present the folders to their teachers.

These presentations could be done in the class, department, main auditorium, or at a banquet.

—Adapted from 100 Great Growth Ideas by Neil Jackson, Jr., (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 143.
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TASTE OF THE NATIONS BANQUET

The final service of our weeklong missions convention features an upbeat singing group, followed by a Taste of the Nations banquet.

Using our parking lot, we set up serving tables in a rectangle and serve authentic dishes from all over the world. Our church is multicultural, so many of the dishes are the real thing. In a carnival-like atmosphere, we taste the food. Those involved also decorate the tables.

Booths are set up to represent various nations, which makes a dramatic backdrop. As the people go from table to table, you can hear, "Let's go to Haiti," or, "Hey, have you been to Italy?" Groups of chairs are positioned outside the ring of tables for convenience. Using our sidewalk Sunday school trailer, we present a program for children.

I don't know who enjoys the Taste of the Nations banquet more—the people who eat the food or those who prepare it.

—John Baschieri,
Lehigh, Florida

THE EVANGELIST—A PASTOR'S ALLY

How often we have read Ephesians 4:11, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (NIV). We need to ask, "Do we understand our role in light of this passage?"

Early in my ministry as a pastor, I sought to be all the offices Paul declared were given to separate individuals. I selfishly protected my pulpit by trying to function as an evangelist, believing I could fulfill that role and mine too. How wrong I was!

The Spirit's enlightenment corrected my view of the role and function of the evangelist. Today I know the importance and need for the evangelist's office to assist me in feeding the flock and fishing for souls.



Twice each year we invite evangelists to fill our pulpit for extended days of refreshing, Holy Spirit-charged services. Their unique styles and aggressive ministry are necessary to stir the church.

No matter how small or large your congregation, your people can become spiritually lazy or lose their first love. Gifted evangelists who minister with anointed sensitivity, boldness, and a heart for the lost can help you challenge and revive your congregation.

And let it never be said of pastors and churches that we failed to remunerate the evangelist adequately. Remember, they have families with needs and responsibilities just like you. Generous churches are usually healthy churches.

Since my attitude adjustment many years ago, evangelists have become some

of my greatest allies. Join ranks with one soon and watch God quicken your church.

—George Cope, Agawam,
Massachusetts

STORE DECORATIONS FOR CHURCH DISPLAYS

Small churches on tight budgets face the challenge of displaying their promotions with excellence. One way to enhance a church theme is to visit your local mall or department store and ask for their outdated seasonal backdrops and posters.

I used large professional photos of people's faces displayed in a clothing store to create a collage of faces on the church walls to emphasize God's call to be witnesses in our community.

For the best response, go directly to the mall administrative offices or store man-

ager. There are so many options, and most stores welcome the free disposal of these items for use in the community.

—Scott Ahrens,
Eugene, Oregon

SEND US YOUR IDEAS

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



SAILING WITH THE GREATEST CAPTAIN

Many young men sailed with the great captain, Sir Francis Drake. One man had the opportunity but declined. Through ingenuity, sweat, and hard work he grew prosperous. One day word came that Sir Francis Drake and his crew were coming into harbor. The rich man went out to the dock to greet the sailors. As the men of the sea came down the gang-plank, one by one, the rich man recognized a sailor who had been his friend when they were much younger. As the two men met, the rich man said, "Look at yourself! After all these years of sailing you don't have much, do you?"

The sailor put down his duffel bag, straightened his shoulders, and with a gleam in his eye replied, "No, sir, I haven't got much in this old world, as you say. At times we were shipwrecked, hungry, cold, and desperately afraid. However, I can say one thing you will never be able to: I have sailed with the greatest captain that ever sailed the seas!"

To the Christian who feels cheated of life and robbed of earthly prosperity: If you come to the end of your life and you don't seem to have much, take courage and shout with conviction, "Thank God, I have sailed with the greatest Captain that ever sailed the seas of time! Jesus Christ is the Captain of my salvation."

—Submitted by Guy Parrish,
Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Adapted from *Pearls From Many Seas*, 1897, Rhodes & McClure Publishing.

A BED IN MY HEART

"Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.
My heart for very joy doth leap.
My lips no more can silence keep.

I too must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradle song.
Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto man His Son hath given
While angels sing with pious mirth.
A glad New Year to all the earth."

—Martin Luther. Reprinted from Knight's
Master Book of New Illustrations;
compiled by Walter B. Knight.
1956, Eerdmans.

STARTLING CONTRASTS

This little message was discovered a few years ago in a tract:

"Jesus Christ was born in the meanest circumstances, but the air above was filled with the hallelujahs of the heavenly host. His lodging was a cattle pen, but a star drew distinguished visitants from afar to do Him homage. His birth was contrary to the laws of life. His death was contrary to the laws of death. No miracle is so inexplicable as His life and teaching. He had no cornfields or fisheries, but He could spread a table for 5,000 and have bread and fish to spare.... Three years He preached His gospel. He wrote no book, built no church, had no money back of Him. After 1,900 years, He is the one central character of human history, the perpetual theme of all preaching, the pivot around which the events of the age revolve, the only regenerator of the human race. Was it merely the son of Joseph and Mary who crossed the world's horizon 1,900 years ago? Was it merely human blood that was spilled on Calvary's hill for the redemption of sinners and which has worked such wonders in men and nations through the centuries? What thinking man can keep from exclaiming, 'My Lord and my God!'"

—Essex. Adapted from
Knight's Master Book
of New Illustrations; compiled by Walter
B. Knight. © 1956, Eerdmans.

ALL IT TAKES IS A LITTLE MOTIVATION

I love the story the late Dr. Ken McFarland delighted in telling.

It seems a gentleman worked on the 4 p.m.-to-midnight shift, and he always walked home after work. One night the moon was shining so bright he decided to take a shortcut through the cemetery, which would save him roughly a half-mile walk. No incidents were involved, so he repeated the process regularly, always following the same path. One night as he was walking his route through the cemetery, he did not realize that during the day a grave had been dug in the very center of his path. He stepped right into the grave and immediately started desperately trying to get out. His best efforts failed him; after a few minutes, he decided to relax and wait until morning when someone would help him out.

He sat down in the corner and was half asleep when a drunk stumbled into the grave. His arrival roused the shift worker. The drunk was desperately trying to climb out, clawing frantically at the sides. Our hero reached out his hand, touched the drunk on the leg, and said, "Friend, you can't get out of here"—but he did. Now that's motivation.

—Zig Ziglar. Reprinted from *Stories for the Heart*; compiled by Alice Gray.
© 1996, Vision House.

NATASHA LAZAREVA

Natasha Lazareva created a Russian Christian underground magazine, so she was sent to jail and awaited a heavy sentence.

As the Communist officials interrogated her, they showed her a picture of a young Baptist girl of movie-star beauty when she was imprisoned and another picture of her when she was released 3 years later. In the second picture she



looked like an old woman—all her beauty was gone.

Then they showed her a picture of Galina Viltchinskaya who, by age 21, had lost all her teeth and hair because of the bad food and lack of sun in jail and the slave labor camps. “This is what awaits you,” they told Lazareva, “unless you collaborate with us and denounce all your coworkers.”

To save her own physical beauty, Lazareva denounced 50 other Christians. Instead of paying the price of discipleship, she became a Judas. Nevertheless, she was sentenced to 6 years in prison.

What would you have done? Jesus said, “If anyone...does not hate...his own life—he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26, NIV).

—Roger Johansson, *Loris, South Carolina*.
Taken from *The Voice of Martyrs*,
February 1996.

PERSEVERANCE

Jean Dominique-Bauby was a 42-year-old journalist when tragedy struck his life. While driving his son to school in Paris he suffered a massive stroke. He was able to pull the car over and send his 9-year-old boy for help before he collapsed. Bauby was in a coma 3 weeks. When he regained consciousness he was unable to speak or move anything except his left eyelid.

In spite of this debilitating illness, Bauby’s memory remained intact. He allowed his keen mind, now trapped inside a nearly useless body, to “flit about like a butterfly” in a way he never had before. He eventually decided to publish his thoughts in a book. With very little ability to communicate by conventional means, he communicated by blinking repeatedly in order to dictate *The Diving Suit and the Butterfly*, a book about the experiences of a man’s

mind trapped in an oppressive body. To do this, he used a special alphabet in which the most common letters came first. It is estimated that he blinked over 200,000 times to produce the 137-page text. Sadly, Bauby died a week after the book went on sale. In spite of tragedy and hardship, he continued his life’s work until the end.

Christians are called to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1, NIV). We must not even allow tragedy to stop us from that goal.

—Chris Rainey, *Leonia, New Jersey*.
Taken from an obituary,
Bergen Record, March 1997.

KEEPING YOUR PROMISES

A 4-year-old boy wanted only a wheelbarrow for Christmas. His parents tried to persuade him to choose something else, but he insisted on a wheelbarrow.

His parents invited some relatives to their house for Christmas Eve. Their tradition was to open one gift on Christmas Eve. The boy, of course, opened his wheelbarrow. Later that night, his mother went to look for him, but he was nowhere around. His parents called the police and sent out the relatives to look for him.

In desperation the mother went down to the nearby church to pray. As she knelt at the altar, she heard a noise in the back of the church: The boy was pushing his wheelbarrow down the middle aisle. She ran toward him and saw that he had taken Baby Jesus from the nativity scene in front of the church and placed it in his wheelbarrow.

“Son, what are you doing?” she asked.

“I told Jesus that if He gave me the wheelbarrow, He’d be the first to get a ride in it,” he replied.

—As told to Todd C. Hodges,
Portsmouth, Virginia.

I MET THE STRANGEST MAN ON THE WAY TO CHURCH

He said he believed in the Bible, but he never reads it.

He said he thought well of the church, but he never attends it.

He said a man should be honest with God in money matters, but he never tithes.

He said the younger generation needs the Lord, but he won’t mentor them.

He said the church needs dedicated members, but he isn’t one.

He said the church should do more in ministering to people, but he won’t help.

He is critical of some of the workers, but he never works.

He is critical of the way the church is run, but he never participates.

He said the Lord is surely coming, but he lives as though Christ won’t return.

He says prayer will change things, but he never prays.

He was a strange man indeed.

I met the strangest man on the way to church.

—Submitted by Doug Rose,
Grand Prairie, Texas.

Reprinted from *The Sermon Builder*,
Fall 1994.

SUCCESS

Mother Teresa attended a gathering with kings, presidents, and statesmen from all over the world. They were there in their crowns, jewels, and silks, and Mother Teresa wore her sari held together by a safety pin.

One of the noblemen spoke to her of her work with the poorest of the poor in Calcutta. He asked her if she became discouraged because she saw so few successes in her ministry. Mother Teresa answered, “No, I do not become discouraged.



You see, God has not called me to a ministry of success. He has called me to a ministry of mercy."

—*Reprinted from Stories for the Heart; compiled by Alice Gray, © 1996, Vision House.*

THE SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE

Jenny Lind, the Swedish nightingale, was well known in the world of opera. Being a favorite of Queen Victoria, Jenny was in great demand and well paid. Yet at the very height of her popularity Jenny Lind canceled all obligations and disappeared from sight. A friend found her one day sitting on the sand at her seaside cottage, a Bible open on her lap. The friend demanded an explanation for her sudden disappearance.

"When every day made me pay less attention to this (she held up her Bible), what else could I do?" Jenny replied.

Jenny Lind returned to the stage but never again at such a pace or devotion to rob her of time with God. She refused to let her heart be stolen.

Is your heart locked up tight? (See Psalm 57:7.)

—*Kaye Loughridge, Cabool, Missouri. Taken from The Book of Knowledge, The Children's Encyclopedia, 1911.*

FILL SOMEONE ELSE'S CUP

When someone has made an uncommon sacrifice on your behalf, go back and express thanks. Fill his or her cup with your gratitude.

In his book, *Koop: The Memoirs of a Former Surgeon General*, Dr. C. Everett Koop recalls his youngest patient: "One day at Children's Hospital I received a phone call from a nearby hospital about a dying newborn with a diaphragmatic hernia. I drove there at breakneck speed. The elevators weren't working, so I ran up to the ninth floor, wrapped the baby in a blanket, and ran back down."

At Children's Hospital Koop placed the baby on the table, but by then the little boy was blue and lifeless. "With no time for sterile precautions, I opened up his chest and with a finger massaged his tiny heart until it began to beat. Then I finished the operation," he recalls.

About 25 years later, Koop's secretary ushered into his office a tall young man—the same person whose life Koop had saved years earlier. He had come to express his thanks, simply saying: "My father thought you'd like to meet me. You operated on me when I was 55 minutes old," the man said. Koop was so overjoyed at the man's expression of gratitude after so many years that he ran around his desk and hugged him.

—*Victor Parachin, Claremont, California. Taken from Koop: The Memoirs of a Former Surgeon General by Dr. C. Everett Koop and Allen V. Koop, Random House.*

TO QUOTE

God doesn't want our success; He wants us. He doesn't demand our achievements; he demands our obedience.

—*Charles Colson*

I charge thee, fling away ambition: by that sin fell the angels.

—*William Shakespeare*

I know of nothing which I would choose to have as the subject of my ambition for life than to be kept faithful to my God till death.

—*C.H. Spurgeon*

If our Lord's bearing our sin for us is not the gospel, I have no gospel to preach.

—*C.H. Spurgeon*

There is a living God. He has spoken in the Bible. He means what He says

and will do all He has promised.

—*J. Hudson Taylor*

Do not attempt to water Christianity down. There must be no pretense that you can have it with the supernatural left out. So far as I can see, Christianity is precisely the one religion from which the miraculous cannot be separated.

—*C. S. Lewis*

I do not believe it is necessarily true that we are worshiping God when we are making a lot of racket.

—*A.W. Tozer*

If the church goes wrong on Christ, it goes wrong on everything.

—*John R.W. Stott*

God does not give us power to imitate Him; He gives us His very self.

—*Oswald Chambers*

True grace delights in secret converse with God.

—*Jonathan Edwards*

Man can only find meaning for his existence in something outside himself.

—*Viktor Frankl*

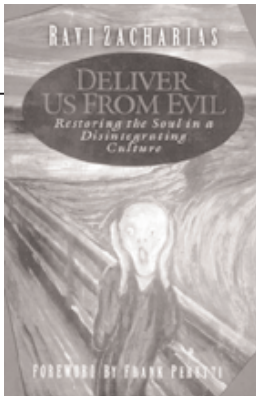
God leads us to eternal life, not by our merits but according to His mercy.

—*Augustine*

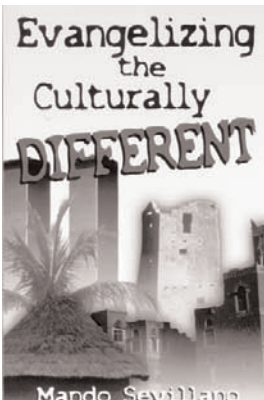
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Ravi Zacharias (Word Publishing, 256 pp., hardcover, \$19.99)



Mando Sevillano (Destiny Image, paper, \$8.99)

Deliver Us from Evil

Ravi Zacharias (Word Publishing, 256 pp., hardcover, \$19.99)

It is painful to see America's slide into secularism and even more painful to see the role ministers have played in that slide. The author says, "It was from the [clergy] that the defecation began. From their ranks came the call to congregations to abandon the notion of an authoritative Scripture and surrender the biblical perspective on life's deepest questions. This was the explosive force that would demolish any claim to Christian uniqueness." Zacharias incisively describes the ensuing failings of American culture.

We are facing an onslaught of evil ideas. According to the author, the ideas we espouse are "reshaping our culture, redefining our destiny, and are at the heart of the rampant evil that we now witness." These ideas are inflicted upon us the "wounds of wickedness."

With logic refined in the fire of public debate, Zacharias demonstrates such ideas to be vacuous. "Secularism seeks to establish a cultural base for life apart from the temple, rendering life inside the temple unworthy of serious intellectual respect. The lesson from history is that sanctity within the temple ultimately defines life outside the temple, and without the former, life becomes profane. Just as reverence is at the heart

of worship, profanity is at the heart of evil."

While he describes the evil changes in law and culture that reflect secularism's advance, he is clear in saying that a return to morality is not the answer. The answer is in a return to the authority of the Word of God from which morality will flow. His view of Scripture is the highest order.

To understand the culture and God's remedy, this book is a must read.

—Reviewed by Joseph B. Fuiten, D. Min., senior pastor, Cedar Park Assembly of God, Bothell, Washington.

Evangelizing the Culturally Different

Mando Sevillano (Destiny Image Publishers, paper, \$8.99)

The author suggests that many people do not reject the gospel as much as they reject the method of its presentation. The theme of this refreshing, book is that an evangelist must learn the culture in which he or she is working.

While rejecting syncretism, Sevillano vigorously asserts that all truth is from God, all lies are the work of the enemy, and all people, without exception, know their Creator. Consequently, where traditional stories and traditional lifeways match the biblical account, they are true. At points where they vary, the enemy has had a hand in arranging the error.

The evangelist's job is not to change people's ways and practices but to make God's truth real and to unmask the enemy's lies. Changing the lifeways of a culturally different people is the work of the Holy Spirit, not the evangelist.

Using his experience of over 20 years visiting, living among, and teaching the Hopi Indians of Arizona, Sevillano shares how Christians can move within a culturally different group and effectively present the good news of Jesus Christ.

Citing examples of his own work among the Hopi (and in other countries) and that of other evangelists in widely different cultural settings, the author points out methods that are universally effective. For example, never rail against local practices. Some cultures dress up to worship—some wear nothing at all; some sing,

(integrity)

Integrity

Stephen L. Carter (Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, 278 pp., hardcover, \$24)

Integrity is a thoroughgoing, perceptive work on a sometimes misunderstood yet highly important subject. Not only does the author

provide a sane, sound understanding of a sensitive subject but brilliantly applies it to a broad arena of human life and activity.

Carter defines integrity as requiring three steps: (1) discerning what is right and wrong; (2) acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and (3) saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong.

Showing that integrity should play a leading role in such matters as letters of reference or recommendation, advertising, tenure evaluations, and grading examination, he proceeds to higher-profile arenas such as journalism, the legal profession, marriage, sports, and politics.

The book is a must for the clergy but is profoundly valuable to anyone who may be pursuing a life of integrity.

—Reviewed by R.L. Brandt, an Assemblies of God executive presbyter, Billings, Montana.

dance, and play musical instruments wildly—others worship in a subdued fashion. Take a lesson from the apostle Paul on Mars Hill. He looked for points of contact between local practices and the gospel. The effective evangelist working among culturally different people always looks for parallels between local beliefs and practices and God's truth. This requires homework.

This book of inspired insights should be required reading for every student who intends to carry the good news to a culturally different person or group, whether Native American, Asian, African, across the globe, or next door.

—Reviewed by Armando Luca,
Sante Fe Springs, California.

Your Pastor Is an Endangered Species

H.B. London, Jr., and Neil B. Wiseman (Victor Books, 208 pp., hardcover, \$16.99)

There is a large gap between clergy and laity, one that is often made more dangerous by lack of information and understanding from both sides. Many congregations could benefit by reading this small “nuts and bolts” volume written by veterans of the ministry.

Chapter 2 sets the book on solid footing by looking into Scripture for God's agenda for the church. Neither pastor nor laity can seriously approach ministry without understanding this information. Another chapter is given to overcoming myths of leadership. However, the authors do more than spotlight the myths—they explain how to solve them. Chapter 7, “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Church Leaders,” probably justifies the reasonable cost of the book.

Overall this is a healthy and illuminating little book, though at times the authors resort to “sympathy seekers” for pastors. The apostle Paul might not have needed that emotional placebo. Readers might want to skip over those few pages and get on with the truly helpful information the book contains.

—Reviewed by Dan Betzer, senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.

The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching

Wayne McDill (Broadman, 290 pp., hardcover, \$17.99)

In this great, practical, easy-to-read book the reader will discover McDill is clear in what he says, for he is an able wordsmith.

The book divides into four sections. The first three chapters prepare you to study your preaching text. The next three describe how to transfer the biblical idea into the contemporary world of your listeners. Chapters 7 through 11 help you to organize your sermon. The last chapter (which alone is worth the price of the book) concentrates on your purpose in preaching.

McDill's clear call is for pastors to preach fewer “do-better” sermons and more “trust God” sermons. He states over 90 percent of sermons are calls to congregations to “do better”—pray better, witness better, live better, give better, etc. The author properly shows how this style discourages people. He argues and urges pastors to show how great God is and then challenge people that Christ in them can and will enable them to live for Him as they trust God.

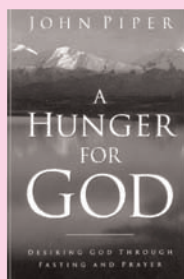
Another strong feature is McDill's use of charts. He shows the correlation between various parts of a sermon and different types of preaching. The chart on page 189 is helpful



H. B. London, Jr., and Neil B. Wiseman (Victor Books, 208 pp., hardcover, \$16.99)



Wayne McDill (Broadman, 290 pp., hardcover, \$17.99)



A Hunger for God

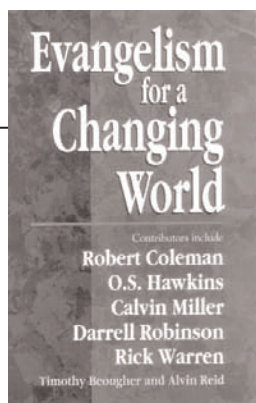
John Piper (Crossway Books, 240 pp., paper, \$10.99)

The author's biblical insights into fasting and the pursuit of God will challenge the inner core of one's faith. His ability to interpret the Scriptures gives greater depth of understanding and purpose to Jesus' admonition, “When you fast...” (Matthew 6:16, NIV). Piper accomplishes this through scriptural exegesis and church history.

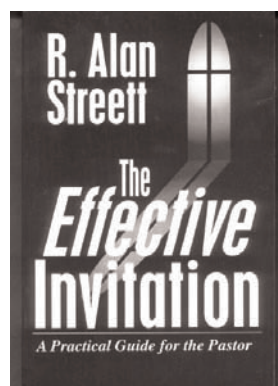
He answers the question, “Is fasting Christian?” by referring to Philippians 3:7,8. “This is the essence of Christian fasting: We ache and yearn and fast to know more and more of all that God is for us in Jesus.”

Piper, who is an inner-city pastor, brings understanding to Isaiah 58: “Fasting is meant to starve sin, not us.” He presents the material not only from theological and historical perspectives but from personal experience.

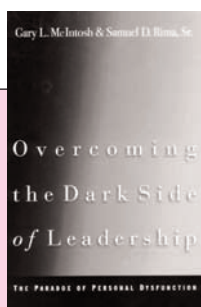
—Reviewed by Steve Donaldson, national director, ChurchCare America, Springfield, Missouri.



Timothy Beougher (*Harold Shaw*, 282 pp., paper, \$14.99)



R. Alan Streett (*Kregel*, 256 pp., paper, \$14.99)



Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership

Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, Sr. (*Baker*, 240 pp., paper, \$12.99)

Credentialed ministers are often assumed, by definition, to "have it all together." McIntosh and Rima assume just the opposite; that is, every leader suffers from some degree of dysfunction, varying from extremely mild to acute. In fact, one's personal dysfunction can often serve as the driving force behind the desire to achieve—the paradox of human leadership.

The authors, both credentialed ministers and seminary professors, label the various kinds of dysfunction as the "dark side" and cite five major disorders: compulsiveness, narcissism, paranoia, codependency, and passive-aggressiveness.

According to them, dysfunction is not the leader's greatest problem; denial is. Once discovered and acknowledged, one's "dark side" can be overcome through discipline, continued vigilance, and effort.

They cite biblical, historical, and contemporary examples of prominent leaders whose "dark side" became woefully apparent. A couple of the contemporary examples appear simplistic—even unfair. Yet the authors don't just point fingers—they are not afraid to bare their own souls.

The reader will find much helpful material but may feel the book is incomplete. The authors work primarily from a psychological model, virtually ignoring the role of spiritual warfare with the flesh (avoiding this biblical term in favor of the "dark side"). Their fine work may need to be complemented by works on spiritual warfare. Dysfunction often runs deeper than discipline alone can remedy.

—Reviewed by Paul E. Grabill, D.Min., senior pastor, State College Assembly of God, State College, Pennsylvania.

as it shows how to structure different sections of the sermon to reach the several dimensions of the human personality.

Preaching is much like watching a Polaroid® picture develop before your eyes. You begin with a dim outline and end with sharp clarity. This excellent book will help every preacher do his best work. Buy it, read it, follow it.

Wayne McDill is professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, Winston-Salem, N.C. He has logged over 35 years' experience as a pastor, denominational leader, and teacher of preaching. Beyond that, McDill is a good writer and a wise guide to better preaching.

—Reviewed by Thomas Lindberg, D.Min., senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Memphis, Tennessee.

Evangelism for a Changing World

Timothy Beougher (*Harold Shaw*, 282 pp., paper, \$14.99)

This book is a confirming word on our need to have a passion and vision for the use of the gift and ministry of the evangelist and

evangelism. It also confirms that revivalism and evangelism work together.

The book is divided into four distinct sections, each dealing with a unique area of evangelism such as contemporary approaches to ministry, the evangelistic imperative, spiritual awakening, and evangelist extraordinary. It was written by 19 different Baptist contributors, each coming from a diverse background such as college professor, pastor, evangelist, and ministry directors. You will find thoughtful analysis and insight to historical and current trends of evangelism methodologies and results.

I especially found Rick Warren's chapter invaluable and insightful concerning developing leaders within our churches to fulfill the Great Commission. Pastor Warren states, "A clear purpose not only defines what we do but defines what we don't do; what our business is, and what it isn't" (page 9).

Darrell W. Robinson's chapter on "The Priority of Personal Evangelism" is also insightful. He states emphatically, "People do what leaders lead them to do. Everything rises and falls on leadership" (pages 114,115). Certainly this is a word to us pastors and evangelists to lead by example.

Over the years great communicators have excelled in their abilities to show others how to communicate the good news. This is such a book. You will find it a welcome addition in your overall evangelism strategy planning.

—Reviewed by Dominic Galati, Jr., executive director, Harvest 2000 Outreach, Racine, Wisconsin.

The Effective Invitation: A Practical Guide for the Pastor

R. Alan Streett (*Kregel*, 256 pp., paper, \$14.99)

In *The Effective Invitation* you will discover the biblical and historical precedent for the art of public invitation and its foundation,

gospel preaching. Many preachers struggle with this very subject, and, as Streett says, "The bookshelves are bare when it comes to the all-important discussion of the public invitation."

My favorite chapter is "Billy Graham's Use of the Public Invitation." In it the author describes Graham's own feelings of inadequacy in the early years and the lessons he learned through trial and error. One of the most encouraging reminders is the role intercessory prayer plays in the invitation. For years Graham has enlisted prayer partners who seek God's face while he is preaching and pray specifically for the salvation of lost souls. Graham said, "It is not by power or might or any fancy sermon; it's wholly and completely the work of the Holy Spirit."

As a pastor, I discovered the approach I had been using was the least effective because it was too complicated for the respondent. We often use too many steps in the process and fail to prepare the listener adequately for the coming invitation.

If you ever felt like you knocked the ball out of the park with your message only to strike out in the invitation, you will find this book an effective tool to inspire and equip you in this most important work of gospel preaching.

—Reviewed by Ron J. Bontrager, senior pastor,
Lakeview Temple, Indianapolis, Indiana.

A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism

Alister McGrath (InterVarsity Press, 287 pp., cloth, \$16.99)

The academic language and tone of this volume may discourage some readers, but the significance of the content is well worth the time and

effort required to absorb the message. The book is another example of the growing respectability of evangelical scholars in the theological academic community.

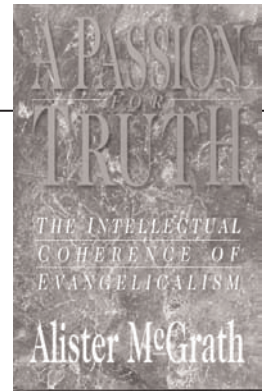
The introduction addresses the historical evangelical hostility toward academic theology, including the influence of fundamentalism and pragmatism in evangelicalism as opposed to the secularism and elitism of much academic theology. Having perceptively assessed evangelical attitudes and current trends in the religious academy, McGrath provides a powerful apologia for evangelicalism and a description of the weaknesses of liberalism, postliberalism, postmodernism, and religious pluralism. Strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches are cataloged concerning the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the authority of Scripture, the definition of truth, and the nature of salvation.

McGrath makes a strong declaration that evangelicals, rather than being only experience oriented, respect both experience and rational understanding. A few well-known names, such as Carl F.H. Henry, are seen as giving an incomplete explanation of evangelicalism in their rational defense of evangelical faith.

McGrath's contrast of biblical truth with a secular understanding of truth is poignant. Whereas the Enlightenment view of truth as reasoned correctness is still strong in liberal, modern theological circles, the Bible views truth as that which can be trusted. When Jesus announced that He is the truth, He declared that humankind can trust Him for salvation. Other such insights are throughout the book for the reader who gives attention to the arguments.

This book would be extremely valuable to college students facing some of the secular theological positions found in many academic institutions. But the Pentecostal pastor/teacher will also find valuable helps in this volume.

—Zenas J. Bicket, Ph.D., is president of Berean University of the Assemblies of God and chairman of the Doctrinal Purity Commission, Springfield, Missouri.



Alister McGrath (InterVarsity Press, 287 pp., cloth, \$16.99)

A S E R V I C E

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NEWS & RESOURCES

1999 YEAR OF THE BIBLE

The Assemblies of God Executive Presidency has accepted the recommendation of the American Bible Society to endorse and proclaim throughout our Fellowship 1999 as the Year of the Bible. Each adherent and member of the Assemblies of God is encouraged to read a minimum of 5 minutes a day from the New Testament, as part of a Bible-reading program shared by all believers throughout the United States.

The kick-off Sunday for the 1999 Year of the Bible reading program is Nov. 22, 1998. Information on how you can promote this program within your church and community can be obtained by calling the American Bible Society at 1-888-3-BIBLE5.

TEEN CHALLENGE STILL HELPS THOSE WITH ADDICTIONS

Sunday, Dec. 6, 1998, is Teen Challenge Sunday. Make it a focus of your ministry.

For 40 years Teen Challenge has been helping young people overcome their addictions to drugs and build a lasting relationship with Christ. Yet when it comes to gaining support from church bodies, many don't recognize Teen Challenge as a vital lifesaving church ministry.

Teen Challenge development assistant Benita Myers said, "Too many congregations think drug addiction isn't a part of the church, but drugs are overrunning our high schools, junior highs, and even grade schools. Whether it's a friend's child, a family member's child, or your own child, one day each of us will in some way face the painful and destructive reality of drug addiction."

However, Teen Challenge has a problem. Even now it is unable to help a large percentage of those who call for help. According to Myers, every month hundreds of calls come into Teen

Challenge International, USA, headquarters in Springfield, Mo., and every month hundreds can only be placed on waiting lists.

"Parents and grandparents hear about Teen Challenge's 70-percent success rate and call begging for help for their children and grandchildren who are held captive by drug addiction," Myers said. "We cry and pray with them, but our centers are full. We lack funds and workers to build and staff more centers."

Much like Scripture's infamous innkeeper who had no more room, Teen Challenge is forced to leave hundreds asking every month, "What am I supposed to do? I don't know where to turn."

"It's time we stop complaining about the sin and depravity in our nation and start doing what's needed to clean it up—beginning with our own lives," Myers said.

NEW CHURCH EVANGELISM INVOLVES COMMITMENT

Sunday, Feb. 7, 1999, is New Church Evangelism Day, a day to remember missionaries who are planting new churches for God's glory and a day to explain what commitment is all about.

According to Charles Hackett, New Church Evangelism director and Division of Home Missions executive director, commitment is the key to planting a church successfully.

"Commitment begins with an individual's recognizing and responding to God's call to begin a new church," Hackett said. "But for a new church to be successful, commitment must be an active part of the church body as a whole."

Hackett continued, "We, as the Assemblies of God, must continue to establish outposts for God in the inner cities of America, and it's vital that the church at large catch the vision for planting churches in the worst areas of

our nation."

With nationally appointed missionaries working at establishing inner-city churches across this country, the need is great for assistance and finance. On Sunday, Feb. 7, remember those missionaries who are giving their all to plant new churches as you challenge yourself and your congregation to be obedient to whatever God calls you to do. Please accept the challenge for yourself and your church to share in the sacrifice.

HYMNS ON CD HELPS CHURCHES WITHOUT ACCOMPANISTS

The CD series, "Gather in Praise," was created primarily for a congregation that lacks an accompanist. The seven-CD set features all-time favorite hymns and praise songs.

Each CD is split-track and professionally orchestrated. Various CD titles include "Praise to Jesus," "Faith," "Communion," and "Grace." The CDs are \$24 each, or—for a limited time—all seven CDs can be purchased for the price of six.

For more information, call 1-800-444-1144.

MUSIC MINISTRY NETWORK BENEFITS THE LOCAL CHURCH

More than just another choral club, the Music Ministry Network was created to benefit the local church's music ministry.

Quarterly mailings include the Network News newsletter, Music Ministry Network Leadership Training Series (aids in the major aspects of music ministry), Music Ministry Referral Service, and the Network Praise and Worship Cassette Series (new praise and worship choruses written by talented men and women involved in local church ministry).

The four midquarter mailings include a newsletter *Update*, updated

Music Ministry Referral List, and additional articles to add to the Leadership Training Series. All eight mailings are only \$40 a year in the U.S. (\$50 outside the U.S.).

For more information or to place an order for the Music Ministry Network, contact the Music Department at (417) 862-2781, ext. 4130.

ROYAL RANGERS INTRODUCES CHALLENGERS PROGRAM

In March the national Royal Rangers office, in conjunction with the Gospel Publishing House, introduced the Challengers program for Royal Rangers ages 15-17. The program is designed to offer older boys special-interest studies coupled with Bible-based ones dealing with youth issues. The new program maintains the out-of-doors adventure and other special-interest studies such as evangelism, computers, air, and sea. Also, new collegiate-looking attire makes the program especially appealing to older boys.

"Our goal is to offer specialized studies that will interest boys of all backgrounds. At the same time they will learn in an environment with godly role models who can instill Christian values and guidance through God's answers to today's youth issues," said Ken Hunt, national commander.

In related news, the Pioneers and Trailblazers programs were revised in 1996, and the Buckaroos and Straight Arrows programs will be totally revamped by the end of 1999.

ROYAL RANGERS PARTNERS WITH CONVOY OF HOPE

Royal Rangers recently partnered with Convoy of Hope to offer a new challenge, the Giving Plan, to local Royal Rangers groups. The program enables groups and their leaders to participate

in community and church food drives. Nonperishable foods gathered are given to needy people at Convoy of Hope outreaches within communities.

"As the boys and their leaders go door-to-door to collect food, they also spread the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Marshall Bruner, ministries coordinator in the national Royal Rangers office. "It gives them a great hands-on ministry experience."

For additional information on how to participate in the Giving Plan, contact the Royal Rangers office at 417-862-2781, ext. 4177.

1999 WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DAY THEME LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM

Feb. 28 is National Women's Ministries Day. The theme, "Women Touching the World," emphasizes the concept of serving others in coordination with the General Council 1999 theme, "Serving Our Generation." "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV) is the theme Scripture verse.

Effective Jan. 1, 1999, "Women Touching the World" also launches the new permanent identification for Women's Ministries projects nationwide. This new umbrella name covers all ministries on national, district, sectional, and local levels. The Women's Ministries title remains the same. "Women Touching the World" is designed to infuse Women's Ministries with a fresh perspective and motivate women to express their faith through ministry to the world around them.

The 1999 National Women's Ministries Day service provides the perfect opportunity to introduce congregations to the "Women Touching the World" emphasis and help uninvolved women discover ministries available to

them and for them. You may also wish to recognize the women in your church for their contributions.

Receiving an offering for the national Women's Ministries Department as part of this day's activities helps cover the significant costs of the ministries provided to some 425,000 women and girls involved in Assemblies of God Women's Ministries and Missionettes.

Information for planning a dynamic National Women's Ministries Day service is mailed to churches in December. If your church has not received the packet containing a program guide, offering envelopes, a sample bulletin cover, and other theme-related items by Jan. 15, call the Women's Ministries Department at 1-800-448-2235. If you would like a free National Women's Ministries Day program guide, check #11 on the reader service card.

CHI ALPHA CAMPUS MINISTRIES ANTICIPATES THE MILLENNIUM

Chi Alpha is calling and equipping staff and students to become lifelong global Christians.

Chi Alpha is tracking current trends, providing relevant resources, and effectively communicating in an age of post-modernity. This ministry is a vibrant force for spiritual awakening and evangelism on campus through communities of worship, prayer, fellowship, evangelism, and discipleship.

Chi Alpha is funded by stable, broad-based support through active financial development, and it is staffed by field mentors, who provide pastoral care and national program implementation and support.

The Chi Alpha ministry is characterized by integrity in relations and excellence in leadership and organization.

By establishing these new goals for 1998-2003, Chi Alpha Campus Ministries

NEWS & RESOURCES

has charted its direction in anticipation of the millennium. Its mission statement is to "communicate the vision for university missions, train campus leaders, and appoint campus missionaries, to reconcile students to Christ—transforming the university, the marketplace, and the world."

CHI ALPHA TO HOST LARGEST GATHERING EVER OF PENTECOSTAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, USA, announces plans to host The World SALT, Dec. 28, 1999, to Jan. 2, 2000, at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites in Los Angeles, Calif. The event is expected to draw 2,500 in attendance, with approximately 10 to 15 percent of the crowd coming from overseas campus ministries. The World SALT is Chi Alpha's most strategic effort in "Challenging University Students To Impact Their World," the theme for this event.

"This will be the first ever worldwide gathering of those involved in university outreach in the Assemblies of God," said Dennis Gaylor, director of Chi Alpha Campus Ministries and The World SALT. "It will be the largest gathering of Pentecostal university students in one place."

Gaylor believes this meeting will be strategic in advancing the cause of Christ in the world, particularly through impacting American and international university students who study on campuses in the United States and the host of students who will come from overseas.

The World SALT speakers will include Christopher Gornold Smith (Austria), Jeannie Mayo (USA), Claudio Friedzon (Argentina), Donnie Moore (USA), Howard Kenyon (Asia), and *Shake the Nations* video (USA).

Workshops, elective seminars, and exhibits are being finalized for the 6-day event.

PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL "WHY I SERVE" AWARD

The *Pentecostal Evangel* is honoring lay workers who are effectively serving the local church. The magazine's new feature, "Why I Serve," highlights the importance of lay workers in the Assemblies of God. It is an opportunity to publicly thank people for their service.

To honor someone in your church send us the person's name, the name and location of the church, the senior pastor's name, and an explanation why this person deserves to be honored. Do not send a photo or statement from the individual. If your nomination is selected for publication, we will contact you. Due to space limitations, we cannot print every nomination. But every worker nominated will receive a certificate suitable for framing as a recipient of the *Pentecostal Evangel* "Why I Serve" award. You may want to frame the certificate for him/her and make a presentation at a church service.

Address your nominations to *Pentecostal Evangel*, attention "Why I Serve." Only one nomination per church, please.

MEDIA MINISTRIES BUILDS PRODUCTION TRAILER

The Assemblies of God Media Ministries completed construction of its own remote video production unit which, according to general manager Jeff Nene, "puts our television studio on the road."

"This trailer gives us a high production value capability at a much lower cost to our clients," Nene said. "We are already getting calls from excited churches and ministries about producing videos and utilizing this new equipment."

The production trailer allows on-site video shoots to be more cost effective and is capable of complete on-location production of church services, concerts, and

meetings. The high-tech equipment includes up to five digital processing broadcast quality cameras and is complete with audio, graphics, and editing facilities. Recording and playback formats include Beta SP, SVHS, and 3/4-inch.

Plans are to use the trailer throughout the Midwest and beyond to help churches and ministries share the gospel through video with their communities. "We live in a sight-and-sound generation, and Media Ministries uses video production as a tool to assist ministries in reaching the lost for Christ," Nene said.

AG-NEWS REACHES GROWING AUDIENCE BY E-MAIL

Since some 1,000 Assemblies of God ministers, constituents, and other interested people began receiving news by E-mail in August 1997 from the General Council in Indianapolis, *AG-News* has been growing steadily. At press time nearly 4,000 people across the country and from as far away as Japan and Australia subscribe to this news service which focuses on Assemblies of God churches, ministries, and people.

AG-News is scheduled to expand from three news releases per week to a Monday-through-Friday service within the next several months. A typical news release offers a feature-length article on a current event within the Assemblies of God and may include news briefs from district councils, A/G colleges, or foreign fields of outreach. Among past features have been the firsthand account of a pastor's son on the Paducah, Ky., shooting; a report on growing pioneer churches in New York City; and coverage of the Ministerial Enrichment Conference.

Anyone can subscribe to *AG-News* by sending the message, "join ag-news" (without the quotation marks), as the entire body of an E-mail message

addressed to hub@ag.org. If you have problems signing on, contact Scott Harrup in the Office of Public Relations at sharrup@ag.org.

A NEW KIND OF PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE

Focus on the Family now offers topical sermon outlines and background materials to help address five key issues and events for the American church: persecution of the church, sanctity of human life, gambling, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. These resources are free upon request. Ask for the Sermon Outline Series by writing to Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO 80995-7477. Or fax your request to Focus on the Family at (719) 531-3424.

1999 HIGHLANDS BABY CALENDAR AVAILABLE FREE

The Highlands baby calendar is ideal for hanging in homes, church offices, and Sunday school classes. Its positive message will help offset the abortion and child abuse issues which dominate the news.

Each month a cute baby picture and caption will remind people of the Highlands ministry that is saving babies and ministering to young women in crisis. The calendar also notes national holidays and Benevolences events.

To order the free calendar in quantity for distribution to church families, fill out and mail the Highlands reply card insert and indicate quantity.

BENEVOLENCES INFORMATION PACKET AVAILABLE

The Benevolences Department oversees the ministries of Hillcrest Children's Home, Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home, Aged Ministers Assistance, and Disaster Relief.

For an information packet containing brochures and other material on

these ministries, check #1 on the reader service card.

FEB. 21 IS HIGHLANDS BABY BOOTEE CLUB DAY

Sunday, Feb. 21, is the annual Highlands Baby Bootee Club Day, which gives opportunity for churches to emphasize the ministry of Highlands and get involved in helping the babies. Women's Ministries, Ys, and Missionettes groups will find this program especially helpful in promoting pro-life ministry.

To receive a sample Highlands Baby Bootee Club quarterly packet and a sample bootee-shaped coin bank, check #9 on the reader service card.

BEREAN UNIVERSITY EXPANDS COURSE OFFERINGS

Berean University is committed to expanding its course offerings to accommodate ministerial students in reaching their goals. These students have set their sights on studying the ministerial courses (prescribed by the General Presbytery and required by most districts) and, at the same time, pursuing a college degree.

Since 1985, Berean has offered associate of arts and bachelor of arts degrees in ministerial disciplines. However, college-level counterparts for all 33 ministerial courses on the institute level were not available in the past. Today they are in place, which means students who apply and receive acceptance into the University's college program may order the college-level equivalents for most of the institute-level ministerial courses.

The effectiveness of the 33 ministerial courses on Berean's institute level continue to serve those who are preparing for ministry through distance education in their hometowns across America. Traditionally called Berean School of the

Bible, this popular study program still fully prepares pastors for ministry, and it satisfies the credentialing requirements of most districts. The difference is that now ministerial students who desire even deeper academic study will be served as well by the University's college program and its new ministerial courses.

A/G POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE SPRING 1999 FIRST DAY OF CLASSES AND COLLEGE DAYS

American Indian College of the A/G, Phoenix, Ariz.—Jan. xx; college days not scheduled.

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—Jan. 4; college days not scheduled.

Bethany College of the A/G, Scotts Valley, Calif.—Jan. 14; college days, Feb. 18,19.

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—Jan. 7; college days, March 25,26.

Black Hills Indian Bible College, Rapid City, S. Dak.—Jan. 4; college day, Jan. 4.

Evangel University, Springfield, Mo.—Jan. 7; college days, March 25,26.

Latin American Bible Institute, La Puente, Calif.—Jan. 18; college days, Feb. 12,13.

Latin American Bible Institute, San Antonio, Tex.—Jan. 6; college days, Jan. 19,20.

North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minn.—Jan. 19; college days March 25,26.

Northwest College of A/G, Kirkland, Wash.—Jan. 11; college days not scheduled.

Southeastern College of the A/G, Lakeland, Fla.—Jan. 7; college days not scheduled.

Southern California College, Costa Mesa, Calif.—Jan. 13; college days not scheduled.

NEWS & RESOURCES

Southwestern A/G University, Waxahachie, Tex.—Jan. 11; college days, March 25,26.

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N. Dak.—Jan. 6; college days, March 25,26 and April 15,17.

Valley Forge Christian College, Phoenixville, Pa.—Jan. 13; college days not scheduled.

Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.—Jan. 4; college days, March 8,12.

DON ARGUE NAMED PRESIDENT AT NORTHWEST

The board of directors has elected Dr. Don Argue the fifth president of Northwest College of the Assemblies of God (Kirkland, Wash.). He succeeds Dennis Davis, whose resignation was effective last summer, after he completed 8 years' leadership at the college.

Argue was most recently president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in Wheaton, Ill. The NAE is a cooperative ministry comprised of approximately 43,000 congregations nationwide that represent over 27 million people.

Before serving with the NAE, Argue was president of North Central Bible College (Minneapolis, Minn.) for 16 years. Under his leadership, NCBC enrollment jumped from 401 to over 1,500 students.

A graduate of Central Bible College, Argue earned a master's degree at Santa Clara University (Santa Clara, Calif.) and a doctorate at the University of the Pacific (Stockton, Calif.). He also did postgraduate study at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (South Hamilton, Mass.) and Regent College (Vancouver, Canada).

In previous years Argue served as dean of students and campus pastor at Evangel College (Springfield, Mo.). He was also pastor of churches in San Jose and Morgan Hill, Calif.

Northwest is one of 17 Assemblies of God endorsed postsecondary schools.

NORTH CAROLINA HOSTS LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST CONVENTION

The Charlotte Marriott Executive Park in Charlotte, N.C., is the site of the annual Light-for-the-Lost convention April 23-25, 1999. Featured speakers are Dr. George Wood, Assemblies of God general secretary; Robert Holmes, missionary to West Africa; and Benny Ferguson, LFTL coordinator. They represent a wealth of missions experience and impassioned vision for the lost.

In addition to dynamic services and business meetings, nightly banquets and women's activities are planned. Make plans today to attend. Walk-ins are welcome.

NEW LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST PROMOTIONAL VIDEO AVAILABLE

About 95 percent of all Christian literature is printed for people who have already embraced the reality of Christ. Nearly half the world's population has never rejected Jesus because they have not heard His name. Light-for-the-Lost provides frontline missionaries with gospel literature to dispel this lack of knowledge. Over \$70 million has been channeled through Light-for-the-Lost since 1953.

The new Light-for-the-Lost promotional video is a great way to learn more about this vital ministry. Available at \$10 each, this 7-minute video brings messages from Thomas Trask, general superintendent; Hal Donaldson, Convoy of Hope president; John Bueno, Division of Foreign Missions executive director; and Charles Hackett, Division of Home Missions executive director. Missions conventions, men's groups, and church services will find the video especially helpful. GPH item #728-061.

RADIANT LIFE ANNOUNCES A NEW VBS CAMPAIGN

The 1999 *Radiant Life* vacation Bible school campaign introduces an innovative new curriculum, "Time Explorers: Choices for the Future," which employs theme-based activity centers. These centers include Bible story, crafts, music, skits, recreation, and snacks. Students use an age-level rotation system to discover life-changing Bible truths.

The "Time Explorers" team will discover archaeological treasures from biblical times to signal a special story for the children. Using a special time machine, the team travels back in time each day to witness biblical events and meet the Bible characters central to that story.

The team will then transport those characters back through the time machine to reveal personal insights of the story to the children and how the Bible story relates to them today.

The daily teaching objectives will: challenge and motivate the children; encourage them to receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior; tell them how Jesus' love reaches out to every person and how special each child is; help them recognize Christ is their strength and refuge; teach them that Jesus is the provider of their needs; encourage them to take the message of Jesus to their friends and family.

Be the light in your community this summer and use *Radiant Life's* "Time Explorers" VBS to bring children to a right relationship with Christ. VBS can be the most effective evangelistic tool to reach children for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contact your *Radiant Life* distributor today or call 1-800-641-4310 for more information.

“WE BUILD STUDENTS” YOUTH BROCHURE AVAILABLE

What should students look like after they have graduated from youth ministry? Do they automatically become mature disciples by sitting in your pews? “We Build Students,” a new brochure from the Youth Department, maps out a four-part strategy to assist in discipling students. It features resources to help get students from point A to point B. “We Build Students,” item #731-700, is free and available by calling 1-800-641-4310.

SPEED-THE-LIGHT GOALS DUE IN DECEMBER

Become involved in giving to Speed-the-Light. Pay year-end goals by Dec. 31, 1998, to help reach beyond the \$9.2 million given in 1997. Only offerings received in the national office by Dec. 31 can receive 1998 giving credit.

NEW HUMAN VIDEO, VOL. 1, HELPS FINE ARTS TRAINING

This inspirational and educational drama training video was developed to teach the beginner and stretch the imagination of the most advanced human video artist. Excellent resource for training Fine Arts Festival drama participants or students ministering in AIM outreaches. This \$24.95 video is available by calling 1-800-641-4310 and requesting item #731-408.

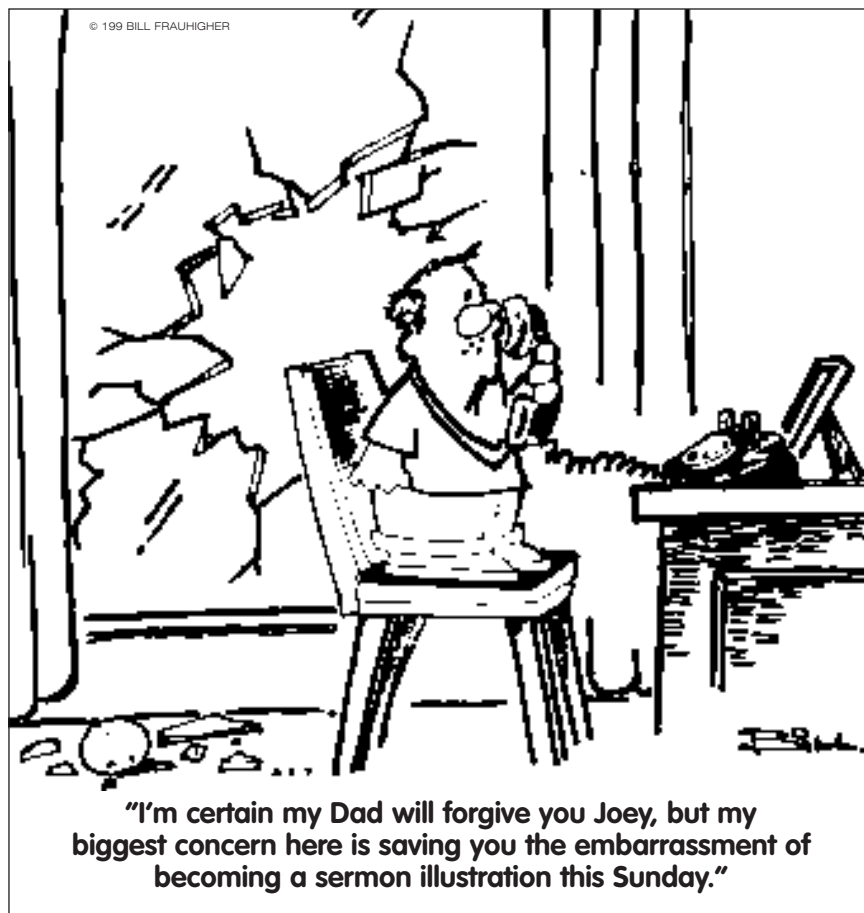
NEW AIM OUTREACH LEADERS MANUALS AVAILABLE

Two new Ambassadors in Mission manuals will help any leader who is considering an AIM trip stateside or overseas. They include practical principles and plans to train and equip a youth leader for an effective AIM outreach. The *Overseas AIM Supervisors Training Manual*, item #732-010, and the *Stateside AIM Supervisors Training*

Manual, item #732-011, are \$19.95 each and can be ordered by calling 1-800-641-4310.

1998-99 SPEED-THE-LIGHT THEME VIDEO, YOUR TURN, AVAILABLE FROM YOUTH DEPARTMENT

Dotting the landscape of history are the powerful testimonies of missionaries such as Lillian Trasher, Mark Buntain, and J.W. Tucker. Their testimonies are strong, but one fact binds them together—they're gone. *Your Turn* is a high-impact, 5-minute video portrayal of their lives and a plea for today's student generation to take their turn in reaching the world for Christ. *Your Turn* costs \$10 and can be ordered by calling 1-800-641-4310 and requesting item #731-650.



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In Closing

BY CHARLES T. CRABTREE

This edition of *Enrichment* provides information, biblical perspectives, and practical guidelines concerning the office of the evangelist. The evangelist is an important ministry gift to the church and demands a thoughtful, deliberate response from all those in spiritual leadership.

Without question, the evangelist is a divine provision for the true church of Jesus Christ. It is not the prerogative of those responsible for the church to ignore or in any way detract from the office of the evangelist. To the contrary, the evangelist is a powerful ally and deserves a prominent place of ministry in the church.

In recent years the evangelist in the Assemblies of God has been taking a growing role in the powerful revival we are seeing across this nation. As the church is restored to strong spiritual vitality, the burden for lost souls is multiplied. In God's wisdom the evangelist has been given to the church to respond to this burden.

All the ministries of the church, if they are spiritually effective, will "do the work of the evangelist," but that assignment is not a substitute for the calling of the evangelist. All astute pastors are quick to recognize they are to "do the work of a teacher" but cannot do all of the teaching. The same is true of evangelism. The pastor needs the help of the evangelist to fulfill the ministry of the church.

God is going to use the evangelist in America as never before. Our society has become increasingly pagan. A new unbelief has produced a new kind of unbeliever: an unbeliever who no longer

accepts Judeo-Christian philosophy as a moral foundation; an unbeliever who no longer respects the Bible or the church; an unbeliever who has been taught to tolerate everything and reject all absolutes. That is the world in which the church is now living.

In spite of the heathenism and hedonism of the American culture, we are called as believers to love the people and reach them with the gospel. In other words, there is a world to which the church is responsible outside the church.


It would be a temptation for many to circle the wagons and stay within the comfort zone of church buildings and church relationships, but the Great Commission to go to all the world and make disciples out of a population of spiritual heathens remains a divine directive no one who loves God can ignore.

The devil would like nothing better than to bring a spirit of unbelief and discouragement to pastors and other spiritual leaders. As the accuser, he delights in pointing a finger to past failure and ineffectiveness. This tactic is true in the area of evangelism. Of course, the church has not done its best in reaching the lost. Every leader can fall into the trap of living in remorse for what has not been done.

In addition to making a case for past failure, the enemy paints a picture of hopelessness for all who seek to fulfill the Great Commission. He seeks to paint the word *impossible* over the task. Thank God, we are not bound by yesterday's failures or defeated by difficult challenges. The Lord of the harvest is still building His church.

Let us not allow ourselves to become

overwhelmed with the responsibility of reaching a lost world but accept the responsibility with excitement and faith. We have the answer for this lost world. God has gifted us and others to fulfill His purpose through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we enter the last great days of the Decade of Harvest and Harvest 2000, it is incumbent upon all of us to maintain a sense of urgency concerning the lost but to take comfort that we are not alone. The Lord of the Church has no backup plan for failure. He is building His church in a cooperative enterprise that includes all the ministry gifts, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 

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



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