

# enrichment

WINTER 2001

Capturing the Heart of  
Millennial Youth  
JEANNE MAYO, JOSH  
MCDOWELL, AND RON LUCE  
8

How To Kill a Youth Ministry  
(For Senior Pastors Only)  
EDDIE V. RENTZ  
16

The Road Map of Mentoring:  
How To Give Directions To  
Younger Staff  
DAN M. REILAND  
20

A Pastor-Driven Youth  
Ministry  
RON W. HEITMAN  
24

Called to a Cutting-Edge  
Leadership Strategy  
JEFF P. KENNEDY  
30

Changing the Tags  
JEANNE MAYO  
34

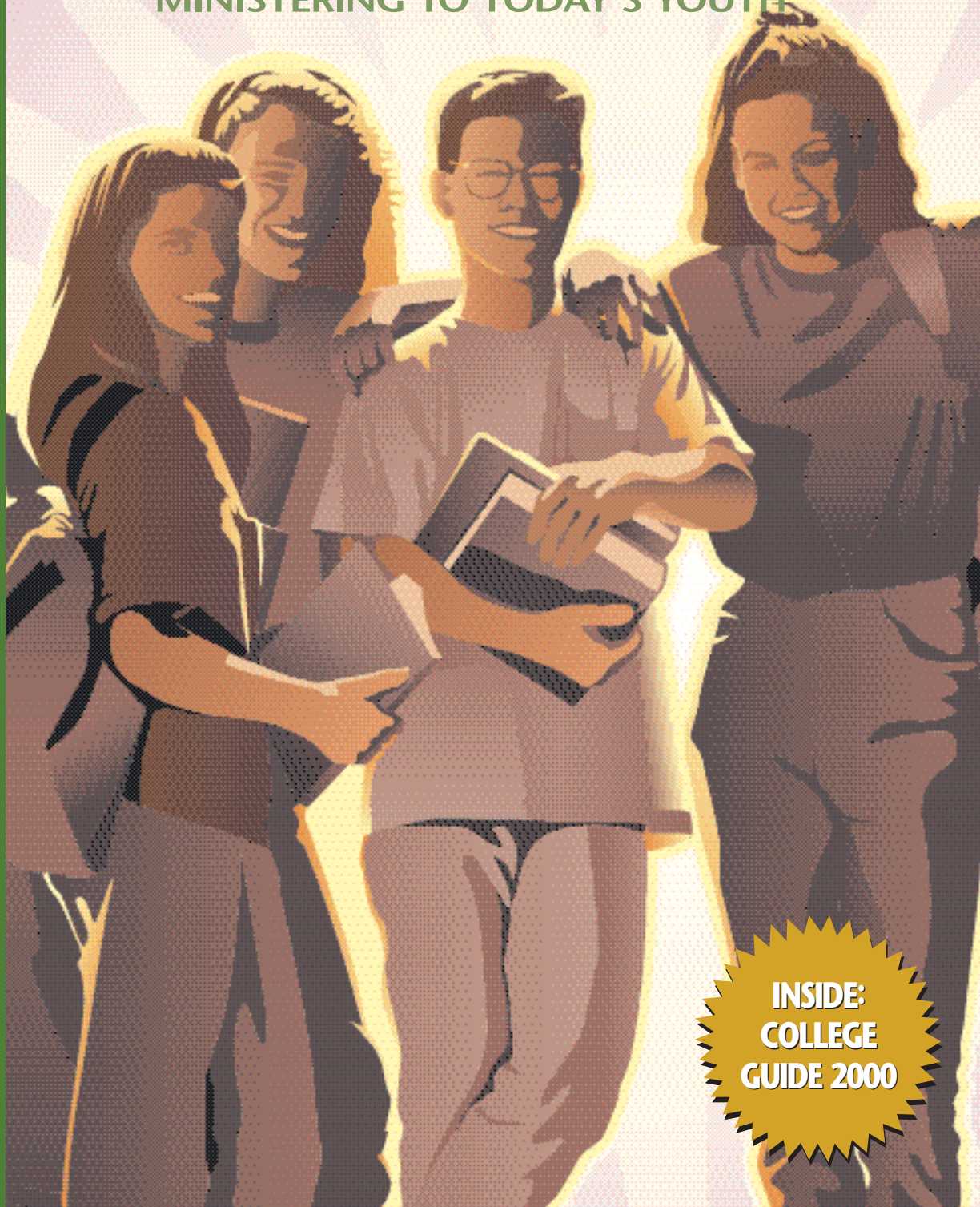
Adult Leaders—The  
Missing Link  
BRET L. ALLEN  
38

Students Reaching Students  
For Christ  
TOM BACHMAN, DAVE  
MEWBOURNE, AND  
STEVE PULIS  
44

Urban Youth Ministry: Long-  
Term Invasions Versus Drive-  
by Outreaches  
KEVIN RAMSBY  
48

## Youth Ministries

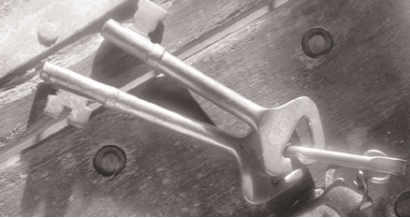
MINISTERING TO TODAY'S YOUTH



INSIDE:  
COLLEGE  
GUIDE 2000







# ministry matters

BY THOMAS E. TRASK



## This Generation May Be the One That Finishes the Task.

**T**ragedy invaded a Fort Lauderdale, Florida, household when two boys found their 12-year-old brother hanging from a tree in the yard. Few wondered what pushed the young man over the edge. He had a weight problem and didn't want to attend school because of his fear of ridicule. He had told family members that he was anxious about the teasing that might come from other children.<sup>1</sup>

One of the loneliest groups in society is teenagers. But they are also filled with energy, dreams, and promise. Just shy of adulthood, they sometimes have the mind-set of children. Yet they are the leaders, thinkers, and parents of the next generation. They have concerns that are similar to their parents'. They also want to grow as Christians and mature in relationships with people. The church that recognizes the tremendous potential of its young people and implements ways to reach them for Christ will greatly affect its community.

Peer pressure among youth is the number one pressure in their lives. The pressures young people face today provide an opportunity for the church. Teenagers are looking for meaning, relationships, and answers. Young people also want a cause to believe in; and once they find it, they are committed to it.

Statistics indicate that the most receptive time for a person to come to Christ is as a child or young person. We, in leadership, need to pour a high percentage of energy into developing a strategy for reaching the youth of our communities.

George Barna states that a large majority of people accept Jesus Christ as Savior before they reach the age of 18. Children and adolescents are most impacted evangelistically by family members, peers, and their youth group (Sunday school, midweek faith-based youth activities). His research group also found that between the ages of 18 and 24, a very large percentage of young people who had regularly attended church dropped out of church.<sup>2</sup>

### In 1999, Assemblies of God young people gave over \$12 million to Speed the Light.

As we develop a strategy to reach young people, we need to consider several ideas:

- Refocus teen ministries from an evangelistic thrust to a discipleship emphasis.
- Prepare parents for family-based evangelism.
- Invest greater resources for child and adolescent ministry.
- Implement more effective evangelistic strategies among teenagers.
- Encourage and equip our young people to share their faith with peers.<sup>3</sup>

Youth are looking for a cause that makes a difference. This is evident in our young people's response to the needs of our missionaries. In 1999, Assemblies of God young people gave over \$12 million to Speed the Light. They participated in 30 national Ambassadors in Mission trips and over 300 other AIM missions programs. Our

youth have pledged more than \$20 million to Speed the Light in 2000.

Some adults are discouraged about this younger generation. They think the Xers and the New Millennials are the most difficult people to reach for Christ. Others have even given up on the youth of today. But I encourage you to understand the questions they are asking and not be afraid to address their needs.

This generation of young people may be the ones who will finish the

task. They could be ones who will keep a clear focus on what is real and what is phony. Their energy, determination, and passion can be tapped for the greatest cause there is—that of reaching people for Jesus Christ. **E**

*Thomas E. Trask is general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.*

#### E N D N O T E S

1. *Chicago Tribune*, 27 August 1996.
2. George Barna, *News Release*, Barna Research Group, Ltd., November 15, 1999.
3. *Ibid.*

**Note from the superintendent:** *Solemn Assembly 2001 is a gathering of Pentecostals from many denominations that will promote fellowship, unity, and reconciliation. This meeting will be held March 26-28, 2001, in Atlanta, Ga. See the insert in this issue of Enrichment. If possible, please plan to attend.*



### theme articles



16

#### **6 ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT—MINISTERING TO TODAY'S YOUTH**

*Interview with Thomas E. Trask*

Some heads-up advice for senior pastors and the youth pastors who serve with them.

#### **8 CAPTURING THE HEART OF MILLENNIAL YOUTH**

*Interview with Jeanne Mayo, Josh McDowell, and Ron Luce*

Even amid a hybrid of millennial teens, there still emerges a committed group of young people who are keeping bright the hope of tomorrow's church.

#### **16 HOW TO KILL A YOUTH MINISTRY (FOR SENIOR PASTORS ONLY)**

*By Eddie V. Rentz*

Pastor, are you hindering or empowering your youth leaders?

#### **20 THE ROAD MAP OF MENTORING: HOW TO GIVE DIRECTIONS TO YOUNGER STAFF**

*By Dan M. Reiland*

Seven principles of mentoring that will help you shape the lives of your staff for years to come.

#### **24 A PASTOR-DRIVEN YOUTH MINISTRY—BECOMING A HERO TO THE YOUTH OF YOUR CHURCH**

*By Ron W. Heitman*

Youth ministry today must be pastor driven not merely youth-leader driven.

#### **30 CALLED TO A CUTTING-EDGE LEADERSHIP STRATEGY**

*By Jeff P. Kennedy*

An effective youth ministry begins with a well-thought-out strategy. Here is one strategy that every youth pastor needs to implement.

#### **34 CHANGING THE TAGS**

*By Jeanne Mayo*

Four relationship-building strategies that will change your youth ministry forever.

#### **38 ADULT LEADERS—THE MISSING LINK**

*By Bret L. Allen*

Helping your adult leaders develop a heart to minister.

#### **44 STUDENTS REACHING STUDENTS FOR CHRIST**

*Interview with Tom Bachman, Dave Mewbourne, Steve Pulis*

Three nationally appointed Youth Alive missionaries discuss campus missions and how teens are impacting their campuses for Christ.

#### **48 URBAN YOUTH MINISTRY: LONG-TERM INVASIONS VERSUS DRIVE-BY OUTREACHES**

*By Kevin Ramsby*

Eight key principles to maximize your long-term effectiveness in urban youth ministry.

#### **52 WHAT'S A WOMAN YOUTH PASTOR TO DO?**

*Interview with Brandi C. Dorsett*

How being a woman in ministry in a male-dominated profession has impacted one youth pastor's life.

#### **56 SPEED THE LIGHT: A WORTHWHILE IDEA**

*By Tom W. Greene*

The greatest aspect of this worthwhile idea may not be what it provides for the missionaries, but for the students themselves.

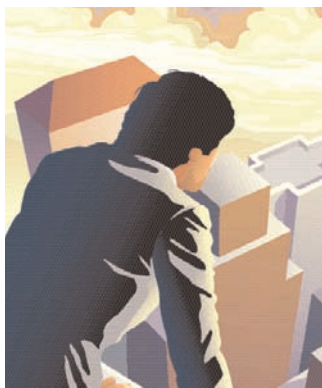
#### **60 AIM—MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

*By Mark F. McGrath*

Is there a future missionary sitting in your youth group? How AIM exposes young people to the reality of the world around them.



24



48



## features

- 106 PASTORAL LONGEVITY**  
By James K. Bridges  
The lack of pastoral longevity in the early days of the Fellowship may have been due to the major emphasis on revival with lesser emphasis on conserving the results.
- 112 SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SERIES (PART 2) CHALLENGES TO SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**  
Interview with Ron F. McManus  
In this second of three interviews, the president of EQUIP Ministries discusses some of the challenges of spiritual leadership.
- 118 PRAYER CHANGES EVERYTHING**  
By Donald R. Spradling  
The paradigm on prayer in Luke 9 reveals three things about prayer that will change your life.
- 124 THE EQUATION OF PENTECOST**  
By Randy L. Valimont  
What is the formula for growing a Pentecostal church? Here is the story of how one church in Griffin, Georgia, solved the equation.
- 128 THE COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM: FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMAND**  
Interview with Thomas E. Trask and Randy Hurst  
Two leaders discuss how the newly formed Commission on Evangelism will assist local churches in fulfilling the Great Command.

## editorials

- 1 MINISTRY MATTERS**  
By Thomas E. Trask
- 183 IN CLOSING**  
By Eddie V. Rentz

## columns

- 132 WORD STUDY**  
**Youth That Are Choice**  
By Stanley M. Horton
- 134 WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH**  
**How To Bridge the Gap of Worship Between Generations**  
By Brenda A. Rasmussen
- 136 WE BUILD PEOPLE**  
**Christian Education and Millennial Teens—A Case for Beefing Up Your Teaching Ministry**  
By Carey B. Huffman

- 138 FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY**  
**The Pastor's Wife and Her Role in Ministry**  
By Jana Jones
- 140 MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY**  
**How To Destroy a Christian**  
By Scotty Gibbons
- 142 COUNSELORS CORNER**  
**Working Through Loss: The Nature of Grief and the Tasks of Mourning**  
By Fred T. Darbonne
- 144 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**  
**Cybersex and the Church**  
By Alan W. Aram
- 148 FINANCIAL CONCEPTS**  
**Marketplace Mania**  
By Randall K. Barton
- 150 FAMILY MATTERS**  
**A Winning Pace: How To Balance Family Life With Ministry Demands**  
By Phil J. Rasmussen
- 152 COLLEGE CORNER**  
**Spiritual Formation**  
By Wayne E. Kraiss
- 154 FOCUS ON AMERICA**  
**Encouraging Our Youth To Serve God**  
By Charles E. Hackett

## PLUS

- 65 College Guide 2000**

## departments

- 156 SERMON SEEDS**
- 160 MINISTRY IDEAS**
- 165 ILLUSTRATE IT**
- 168 BOOK REVIEWS**
- 172 NEWS & RESOURCES**
- 182 WITH CHRIST**

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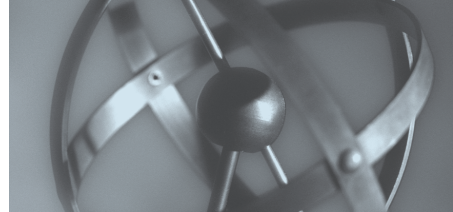






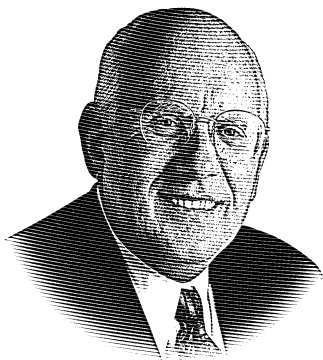
# interview

W I T H T H O M A S E . T R A S K



## ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT— Ministering to Today's Youth

**Young people today are not interested in a gospel of compromise. They're bold, courageous, and they will go after the devil with all the forces they have.**



*Ask the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God how he feels about his church's youth, and you will get one passionate answer. As well, his passion and commitment to those called to lead the youth of this church are no less. Enrichment's executive editor, Wayde I. Goodall, visited with Thomas E. Trask to discuss this issue's theme—youth ministries.*

### WHY IS YOUTH MINISTRY CRITICAL FOR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST?

TRASK: The youth of our church are not only the church of tomorrow, they are the church of today. It pays dividends to invest in youth. Youth today are as passionate, or more so, than any time in the history of the Assemblies of God. They are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, to their testimony, and to their church and its youth ministry. Our youth are a wonderful asset. We must invest our time, energy, and resources in the youth of the Assemblies of God.

### WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE USE OF CONTEMPORARY

### METHODS TO REACH THE YOUTH OF AMERICA?

TRASK: I remember when people from the Jesus Movement—wearing their tank tops, sandals, and shorts—began pouring into our churches. The churches that said, "These people don't fit our mold and style" missed a tremendous opportunity for evangelism and discipleship. Churches that welcomed the Jesus people had the joy of seeing a great harvest. Today, many of these former Jesus people are adults in our churches, and some are even pastors.

It isn't a matter of style; it's the content. We don't compromise the message—that is sacred. But methods are not sacred. Churches need to make adjustments—as long as they don't water down the gospel—to reach young people. Young people today are not interested in a gospel of compromise. They're bold, courageous, and they will go after the devil with all the forces they have.

### WHAT ABOUT SMALLER CHURCHES THAT CANNOT AFFORD A YOUTH PASTOR?

TRASK: I have pastored small and large



churches. A pastor can use parents who have teenagers or those with a burden for youth to work with the youth group. A pastor can help laypeople develop into qualified leaders by training and mentoring them. In one church I formed a council of adults with a burden for youth. They initiated a youth program and did a great job.

### **HOW DO YOU TRANSITION FROM LEADERSHIP BY LAY LEADERS TO YOUTH PASTOR?**

**TRASK:** As a youth group grows, it will exert more and more demand on a layperson's time. Today's youth are relational; they want to connect. If a layperson doesn't have the time to give to the youth, a youth pastor needs to be hired. The laity who have given leadership can form a support group for the new youth pastor. This will help them not feel ostracized because they haven't been taken out of the youth ministry. They are just being used in a different way.

### **WHAT MAKES FOR A STRONG YOUTH PASTOR-SENIOR PASTOR RELATIONSHIP?**

**TRASK:** First, youth pastors must be loyal to their senior pastors. If a youth pastor can't give his\* loyalty, he has a responsibility to make a change. He can't undermine the senior pastor and lead the youth, because the youth will pick up that spirit. Then the youth pastor is responsible for sowing seeds of disloyalty, and that must not happen in the kingdom of God.

Second, a senior pastor needs to communicate with his staff. They need to know his heart, vision, and concerns. Sometimes frustrating situations develop because there is a lack of communication. Communication keeps the youth pastor from riding off into the wind, doing his own thing.

Also, the youth pastor shouldn't be spending money and making plans without bringing the senior pastor into the planning. The senior pastor must know what's going on with the youth. The youth pastor needs to have the

pastor's blessing and approval. Many times senior pastors would be supportive if they were brought into the initial planning phase when ideas can still be tweaked. When they're left out of the loop, senior pastors are put on the spot because they are brought into the picture after the fact. Youth pastors need the counsel and input from their senior pastors.

### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SENIOR PASTORS ON MENTORING YOUNGER STAFF MEMBERS?**

**TRASK:** Some youth pastors have just graduated from Bible college. They are young, lack experience, and need mentoring. It is important, though, that a senior pastor not break a youth pastor's spirit in this process. Someone said youth pastors are like young stallions—full of energy, vision, and plans. They are eager to see something happen in the youth program. That's wonderful, and you don't want to chill that. But you must have balance. It comes back to the matter of submission. The Scripture says, "Let the younger submit himself to the older." If we'll follow the scriptural admonition, it will work for both parties. *(For a further discussion on the subject of mentoring, see the article in this issue entitled, "The Road Map of Mentoring: How To Give Directions to Younger Staff" by Dan Reiland.)*

### **WHAT HAS IMPRESSED YOU THE MOST ABOUT OUR YOUTH AND THEIR GIVING TO MISSIONS THROUGH SPEED THE LIGHT?**

**TRASK:** Giving to Speed the Light has been phenomenal for the youth of this Movement. Many denominations look at the Assemblies of God and wonder, *How can they get their young people to raise \$12 million?*—a record for the youth of this Fellowship. Giving starts in the younger years. Missions is the emphasis of our church. Many young people have gone on missions trips and missions-evangelism projects and have caught the spirit of missions. They see the need for projectors, cars,

boats, and equipment to expedite proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am proud of the sacrificial giving of our youth and the district leaders who encourage and challenge them.


In 1999, our youth surpassed their goal of \$12 million. And this year the goal is \$25 million. Our youth are willing to take their shake and hamburger and babysitting money and give it to missions. Some of the stories about how God provided this money are phenomenal. The young people in the Assemblies of God are giving sacrificially to missions, not out of pressure, but willingly from their resources.

### **SHARE A FINAL THOUGHT WITH OUR DISTRICT YOUTH DIRECTORS.**

**TRASK:** The greatest work of a district is in the district's youth. The best investment a district youth director can make is to invest time, talent, and treasure in the youth. It pays dividends.

As I preach in churches, sometimes a person asks, "Do you remember me? I was in your youth camp. Remember the problems and the hard times I gave you?" And now they're adults, serving on church boards or active in ministry. I think, *I'm thankful to God for the investment I made in their lives.*

Many of our Assemblies of God missionaries were called at youth camps, youth conventions, and youth services, and it still happens today. God has called pastors and evangelists as a result of youth ministry and youth services across this Fellowship.

I'm a firm believer and a supporter of the youth of the Assemblies of God. They're the finest; they're the best; they're the most committed. I don't worry about the church of tomorrow. The church of tomorrow is going to be as strong or stronger than it is today because of the commitment of our young people. 

*\* We recognize that the call to youth ministry is not gender specific.*

# interview

WITH JEANNE MAYO,  
JOSH MCDOWELL, AND RON LUCE

## Capturing the Heart of Millennial Youth



JEANNE MAYO



JOSH MCDOWELL



RON LUCE

**W**hat are the identifying marks of teenagers born between the years 1981 and 1987? The 22 million teenagers, ages 13 to 19, who make up this generation have been dubbed the millennial generation by the researchers who study them. They have been labeled, tagged, earmarked, and characterized in a multiplicity of ways. But nothing sets them more apart from other generations than the fact they have less in common with each other than with those of previous generations.

Three champions of youth ministry gave Enrichment their take on Millennial Kids and what the church must do to reach and keep them for Christ. The interviewees are: Jeanne Mayo, director of Cross Current ministry at First Assembly of God, Rockford, Illinois; Ron Luce, president of Teen Mania Ministries, Lindale, Texas; and Josh McDowell, noted author and youth specialist and long-time Campus Crusade for Christ spokesman.

### WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S YOUTH?

**MAYO:** Due to a lack of family ties, today's youth are deeply committed to friendships. Friends hold immeasurably more influence than other voices in their lives. I tell my young people, "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future." Youth ministry that doesn't build positive peer pressure and deal with friendships is going to be short lived and not very effective.

**LUCE:** Many of the needs of youth are the same as they have been in the past. Teens need love, relationships, and acceptance. The difference today is the busyness in families and society. One of the problems we have is with the fatherless and those without strong family relationships. As the result of divorce or busyness, there is a huge deficit in relationships. Those in youth ministry many times become surrogate parent figures to the young people to whom they are ministering.

There is also a lack of personal relationships that is derived from high-tech toys, videos, and CDs. Another huge piece of youth culture is the Internet. It is impacting relationships and the ability of young people to socialize and build friendships. As well, the Internet has tremendous negative influence in the way it reaches into their bedrooms and corrupts them. This makes it harder for relationship needs to be met.

Studies show today's young people are more willing to give their lives to a cause. This indicates their need to live for a purpose rather than live for fun, money, or whatever brings excitement. Trends in youth culture—a seriousness in their walk with the Lord—is compounded across the nation by many young people who aren't just concert-going, screaming, wild teens at Christian events. There is a seriousness that is brewing in the level of commitment among young people.



**MCDOWELL:** This generation feels less loved than any generation in 50 years, and they are striving for love. Two words describe this generation: *abandoned* and *disconnected*. They feel much more abandoned by adults than did Busters. Christian and secular studies also include the words *connected* or *disconnected* to describe this generation.

Over one-third of all teenagers feel extremely stressed out. This is the highest rate of any age group.

Today's teens are more committed to relationships, but not so much a commitment and loyalty to friends. The average teenager changes his or her best friend every 2 to 3 years. That has never happened before.

Only one in six teenagers today say they are interested in truth. Ninety-one percent of Christian young people believe truth is relative—there is no truth apart from themselves. This is not in cement, though; they often choose the route of least resistance. But they're not making choices based on their convictions. Forty-six percent of 13- to 18-year-olds today cannot even tell you why they believe something, or name a person, book, or seminar that has ever convinced them that truth was relevant. That's the highest percentage ever recorded. Today's Christian young people may say the Bible is true and reliable, but we have never had a generation so quick to disregard biblical truth that

Research shows the number one person in the average family committed to family is not mom, dad, grandma, or grandpa—it's the teenager. But it's not commitment to his or her immediate family. Its commitment to the family they believe they can create. Ninety-five percent of 13- to 17-year-olds say they believe a person should be married to one person for life—we've never before had that high of a statistic.

Seventy-eight percent of young people say, "My parents are the number one influence in my life and what I believe." Teachers were rated number two (16 percent). Youth pastor and pastor are 2 or 3 percent.

Teenagers are very active in faith

**Youth ministry that doesn't build positive peer pressure and deal with friendships is going to be short lived and not very effective.—Mayo**



This generation is self-reliant and independent. They have given up on the church and parents. From about 16 to 17 years of age and younger, their attitude is: If it's going to happen, I am going to have to do it. God is not in their formula for the future.

There is good in what I call the mosaic or the third millennium teen—those 17 years old and younger. This generation is extremely optimistic. They believe one person can make a difference and can change the world. But God is not a part of their formula.

doesn't fit its lifestyle. In the next 5 to 7 years, the church can play a powerful part in establishing the truth of the Scriptures in the lives of young people.

Here are some contradictions. When you talk with young people, they are positive about their families. But when you interact with them, they say they expect less from their families. They have given up on their parents. A teen may say, "If I just have a little time with Dad, it's great." The reason: Teens are afraid to expect more because they don't want to be hurt again.

activities, but they are absorbing very little value out of those religious activities. Most people think those attending the youth group today will be the churchgoers tomorrow. This is the first generation where that is not true. Rather, youth attendees today will not be in church tomorrow. And especially the leaders of teenagers today will not be in church tomorrow.

In the last 20 years, when a young person was asked, "When you leave home and go to college, will church still play a vital part in your life?" 50 to 78

**The only thing that will keep our young people in church is relationships plus substance, or truth in the context of relationships.—McDowell**



percent answered yes. Now less than 33 percent answer yes to this question. And these are Christian young people. Within 18 months, many denominations will lose between 85 and 90 percent of their high school graduating seniors.

Busters are getting married, having children, and returning to the church. But it won't happen with this current generation of young people for three reasons. First, with Busters, church and spirituality are in the top five things they are striving for in life. With the mosaic generation, spiritual things and church aren't even in the top seven things they want out of life. There isn't a commitment to spirituality that will bring them back into church.

Second, 85 percent of 13- to 17-year-olds believe there is meaning to life. And they are striving for meaning in their lives. One of the biggest things they are striving for is education. Mosaics believe education will make up for the parents and the adults who have abandoned them. But the difference with this generation and Busters is Busters' greatest motivation for education was to please their parents and accomplish their lifestyle. With 13- to 17-year-olds, they will rely on themselves, not their

parents, not the church.

Last, this generation of teenagers has beliefs, but they don't have any convictions. When young people can take a belief and rationalize it through to the logical reason of why they believe it, it becomes a conviction. But biblically, it becomes a conviction when it affects the way they live. I rarely find young people who can tell me why they believe Jesus is the Son of God and why the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Most reply, "Because my parents taught me." Our Christian young people today are taking the road of least resistance, and that's moral relativism, not conviction. Average Christian young people today know so little, not only what they believe, but why they believe it, that they're not speaking up.

Relationships are the main reason young people attend church for the first time. They come because their friends invited them. But the only thing that will keep our young people in church is relationships plus substance, or truth in the context of relationships.

#### **HOW CAN YOUTH MINISTRY TODAY BECOME MORE RELEVANT?**

**MAYO:** We have a visitor-friendly youth group, and we have substance. We call for the lordship of Christ and clarion

commitment to Him. We ask our teens to pick up their crosses and follow Jesus. And the young people know I am going to challenge them. When they ask friends to come, they know they are not going to hear a watered-down message. They will hear a straight shot on Jesus as Lord. Our young people are not ashamed to bring their friends. As a matter of fact, there is a hunger for a challenge that's worthy of that kind of abandonment.

Teens want me and the other people on our team to present the gospel in a relevant fashion. I don't embarrass them by some word choices or by the clothing I wear. I take young people from my youth group shopping when I'm buying things to wear in a youth service. I don't think everybody's going to leave the youth service if I don't look a certain way, but having a relevant appearance that my young people are proud of is something with which I need a little help.

My young people bring their friends to a youth gathering where we're talking about topics that are relevant. I can do an exegesis on the tabernacle and the Holy of Holies, but I'd better come to the core of where they are in the trenches and make the message relevant.

Teens also want to know that you really care about them. And when you are relevant, it shows that you care.

**MCDOWELL:** Truth must be taught in the context of relationships. If we don't teach truth to young people today in a way where they see how it affects them personally, their relationships, and their relationship with God, it will be rejected.

Second, I agree with Jeanne on the lordship challenge. Teens believe the world needs to be changed and that one person can change the world. They really want meaning and purpose in life.

**LUCE:** If you are not relevant, you could have the greatest message in the world but no one will receive it. The best thing we can do to be relevant is to be ourselves. You don't necessarily have to dress like them, talk like them, or act like them to be relevant. I met a 70-year-old youth pastor who loves his teenagers and his teenagers love him. It is not about age; it's about being real. Senior pastors can be relevant by just being themselves. The best parents in the world are those who are relevant and who are real with their young people.

### **WHAT IS THE SECRET TO REACHING YOUTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY?**

**LUCE:** You must be able to speak the timeless message of the gospel in a way that they are used to getting information—MTV-style bites of information—rather than making them listen to an intellectual sermon. Another area would be in relationships. This world is becoming more and more isolated. We need to wrap our arms around our teenagers and train leaders so they can develop relationships with teens. This will show love to teens and draw them into our youth groups. Everyone needs love and fewer and fewer are getting it.

I believe we can have an incredible revolution with the young people of this generation. For this to happen, youth pastors need to have a vision for their city or town and multiply the scope of their ministry by multiplying

the number of teens through a quality youth ministry. When we disciple our teens, our youth ministries in local churches will grow.

**MAYO:** When I started in youth ministry 30 years ago, you could give young people a Bible after they got saved, tell them to come to church and youth group, and they were on their way. Now, to have life-lasting impact, we need to be intentional in our approach to follow-up, getting them involved with Christian friends who will help them grow in Christ. If we do not incorporate them into one of our small discipleship groups within 4 weeks of their decision to follow Christ, the chances of retaining them drops to about 10 percent. If we are going to retain teens, we need to help them change their circle of friends. They need friends who have the same goals, dreams, and convictions.

One of the things I changed was our method of communication. This generation responds to videos, computers, drama, creative arts, sound, lights. Years ago, I did not think these things were important. The message obviously remains the same, but I need to use methods that will connect with this culture.

Youth pastors also need to show their young people that they care for them. Teenagers who sense that you really care about them will tolerate other things in youth ministry.

**MCDOWELL:** The youth pastor has to be a model of integrity and be real. If not, today's teens will reject what he preaches. If the senior pastor isn't relevant to young people (when he speaks, young people need to understand him), and if he doesn't have a phenomenal relationship with his wife and spend time with his children, he is almost irrelevant to those young people when he preaches. Four times a year, every pastor should spend time with the young people, not preach or talk, but interact with them and listen to them. When he answers their questions, he

shouldn't be judgmental, and he should take longer than 2 minutes answering a question.

Youth pastors need to build bridges between their students and the adults in the church. Many teens distrust adults. We have to win the respect of teenagers. A youth pastor needs to have the deacons and elders spend time with the young people in a social atmosphere. Let the deacons share their testimonies, and then listen to the young people. That would help draw young people into the church. If a youth pastor today doesn't work toward building trust, when young people leave home and go to college, he will have lost them.

### **WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PASTORS WHO LIMIT THEIR YOUTH PASTORS BY NOT ALLOWING THEM TO USE CONTEMPORARY METHODS OF MINISTRY TO REACH AND KEEP TEENS?**

**MAYO:** I respect their viewpoint, but worldliness is an issue of heart and attitude, not an issue of the exterior things we concentrate on. And if pastors are unwilling to let their youth pastors move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they must not blame them for less than effective results.

The methods we use are not sacred; the message is. If we persist in being old wineskins, calling it conviction, purity, and holiness, we will have results that will also be cracked.

**MCDOWELL:** One of the top three items in the job description of the youth director should be to help parents relate to their children. Yet, I don't know of a church where that's even a part of the job description. To be relevant today, young people are taking their spiritual cues from their parents. Churches need to help parents.

But many youth pastors are treated like second-class citizens. They're paid that way, and they have no authority but all the responsibility. They've got to please everyone. Parents won't listen to them. When a youth director starts to talk to a parent (unless the youth pastor has children who are grown), the parent

# When we disciple our teens, our youth ministries in local churches will grow.

—Luce



thinks, *Wait until you are married, or until you have two or three young children—see how you will talk. You haven't been around like I have been.*

## WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE PASTOR'S PRIMARY ROLE IN YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

**LUCE:** It is imperative for senior pastors to be completely committed to youth ministry with their hearts and with their budgets. It can be easy to subcontract our love for teenagers by hiring a youth pastor. But youth pastors need their senior pastors' support. The church needs to hear the senior pastor talk about the youth ministry and back it up with resources. It is impossible to see a youth revolution in America without the senior pastor (and fathers) turning their hearts towards the young people. Malachi talks about this. As the teenage population explodes, the body of Christ—especially those with the decision-making power in the local church—need to get absolutely and completely involved in the ministry.

People on Madison Avenue and in marketing are excited about the young people who have money to spend on CDs, shoes, and clothes. If they are

excited about going after young people, shouldn't we be also? The leaders in the body of Christ—not just youth pastors—need to be more committed and passionate about reaching young people with the gospel. It is our job to influence them while they are young. Ninety percent of those who give their hearts to the Lord do so before they are 20 years old. We must capture their hearts while they are young, and it is going to take a commitment from senior pastors to realize the need and the strategy to make a difference in this generation.

**MCDOWELL:** The senior pastor has to model objective truth. He must not only teach what the Bible says; he must live it. Sixty-five percent of what young people learn is from what they see, not what they hear or read. For youth ministry, senior pastors need to build a bridge to the young people.

The number one thrust of the church must be to help families relate to their children. Christian parents are not relating to their children. The second thrust should be evangelism and discipleship.

In today's culture, we must bring family ministry and youth ministry together under one head in the church. Then under that one head is youth coordinator

(like a youth pastor) and the family coordinator (because parents will listen to the family coordinator). If we don't bring family and youth ministry together, we are not going to truly help young people by helping their parents.

**MAYO:** First, if a senior pastor likes teenagers, he has done his youth pastor or youth leaders an enormous amount of good. It can be through occasionally dialoging with the young people. An even more powerful format is to show up at their socials. My young people hear me when I speak at the youth service, but I make a bigger impact when I attend their functions. I went to a couple of birthday parties one weekend, and I didn't have time to go, but the young people responded to my being there. If senior pastors can overcome the awkwardness or insecurity they might feel and go to where youth hang out, they will make a tremendous impact on them.

Second, senior pastors need to realize that the congregation will mirror their attitude toward the youth and the ministry. With that comes the courage to allow youth leaders to do things that may be out of the comfort zone of the senior pastor. I often say to senior



pastors, "If the music in the youth service is not too loud for your liking, it's not loud enough for the young people in your youth group. And if you don't have some young people somewhere out on your church parking lot smoking or doing some other things you don't want on Wednesday evening, you probably aren't drawing the right young people."

The senior pastor needs to realize Jesus didn't die for just the church teens. We certainly need to honor, revere, cherish, and take great care of the young people who fit into the mold of church teens. But there are young people in the church who are not what parents think they are. If young people come who don't meet our standards and we reject them, some may be lost for eternity.

Finally, the senior pastor needs to release more finances to the youth ministry. Statistics vary, but the largest percentage of the church's finances is spent on adult ministry and other related things. But children and youth ministries produce the largest number of conversions. The average church puts minimal financial resources into the youth area. It is a deadly trend. **e**

## A SNAPSHOT OF A GENERATION

In the Internet age, teens seem to be coming of age ever earlier. A recent Newsweek Poll explores what concerns today's youth and asks if their parents have a clue.

### **Stress: Do teens today face more problems than their parents did as teens?**

	TEENS
More.....	70%
Fewer.....	5%
Same.....	24%

### **Family: Do your parents spend enough time with you?**

	TEENS
Enough.....	61%
Too little.....	24%
Too much.....	15%

### **Identity: How much peer pressure from friends do you feel (does your teen feel) today to do the following?**

THOSE RESPONDING 'A LOT'	TEENS	PARENTS
Have sex.....	10%	20%
Grow up too fast.....	16%	34%
Steal or shoplift.....	4%	11%
Use drugs or abuse alcohol.....	10%	18%
Defy parents or teachers.....	9%	16%
Be mean to kids who are different....	11%	14%

### **If you had to choose between fitting in with friends or becoming outstanding in some way, which would you (your teen) choose?**

	TEENS	PARENTS
Fitting in.....	26%	43%
Becoming outstanding.....	69%	50%

### **Hostility: Many teens these days feel a lot of anger.**

#### **How angry are you?**

	TEENS
Very.....	3%
Somewhat.....	25%
Not too.....	43%
Not at all.....	29%

### **Faith: How important is religion in your life today?**

	TEENS
Very.....	43%
Somewhat.....	35%
Not too.....	14%
Not at all.....	8%

### **Worries: How concerned are you about the following?**

THOSE RESPONDING 'A LOT'	TEENS	PARENTS
Not having enough money to buy the things you (they) want.....	34%	35%
Cost of your (their) college education.....	54%	68%
Violence in society.....	59%	82%
Not being sure about your (their) future job opportunities.....	43%	49%
Your (their) getting into trouble with drugs.....	25%	66%
Your (their) drinking or abusing alcohol.....	26%	64%
Sexual permissiveness in society.....	33%	72%
Sexually transmitted diseases.....	58%	75%

- 48% of teens say they use a computer almost every day at home.
- 21% have looked at something on the Internet that they wouldn't want their parents to know about.
- 17% of teens and 37% of parents say they worry a lot about safety at school.
- 21% of teenagers polled say that most of the teens they know have already had sex.

*For this special Newsweek poll, Princeton Survey Research Associates interviewed a national sample of teens 13–19 and 509 parents of such teens by telephone April 20–28, 2000. The margin of error is +/- 5 percentage points for parents; +/- 6 for all teens. Copyright 2000 by Newsweek, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.*









# How To Kill a Youth Ministry

## (For Senior Pastors Only)

BY EDDIE V. RENTZ

**With only 2,550 full-time youth pastors and 23 million teenagers in this country, we cannot afford to lose one youth pastor to discouragement or mistreatment.**

**H**e was there with his wife and newborn baby. I noticed them because they were so excited about God's gift to them—their child. They were among the approximately 50 youth pastors and workers who had come to the district youth leaders conference because they were hungry to grow as leaders. The conference was charged with energy and enthusiasm. During one of the roundtable discussions, I fielded questions about vision, how to plan outreaches, and discussed products available to help them become more relevant as leaders. The mood was light.

Then it happened. It was one of those moments that changes the atmosphere in a room. The young man I noticed earlier was visibly upset. His voice began to crack with emotion as he shared the pain he experienced in the past two positions he held. They were terrible experiences; he and his wife were wounded deeply. Both pastors he had served feared change. They opposed anything different from the way youth ministry had been done in the past. As tears ran down his cheeks, he shared how he was

afraid this would happen in his new position. He could not go through this again. His sharing opened a floodgate. Others began to share similar experiences in their journey of youth ministry. Most spoke with broken hearts, afraid they too would again be wounded. Suddenly the room had grown solemn.

### **WE'RE LOSING YOUTH PASTORS**

If this were a rare account, I would dismiss it as someone who is unable to work well with others. Unfortunately, I hear similar accounts more than I care to tally. There is a boneyard of potential nation-changers who have become so discouraged they have either left the ministry or now hobble along wounded and ineffective. Survival is their way of life. Some churches change youth pastors as often as people change clothes.

There are many fine pastors in our Fellowship. However, if we are going to reach the next generation, we must reevaluate what we are doing. With only 2,690 Assemblies of God youth

pastors and 23 million teenagers in this country, we cannot afford to lose one youth pastor to discouragement or mistreatment, especially since we have only 317,000 young people involved in Assemblies of God youth groups. Allow me to share a few thoughts on how to kill a youth ministry. These are not the only elements, but they are the ones I see time and time again. Pastor, my desire is that you will open your heart to ask the Lord if you are hindering youth ministry or empowering today's youth leaders.

### **THREE WAYS TO KILL A YOUTH MINISTRY**

#### **Mistrust**

Wolf J. Rinke, author of *6 Fail-Safe Strategies for Building High Performance Organizations*, writes, "If you mistrust your employees, you'll be right 3 percent of the time. If you trust people until they give you a reason not to, you'll be right 97 percent of the time." Not trusting or believing in your youth



pastor will create resentment and weaken his confidence.

Les Giblin said, "You can't make the other fellow feel important in your presence if you secretly feel that he is a nobody." While it is true that our confidence is in the Lord, as a mentor you have the power to build up or tear down the confidence of the person God has placed in your care.

Mistrust hinders the potential of people, no matter what title or position they hold. Proverbs 18:21 states, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." The enemy of our souls is doing everything he can to condemn and render ineffective each person called of God. Jesus warned in Luke 17:1, "Offenses will come; but woe unto him, through whom they come!"

Henry L. Simpson, former U.S. Secretary of State, said, "The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way you can make a man trustworthy is by trusting him; and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust."

Many pastors have tragic stories of being burned by a staff member. However, we must forgive and trust again. Guard against working from a

lack of trust. Jesus believed in those who were entrusted to His care. He was patient and forgiving. He showed them by example how they should live, love, and serve others. When they failed, He encouraged and forgave them. God has placed in your care a young minister to mentor and lovingly care for while he or she is serving you and your youth.

B.C. Forbes said, "Better to be occasionally cheated than perpetually suspicious." Are you struggling with mistrust? Ask God to help you overcome, or it will kill your youth ministry.

### RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The gospel is sacred; it must not change. However, the methods in proclaiming it are always changing. We live in a post-Christian nation. Truth has been swallowed by relativity. The stories of the Bible are foreign to a majority of teenagers in our country. They see the church as irrelevant and boring. To reach this generation, we must be open to new ways to communicate truth. Some of the necessary tools are unique to this generation.

Some pastors say that colored lights that move or using video, certain styles of music, and even drama are of the

devil and compromise the Word of God. We must remind ourselves that these are just tools. The message of the gospel does not change. Holiness is not the absence of moving lights or loud music. It is not a lack of holiness to use video or illustrated sermons to proclaim the message of Christ.

As a senior pastor, you may feel uncomfortable with how your youth pastor reaches the lost. One well-known Assemblies of God pastor made a comment about the youth group in his church as being wild and loud. He expressed his discomfort with the methods they used as different from the way youth ministry once was. However, with excitement in his voice, he spoke of how God is saving more teens than ever, and that they were on fire and growing in the ways of the Lord. He realized that his discomfort was not a barometer of God's disapproval, just his struggle with his age.

The youth ministries that are thriving are using creative methods to reach the lost. They have not stopped praying or discipling teens—if anything, they are more committed to those elements. However, they are creatively using whatever tools they have to preach the Word to more teenagers.

One youth group uses video and PowerPoint demonstrations to communicate the gospel. Another group does an illustrated sermon once a month. They incorporate drama, make-up, lights, and video to preach a powerful message of truth. One youth pastor staged an accident outside the church and once transformed the sanctuary into "hell." His group has grown from 75 to more than 600 teenagers.

Other youth pastors are doing weekend outreaches that turn the church parking lot into a recreation center. They build skateboard ramps, put up basketball hoops, erect climbing walls, set up paintball courses, and then preach the gospel during a mandatory halftime. Pastor, only you have the power to allow your youth pastor the freedom to use other methods



**"No! I don't regard you as my 'lowly youth pastor.' Think of this as a 'status symbol'; a lot of great ministers wore collars."**

## I WISH MY SENIOR PASTOR WOULD...

1. take at least 2 hours a week and disciple me, train me in all areas of ministry, hold me accountable, be honest even when it hurts, correct me, and encourage me.
2. ask for my input on decisions that affect my ministry.
3. recognize the need to communicate more with me.
4. understand that a lack of planning on his part does constitute an emergency on my part.
5. see the youth as a vital force of the church now, not just in the future.
6. dedicate more time in building a personal relationship with me and not just a working relationship.
7. allow me to focus more on youth ministry and not so much on associate duties.
8. be more relevant in his thinking so we could reach more people effectively.
9. cast more vision to the staff as a whole and not keep us guessing where his heart is.
10. grant more freedom to spend money on effective youth ministry outreaches and events that have eternal rewards.
11. feel a freedom to delegate more ministry to lay leaders to take pressure off the staff.
12. spend more time focusing on the ministry within the church than on his golf game.
13. be more compassionate toward people.
14. live what he preaches.
15. show more respect to his wife in public.
16. be more relevant by not restricting the youth ministry from using multimedia in presenting the gospel.
17. plan ahead and not overwhelm me with too many responsibilities, thus respecting my time.
18. affirm me more.
19. not take me for granted.
20. have more of a spirit of excellence pertaining to his ministry and leadership to others.

—Taken from an informal poll received on a youth pastors E-mail list serve.

to reach lost teens. You will get complaints—something different usually does. Be courageous and supportive. You will reap a harvest of new souls.

### LACK OF MONEY

I am not speaking about the salaries of youth pastors, although that needs addressing. Rather, I am speaking about the lack of money churches invest into building an effective youth ministry. Many youth pastors are given no funds to reach teens. They are told to raise their own budget.

Churches that are growing have made it a priority to invest in both children and youth. If you reach a teenager, you touch the hearts of the parents.

Many youth pastors struggle with a lack of resources to build a relevant youth ministry.

We must invest in our youth ministry. We are in a crisis within the Assemblies of God. Our churches are declining in growth, and we are aging as a Movement. Churches are closing faster than we care to admit. If we do not act now, we will lose this generation. Time is of the essence. Every day 80,000 people die and go to hell without ever having heard the gospel. Show me a youth ministry that is reaching teens, and I will show you a church that is investing money in that program. How much money does your church give your youth ministry to reach teens?

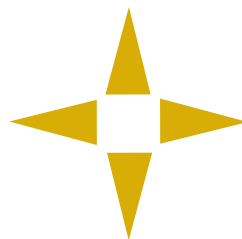
### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Pastor, you can make a difference in the youth of your church and community. Let your youth pastor know how important he or she is by spending time mentoring and encouraging him or her. Build trust. Be open to new ways to reach this generation and give so your leadership has everything it needs to touch young people for Christ. I know you care. Start today to make a difference. You will be grateful you did. Your youth pastor will rise to meet the challenge if you will only give him or her your trust and support. **e**

Eddie V. Rentz is director of National Youth Ministries, Springfield, Missouri.







# The Road Map of Mentoring:

## HOW TO GIVE DIRECTIONS TO YOUNGER STAFF

B Y D A N M . R E I L A N D

Don't  
resist or

resent the  
detours.

They are  
often God's

part in the  
journey.

I've been lost a time or two in Atlanta. The way into the city is not necessarily the way out. Retracing your steps to get back to where you started is likely to land you somewhere in Alabama. Good maps are available, but not easy to read. On my own, I waste time, make unnecessary mistakes, and find more streets named Peachtree than imaginable. I generally find my way, after getting directions from someone who has been there before.

Mentoring is learning from those who have been there, and letting them share their personal map with those who need to get there. As senior pastor, you have much to offer your youth pastor. You can shape his\* life for years to come.



## MENTORING MAPS ARE GOOD FOR:

**1. Seeing the big picture.** People who have traveled farther in life have a larger mentoring map. These maps help the person you are mentoring gain perspective by seeing the big picture.

**2. Discovering where your youth pastor is on his journey.** The first step in moving toward an intentional goal is to identify where your youth pastor presently stands.

**3. Identifying where your youth pastor wants/needs to go.** A well-traveled mentor's map allows the staff member to clarify where he wants to go.

**4. Learning to avoid pitfalls.** Life presents many different roads that look like they all arrive at the same place. They don't. There are dead-ends, places you do not want to go, and some roads are a waste of time.

**5. Choosing the best options.** This is the true value of a mentor. Showing the best life-routes helps the one you mentor

arrive at the destination God has designated for him.

## MENTORING IS MORE OF A LOST ART THAN A NEW IDEA

In Titus 2:6-8, Paul wrote: "Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (NIV).

The Bible is full of mentoring relationships: Abraham and Lot, Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus and the 12 disciples. Studying these relationships lets us know that mentoring isn't always a walk in the park. It can be more like a trip and stumble, landing two steps back from where you started. Sometimes the mentorees or protégés don't want to take the trip. Or, if they do, they want to get there on their own.

Some good things can come from

traveling your own road, but traveling alone can be unwise. Life moves at a fast pace and is too complex to travel alone. Why do so many refuse directions? Perhaps there is an art in giving them the right way, and perhaps that art has been lost.

Have you ever stopped and asked for directions and heard something like this: "You know the new shopping center about a mile up the road near the theaters? Don't go there. You need to head down First Street, but it changes names before you make the next turn, and I don't know the name of the street you need to turn on. But if you miss it, the next exit is about 300 miles east of here, so don't miss it."

With a map like that, I would rather try it myself too.

## MENTORING BY THE MAP—PRINCIPLES THAT WORK

**1. Remember, your map doesn't fold up perfectly.** Have you ever tried to refold a map? I usually ends up looking like the Japanese origami paper-folding art. When your youth pastor tries to fold the map and doesn't do it right, be patient. You probably didn't get it right the first time either.

When showing the way—mentoring—always remember your humanity. You are not perfect and neither is the one you mentor. Some of the best things you can share with a younger staff member are the mistakes you've made and what you learned. A generous amount of grace is needed for a fruitful mentoring relationship.

If you get lost, admit it, and rechart the course. Don't let pride short-circuit the potential of how far you can travel.

**2. Agree on the destination.** Make sure your youth pastor wants to take the journey of personal growth, and that you both agree on what a successful journey looks like. What is the goal? How do you know when you've arrived? Clearly and specifically identify the skill or character trait you want to develop.

**3. Some of the roads have changed since your map was printed.** I recently took



**"I'd like to thank our youth director for that amazing presentation."**

## SETTING THE TABLE FOR MEANINGFUL MENTORING

A great meal doesn't happen by accident. Someone works hard to think through the menu, invite the right people, prepare the food, and see to the details that make the meal special—right down to setting the table.

My sister Jean is a chef in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in the beautiful Tetons. She and her crew go to great lengths to make the table as beautiful as possible. They insist that the right things, put in the right places, make all the difference. Meaningful mentoring requires the right things to be brought to the table as well.

### YOU AS THE MENTOR BRING TO THE TABLE:

- 1. Experience.** Your experience is of immeasurable value to your younger staff members. No price tag can be put on what you can offer as the one who has traveled a little farther in life.
- 2. Competency.** It's important that you mentor in the areas of your gifts and strengths. This isn't about perfection, but the integrity of being good at what you do before you teach others.
- 3. Heart.** True concern and compassion for the person you mentor is essential. Quality life-changes come less from mechanics and more from human connection.
- 4. Availability.** Nothing replaces time together in the moments that really count.
- 5. Faith.** Good mentors see in the younger staff member potential the staff member has not yet seen.

### THE STAFF MEMBER BEING MENTORED BRINGS TO THE TABLE:

- 1. Desire.** The staff member must truly want to be mentored.
- 2. Capacity.** The staff member must have the ability to grow in the agreed-on areas of mentoring.
- 3. Teachable spirit.** The staff member must be open and receptive to learning and possess the attitude of a good student.

With these elements, the table is set for a wonderful, balanced, memorable meal. Bon Appetit.

—Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., is vice president of Leadership and Church Development at INJOY, Atlanta, Georgia.

my two kids to a concert of a popular recording group at the Georgia Dome. It was an evening with 70,000 other people. About halfway through the concert I wasn't sure, but I thought my ears were bleeding. It was not my cup of tea, to say the least. But my wife gently reminded me that my parents weren't exactly thrilled with my style of music either.

You have some great experience under your belt, but time marches on and things change. This requires that you be a student for life if you want to be an effective, life-changing mentor. Stay open to new ideas and ways of doing things, and make the effort to see life through the eyes of the person you are mentoring.

**4. Travel the journey together.** Putting the best map in your youth pastor's inbox with a memo that says, "Follow my instructions," will greatly diminish the impact and potential of the mentoring relationship. In this approach, the relationship is missing.

Mentoring requires time. There is no way to get around it. That is why, after many years of investing in people's lives,

I have adopted a life-mentoring philosophy: Invest more time into less people. Quality and quantity time with a few can result in deep, meaningful, and abiding change.


**5. Remain open to detours and delays.** I don't like being delayed, derailed, or detoured, but these times often teach me something—either about myself or about life. In the unplanned moments we discover our real character and ability to respond to life in healthy ways.

Mentoring doesn't always follow the plan you carefully laid out. The blanks are not always filled in neatly. Finding your way through the detours is part of the process. The detours may be spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, or simply skill related. Don't resist or resent the detours. They are often God's part in the journey.

**6. Share your map for their benefit, not for yours.** You are helping your youth pastor travel his journey in a more productive and meaningful way. This gets complicated when he also

receives a paycheck as a staff member. But if you will mentor for his benefit and not yours or the church's, his fruitfulness will blossom one hundredfold.

Your youth pastor needs to know that you care about him. Trust is the issue. The person you mentor must trust you to learn from you, and the trust will come as he sees that what you offer is truly a gift.

**7. The journey is as important as the destination.** Finally, remember that the steps of the journey are just as important as the end result. In some ways, they are even more important. Enjoy each step. Make sure you share a heart connection. Laugh often, mentor with integrity, and thank God for the results. 

*\*This implies women youth pastors as well.*

Dan M. Reiland, D.Min., is vice president of Leadership and Church Development at INJOY, Atlanta, Georgia.



# A Pastor-Driven Youth Ministry— Becoming a Hero to the Youth of Your Church

B Y R O N W . H E I T M A N

Paul wasn't the most creative youth speaker. Having the young man Eutychus fall out of an upstairs window and plummet to his demise is not a milestone in anyone's pulpit ministry (Acts 20:7–12). At least Paul followed up on this situation. He addressed the situation with what this generation needs: personal attention from spiritual authority and a demonstration of the supernatural.

## GENERATION CONNECTION WITH SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION

The angel who appeared to Zechariah told him that his son would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (Luke 1:17). Can we apply the word *fathers* in a spiritual sense to pastors of churches, and the word *children* to the youth of this generation? This generation of young people is crying for relevant attention from spiritual authority. Youth ministry today must be pastor driven not merely youth-leader driven. The local church with no children or youth is a dying church. Unless the heart of the senior pastor pounds for the winning, building, and sending of children and youth, the local church will slowly and methodically have

funerals until ultimately the church itself dies.

Some young people of this generation can relate to the young man in Acts 20. Due to the lack of participation by senior pastors, a nonexistent youth ministry to meet their needs, and the absence of personal leadership attention and youth ownership, young people miss out on the life-changing experience of the supernatural. As a result, young people fall out of the window, or head for the back door in a downward spiral to the postmodern world that teaches them to question the existence of absolute truth.

As spiritual leaders, let's follow Paul's example and embrace our young people and experience the supernatural presence of God together. This generation is longing for the genuine outpouring of the presence of God. When God and absolute truth become relevant to their cry and their need, this generation will pursue God with the focused energy and life the local church needs.

One third of Assemblies of God churches average under 50 people, and two thirds of our churches average under 100 people. Full-time youth

pastors are not beating down the doors of these churches begging for a job. But these churches offer some of the greatest potential for church and community impact through aggressive youth ministry.

The community with one junior and one senior high school campus provides the potential for a dynamic children- and youth-based ministry. The church with a dynamic ministry will be seen as the church that is impacting the young people of its county.

Youth ministry as a whole tends to fine-tune existing youth ministry and build on its strengths rather than being apostolic and birthing new youth ministry in smaller area churches. We need to continue to invest in churches that have full-time youth pastors. Good things should be happening in those churches due to qualified leadership. But we shouldn't believe that just because a church has a youth pastor, the senior pastor need not be involved—every church needs the senior pastor to drive the vision of the youth ministry. Meanwhile, we must address the need to help our churches with nonexistent or struggling youth ministries.





## EVENT-DRIVEN VERSUS PROCESS-DRIVEN YOUTH MINISTRY

Pastors of smaller churches must have the opportunity to see a strong, vibrant ministry to the youth of their church

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**"Aren't you going to ask us to tuck in our shirts?"**

and community. We are addressing this need in Illinois with a visionary placement effort called, "The Link." The Link places a youth pastor in a church that could never afford one. God birthed

this strategy in Steve Thomas, of Calvary Temple, Springfield, Illinois, one of our youth pastors.

Throughout history, youth ministry has been event driven rather than process driven. Youth ministry has been great at having a big event, but weak at the process of long-term fruitfulness. The vacuum of leadership and constant changeover—whether hired or volunteer—have limited the effectiveness of the process. Both pastor and youth leader pursue the bigger numbers by doing events. Big events do wonders for stroking our egos and building our image. We are guilty of building the roller coaster of up-and-down casual Christianity that we have often accused the young people of riding. Students need the weekly process of discipleship that starts invading their day-to-day walk.

Young people cannot live on these big events. Illinois District Superintendent Paul Martin says, "Little if anything of eternal value will happen

## BECOMING A HERO TO THE YOUTH OF YOUR CHURCH— 20 ACTION POINTS FOR SENIOR PASTORS

1. Learn your youths' names. Use pictures with names on the back to help you.
2. Regularly lay hands on students during prayer and let them hear you pray specifically for them by name.
3. Twice a year attend the youth service to spend time with your teens and show them you care. Toss out a bag of candy, give coupons to McDs, laugh with them, talk with them, play a game.
4. Let students and families hear you pray for the youth in the Sunday services.
5. Use illustrations in your sermons that relate to teens.
6. Involve your youth in altar services with special prayer for them, or by having them pray with others.
7. Host a youth day and have students plan and participate in the service.
8. Visit a mall with a teenager and ask him or her to show you the store(s) that students love and why. Find out what attracts students.
9. Plan with the students and give a room(s) or entire facility to the youth to decorate.
10. Visit a youth ministry in your area on a youth service night to look for ideas that work.
11. Assess your recent graduate(s) to determine the strength of your youth ministry.
12. Each month meet with youth leaders (adult volunteers and student leaders).
13. Invest in leadership resources and incorporate monthly leadership training.
14. Look at students with a prayerful heart, intensifying your burden for schools and community activities.
15. Strategize with church leadership to help structure a youth budget.
16. Involve your youth in missions through giving, missions trips, and mission conventions.
17. Assess youth involvement in the ministry of the church (outside of the youth ministry).
18. Find students doing the right things and compliment them. Let them become involved in ushering, greeting, sound and video booths, church web sites, music ministry, Sunday school teachers, and serving.
19. Remember your days as a young person, noting students are different yet the same.
20. Take every opportunity to hug young people and let them know you love them and are praying for them.

—Ron W. Heitman, Carlinville, Illinois.

at the district level...but everything of eternal value will happen at the local church." I am a strong believer in gathering young people together to affirm and strengthen their faith in a larger setting. But the local church is the New Testament pattern. Our investment lies in the local church teaching and guiding teens in their daily walk with Jesus.

The small church that is dependent on a sectional youth rally for its youth's spiritual energy bar is negating its responsibility of developing the process in its own church with consistent spiritual leadership, student ownership, and supernatural experience. Even the weekly youth service in the local church can create the event rather than the process. The youth pastor is missing the target if the church has an outstanding weekly youth service that is the event, but is weak in the process of training the day-to-day, life-changing walk. Do we give people what they want or what they need? It cannot be an either/or; it must be a both/and.

When I came to the district office 8 years ago, I asked Phil Schneider, one of our long-time, youth-driven pastors, "What is the number one thing you would do?" His reply was to create a training resource that would help the


smaller church accomplish effective youth ministry by developing leaders with a process mentality. Teaming together with other effective youth pastors, we took an effective model from the Oklahoma District and created *Youth Ministry Institute* (See sidebar Youth Ministry Institute: A Helpful Leadership Tool.), an extensive resource to help train volunteer leaders in churches that do not have full-time youth pastors, and to help youth pastors train their volunteer leaders.

### PASTOR-DRIVEN YOUTH MINISTRY

Churches today that lack relevance have open windows through which our young people can fall. We demand young persons attend our adult services every week, become pliable to our expectations, and be relevant to our adult setting. The style and order of our services (music, worship experience, prayers, participants, preaching, analogies and illustrations, and length of attention span) is adult focused, and young people are expected to make the process work for them. Some churches build multipurpose rooms for all ages, but multipurpose is still defined as adult (the color doesn't appeal to a youth; pictures do not depict young people;

the setting does not say this is owned by our youth). The place says, be careful, don't mess anything up, others have to use this.

Raising children can be messy. Children and young people need space and a place to call their own, with identity and relevancy. They need people to reach into their world. Young people can be challenged and trained to works of service. Instead of adults complaining about the loudness of the music, or sitting on the back row, or even not coming because it is "just" youth night—a pastor-driven youth ministry can have adults on the front row cheering students involved in the process, as students lead others in experiencing the supernatural presence of God.

Pastors, Paul didn't turn his youth situation over to the youth pastor or a volunteer leader. He stepped up with spiritual authority, with personal passion, to see the supernatural at work in a young man or woman's life. So, let's pick up the dead, put our arms around them, and say, "They are alive." 

Ron W. Heitman is youth director for the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God, Carlinville, Illinois.



### YOUTH MINISTRY INSTITUTE: A HELPFUL LEADERSHIP TOOL

Nothing can prove more frustrating than lacking the right tools for the job—especially in youth-ministry leadership. Perhaps you're a recent college grad wading through your first months of pizza parties and car washes, wondering how to foster spiritual depth in your teens. Maybe you're the layperson nominated by the pastor to do something with the young people. Or you are a veteran youth worker searching for curriculum for training volunteer leaders. *Youth Ministry Institute (Y.M.I.)*, the comprehensive youth leadership manual produced by national Youth Ministries, can prove helpful to any adult entrusted with the responsibility of local church youth ministry.

Each of the 10 chapters in this 222-page manual is chock-full of thought-provoking and practical ideas to help you direct an effective, relevant youth ministry. The manual introduces the programs and resources available from National Youth Ministries, then focuses on the life of the youth minister, challenging him/her to live an authentic Christian life worthy of students' emulation. *Y.M.I.* teaches the youth worker to cast vision for youth ministry, and how to develop significant relationships with all those involved in the formation of teens' lives.

The manual also explores the elements of an effective youth program, model youth group designs and formats, and approaches to outreach and evangelism. Other components include a study of youth culture and a helpful chapter on administration. At the end of each chapter is a toolbox of practical and personal helps such as worksheets, reproducible forms, check lists, time tips, counseling helps, icebreakers, and 52 sample sermon outlines. Also included are a syllabus and final exam, should you choose to use the manual for classroom instruction.

Still trying to find the right tool for the job? *Youth Ministry Institute* can be purchased for \$29.95 by calling Gospel Publishing House at 1-800-641-4310, and requesting item #733-306.

—Loralie Crabtree is former editorial assistant for National Youth Ministries.





# Called to a Cutting-Edge





# B Y J E F F P . K E N N E D Y Leadership Strategy

## **PASSION AND PURPOSE**

Today's youth are not the church of tomorrow; they are the church of today. God's kingdom is not age-specific. Scripture illustrates that growth belongs to God, and we who labor in His vineyard must have the same purpose as the One with whom we are working. Paul wrote, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:6-9, NIV).

Youth ministry at its very foundation must be spiritual because it is God's. Youth ministry is not a proving ground for novices or a testing ground in which future pastors practice. Youth ministry is on the same priority list as any other ministry in God's kingdom. God has given us young people to care for; and to whom much is given, much will be required. This should drive us to our knees to find out what the Lord is doing in this generation and join Him in reaching young people. Youth ministry is a delicate balance of absolute dependence and pure personal striving to see Christ's image formed in young disciples.

## **CHALLENGE, CALL, AND VISION**

The Great Commission is about discipleship. Therefore, youth ministry must be designed around making disciples. What a privilege we have to see people transformed by the grace of God from an unconverted state to a regenerated one. The process of spiritual

transformation poses challenges to today's youth pastor. This process is both divine and relational. Divine, because it is the work of the Holy Spirit; relational, because God has invited, initiated, and indwells students for a life-long relationship with Him.

The challenge facing youth pastors is to build into students' hearts the sense that God has a specific call and destiny for their lives when they are completely surrendered to His will. Successful youth ministry must incorporate this concept of the call of God into our students' relationship development with Christ. Jesus calls us to follow Him. He will change us from what we are into what He has designed us to be. This is the transforming model that must be communicated to our students. Leading them into a "following" relationship is a must. The call of God impacts every strata of the believer's life.

Youth ministry also has a focus on the future. The only way to ensure lasting discipleship is to teach, preach, and model a life surrendered to God. However, this cannot be accomplished alone. You need staff who will replicate your vision, duplicate your leadership, and demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to this generation.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (SINGULAR VISION, PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP)**

As you communicate your vision for youth ministry, you will need others to carry this vision to places where you cannot go. You are only one leader, and your effectiveness can only extend to a certain number of students and a certain type of student. Paul tried to be "all things to all men." But I have

**Our students are being  
exploited by a crafty  
system of slick and  
shallow promises that  
leaves them broken-  
hearted, disillusioned,  
and morally bankrupt.**

## PROCESS FOR TRAINING POTENTIAL LEADERS

Because students are important to the Lord, and Scripture instructs us to know those who labor among us, I have designed the following 10-step process to properly channel potential leaders into future involvement. We provide this form to those who are interested in working with our youth. This lets them know the process in becoming a youth leader.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Have an introductory meeting with the youth pastor before attending any youth event or youth service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Complete or update a leadership form (all leaders must be members of the church).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Sit with an assigned adult youth leader for 1 month to observe the youth service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Attend two care group meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Attend all youth events for a month.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Attend leadership meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Sign a personal conduct agreement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Provide a recommendation from current and past ministry supervisors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Agree to a 3-month probationary period. (This will be a time of supervised ministry where you will come alongside an adult leader and be faithful in another person's area of ministry.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Read the book, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*.

—Jeff P. Kennedy, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

discovered I am not very good at this. I have others whom God has provided to help me be effective as I release them into the ministry alongside me.

It is important that you develop leaders to replicate your vision. Your vision is what God has revealed to you concerning what He is doing in your city, on your school campus, and in the lives of your kids. You need your staff to work in concert with this vision. The synergy of that point of agreement will topple the enemy's strongholds. There needs to be a singular vision but a plurality of leadership to enable your ministry to advance forward in your city.

Leadership development is hard work, but it can yield great dividends. It is equipping leaders to carry out the stewardship of the ministry, not just task delegation. The key to developing leaders is to delegate authority, accompanied by a leadership-entry process and a well-defined job description. (See the sidebar, Process for Training Potential Leaders.) A job description outlines the chain of authority and clearly explains

what is expected of your workers. As the leader, you need to look at the priorities and expressed goals of your ministry. If you do not have well-defined priorities and goals, you are not ready to delegate. Priorities and goals are the guts of your ministry vision.

As a church staff member, your number one priority is to help fulfill the senior pastor's vision. I have served four pastors, and in each case they outlined their vision for the church. I had the latitude to flesh out the structure, scope, and vision of the youth ministry, as well as the freedom to implement it. But I worked within the vision of my senior pastor. My vision complemented the senior pastor's vision for the church.

Your leadership team's responsibility is to help you fulfill the senior pastor's vision first. The pastor is the shepherd; the youth pastor is the undershepherd. It is important to keep this before your workers at all times. The principle of singular vision must be applied to every strata of your leadership team. This gives your leaders a sense of connection and

value that will foster a genuine stewardship of the ministry. As you outline your vision, you will be ready to set priorities and goals that people can follow.

How many times have you given a pressing task to someone offering to help, and he/she successfully completed the task and asked for more to do? You had to think of something else to keep that person busy. This is task delegation and not leadership delegation. You can become weary of creating something for him/her to do, and he/she can become frustrated by not doing anything meaningful. Without a vision that defines your needs and a person's place of effectiveness, your ministry scope will remain limited. With a plurality of leadership, your ministry scope will not only increase in breadth but also in depth. You are in fact called to equip the saints for works of service, so the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:12).

Finally, leaders need to have a sacrificial love for students. There must be a passion to demonstrate the love of

Christ. This means your staff will need to model grace, patience, longsuffering, and forgiveness more often than love, joy, and peace. Many of the young people coming to Christ do not know how to relate well with friends, authority, other teens, or even themselves. They will not reach out to your staff and make them feel accepted or appreciated. These students are insecure and need to be understood and loved.

In Romans 9:2, Paul expresses sorrow and anguish over the condition of his countrymen. Would to God we could have an army of youth pastors and leaders who will carry this generation in their hearts in like fashion. Our students are being exploited by a crafty system of slick and shallow promises that leaves them brokenhearted, disillusioned, and morally bankrupt. The time is now for a holy onslaught of youth ministers who will stand in the gap, do what it takes, and follow the example of Jesus and radically love a lost generation. We need to take the love of Christ to the lost—campuses, coffee shops, malls, streets where kids cruise, parks where skaters ride, beaches, and clubs. All these seem to be gospel-free zones. Our own students can

infiltrate these areas and bring hope to the hopeless. Student leadership is the ticket for expansive youth ministry.

### EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEADERSHIP— THE UNTAPPED RESOURCE

Youth pastors and other leaders sometimes state that they lack growth potential in their youth ministry because there is not enough adult help. In some cases this is true, but God has a rich resource of young leaders who are often overlooked. Young people lead other young people the best. Our foreign missions philosophy can apply to the youth culture. The indigenous church is the most effective tool to reach a culture. Youth pastor, you are in the equipping business (Ephesians 4:12). The youth in your church will be equipped to serve the Lord, not by an army of well-trained adults, but by an army of well-trained youth. Youth who are not involved in a meaningful ministry within the church or youth group are not as likely to consistently participate in the youth program.

Let God give you the vision and strategy to equip your teens to touch their world. If they can do it while they

are under your ministry, think of what they will do as adults. Think of the blessing that well-trained youth will be to your senior pastor. Many youth pastors are blessed with adult leadership, but youth pastors can enhance their ministry by building strong student disciples. (See the sidebar, Purposeful Discipleship—Connecting Beliefs to Behavior.) Youth pastor, call your students to greatness. Build a structure to get them there, and you will be amazed at what God will do. Remember, He will do “exceedingly abundantly” more than you can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

God is calling faithful men and women to equip and entrust the kingdom of God to the youth of this nation. May we have the courage and passion to see, with eyes of faith, God’s provision inside and outside our youth rooms. May God give us anguish of heart until we see Christ formed in them. **e**

*Jeff P. Kennedy is youth director for the Michigan District of the Assemblies of God, Farmington Hills, Michigan.*



## PURPOSEFUL DISCIPLESHIP—CONNECTING BELIEFS TO BEHAVIOR

In a society where truth is created by convenience, many teens see no problem when their spiritual decisions don’t affect specific demonstration. Christianity may merely be one compartment in their lives. Developing a relationship with Jesus that permeates every aspect of life starts by not simply having things to know, but also things to be and to do. Students will make the connection as you help them to:

- **Meet the challenge.**—Raise the tough issues and answer difficult questions. Other people and things in life will challenge their faith. As a friend, you should help them challenge it first. An unchallenged faith is not owned.
- **Get a taste.**—Determine exactly what you want students to grasp about following Christ. Lead them into situations that will give a taste of this truth.
- **Look in the mirror.**—Help students learn to recognize spiritual strengths and discover where theirs might apply.
- **Give something back.**—Teach them to look for opportunities to serve Jesus through others. As students mature, their focus turns to what they can contribute rather than what they get out of ministry.
- **Keep their eyes open.**—Train teens to look for natural opportunities to talk about Christ and to seize them in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Pray things done.**—Programming, planning, promotion, and personality are ultimately powerless without prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 1:4; 4:6).
- **Stay in check.**—Set expectations high and keep students accountable through personal time, levels of leadership, and mentoring. Always inspect what you expect.
- **Keep first things first.**—“Do you love me?” (John 21:15–17). This is the first question to be answered, not “Do you love people?” or “Are you willing to do...?” From this love relationship comes spiritual power and sensitivity. Acts 4:13 states, “They had been with Jesus.” Students should view their “Jesus time” as the only nonnegotiable part of their schedule.

—Carey Huffman is youth consultant for the Christian Education Counselor, Springfield, Missouri.



A stylized illustration on the left side of the page shows a woman with dark hair and a child behind her, both looking towards the right. They are set against a background of numerous long, thin, overlapping rays in shades of purple and pink that fan out from the left. The woman is wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark pants, and the child is wearing a similar light-colored t-shirt.

B Y J E A N N E M A Y O

# Changing the Tags

**T**he rumors you may have heard are true. At the Mayo home it is not uncommon to have all the living room furniture on our front lawn, so there is space for the trampoline in our living room. Teenagers from my youth group pile into our home to do hysterical exploits on the trampoline (we have high ceilings). It is not even uncommon for some of the more daring teenagers to jump from the balcony overhead onto the trampoline. That same living room floor space is also the sight of sumo-wrestling competitions, midnight-Communion sharing, Christmas parties in July, and hundreds of heart-to-heart talks.

I probably need to answer the unspoken question. After three decades in youth ministry and with a pretty decent-sized youth outreach, shouldn't someone else run the trampoline-and-sumo moments? My

answer is a resounding, "No." My personal philosophy is that when I'm out of the trampoline-and-sumo moments, I am out of true youth ministry.

Early in my ministry I scribbled down a quote that has been crucial in my own youth ministry philosophy. It reads: "He who spends the most time...wins." Simply put, this youth culture will not be permanently impacted for Christ apart from the investment of personal relationship and time. I recall the first time it dawned on me that teenagers in my group rarely remember the messages I spend many prayerful hours preparing. After I'd been in ministry for only a year, a young teenager said, "Face reality, Jeanne. We don't remember much of anything you preach. We just remember how you treat us. So your job is really simple. Just make us



think you really like us, and everything spiritual will fall into line."

Granted, the young man's theology was a little twisted. But using his words as a springboard, allow me to share a few specifics for building significant relationships within the context of youth ministry.

### **BUILDING SIGNIFICANT YOUTH MINISTRY RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **1. Get out of your religious ivory tower and into their world.**

Many youth pastors try to do the majority of their relationship building on church property. But your effectiveness multiplies powerfully when you leave your spiritual comfort zone and courageously appear on their turf.

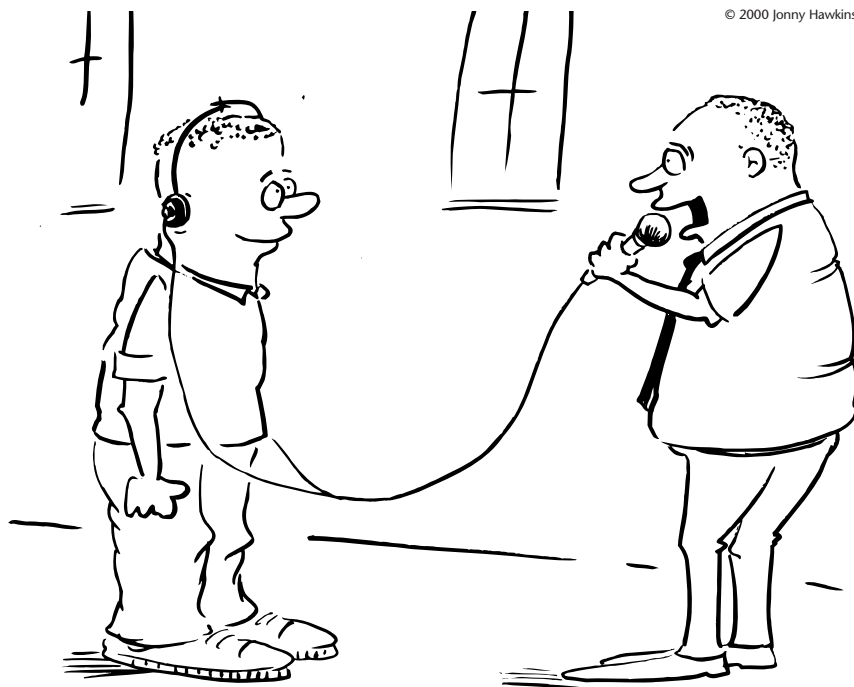
When I am attempting to bridge my way into a student's life, I often go to his or her lunchroom or on the sidelines of his or her sporting event. Take for example an incredible young man named Nick. Nick's name was smattered all over Rockford's sports headlines because of his staggering football skills. Then one crisp, fall night, tragedy struck when his ACL was torn and his brilliant senior football season came to an abrupt halt. I'm convinced my spirited

cheerleading at his games gave me a heightened voice to speak words of hope, direction, and faith during the following painful days. Now, months later, that same talented young man is preparing for full-time ministry. Why? Perhaps because I took time to come out of my church ivory tower and show up in his world of high school football.

#### **2. Listen far more aggressively than you talk.**

The Book of James tells us that as Christians we should be slow to speak but swift to listen. Those desiring to impact today's youth culture should be even slower to speak...and swifter to listen. Teach yourself to make mental notes on topics that are important to individual teenagers. Then take time to sincerely bring those things up in conversation. Teenagers truly don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Today's shallow family relationships make many of our youth starved for anyone who will truly communicate with them. Sincere conversations on anything from relationships to hobbies to history term papers build relational bridges that will eventually carry much weight for you.

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**"As youth pastor, I feel as though we've been communicating much better lately."**

Occasionally, have the guts to ask questions of a more serious nature—"How can I be a friend to you at this point in your life?" or "Give me one thing on which I could support you in prayer." Then listen as the teenager answers, because those answers will give you a window into his or her soul.

#### **3. Build some memories or memory-events—the kind they'll remember in the scrapbook of their minds.**

Our Heavenly Father modeled throughout the Old Testament the importance of building memories. He frequently instructed the Children of Israel to gather stones and build a memorial to commemorate a meaningful occasion. Because the media has largely raised today's youth rather than parents, teens have not learned how to create their own fun. Thus, much of the sin you will deal with in youth ministry will boil down to teenagers who simply got bored and wanted to have some fun.

Help the teenagers in your youth ministry create some great memories rather than waiting for them to happen. Sometimes those memory-moments are made one teenager at a time. I have countless personal rituals with teenagers ranging from late-night phone calls after an important date to yearly visits to a mother's gravesite on the anniversary of her funeral.

Other memories will be ones you experience together as a group. Sometimes glorious moments of spontaneous fun, spirituality, or tenderness will erupt with unexpected impact. Other times, these memory-moments will be ones you need to privately help plan and execute. Recently, I showed up in senior hall at one of our local high schools and passed out free breakfast to everyone who came through, along with humorous gifts that proclaimed that day as "Spoil the Seniors Day." I hosted a moving candlelight-devotional day on the beach during a trip with some of our students, complete with mementos of the night together. Some of my leaders helped coordinate "The

World's Largest TP Job" (complete with aerial view photographs of the friends' homes that were targeted). Events can be serious or funny. Jesus made memories with His disciples, and we need to follow this powerful pattern.

The memory-event itself does not need to be anything lavish. The power in the moment rests in the heart and spirit behind it. Just hours ago, a sharp teenage girl hugged me and emotionally shared that every morning when she gets up she looks at a gift I had given her. What was the expensive gift? It was a leaf I picked up one fall afternoon and placed in her hand after we had a serious talk. "You told me," she said, "every time I look at that leaf, to remember that you and Jesus love me. It sounds so silly, but every morning I glance at it, and Jesus reminds me that both you and He are still on my team."

#### 4. Cash in during moments of personal hurt or pain.

C.S. Lewis once said, "God whispers in the good times but He shouts in pain." How powerfully correct that statement is. Moments of pain or disappointment are what I call high-impact moments. Students remember for the rest of their lives who was there when they found out their parents were getting a divorce


or that their mom had cancer. Likewise, the bond between me and some of my teens is never stronger than right after they lose a crucial basketball game, and we linger in the gym until the lights are turned off and we slowly walk out together. Emotions are not always rational during adolescent years, but they are real. If I don't care about the pain they feel when they don't get asked out for homecoming, I probably won't be the person who hears their pain when they mess up big time on the Internet.

#### KEEP CHANGING THE TAGS

"Triage" is one of my favorite stories that summarizes the importance of relationships in youth ministry. It occurred during World War II. Triage was the policy by which doctors color-tagged the wounded indicating the degree of medical assistance they would be given. Red tags were placed on men who appeared to be hopeless; blue tags indicated a soldier would survive only if medical attention was given immediately; and a yellow tag meant a wounded soldier would survive even without rapid treatment. A soldier named Lou was brought in for medical review and quickly tagged with a red tag, indicating the hopeless manner of his condition. "After all," the doctor said, "his legs are

so badly blown apart that life would be excruciating." But a nearby nurse, noticing that Lou was still conscious, began to talk softly with him so he would not face death alone. The moments of conversation spanned to an hour. Finally, because of the relationship that had been built between the two of them, the nurse simply could not allow Lou to die. What did she do? She replaced his red tag with a blue one, making possible the medical assistance that saved his life.

What is our calling in youth ministry? Part of it is powerfully pictured in this story. The Master Youth Pastor calls us not just to preach sermons, but to live them...in the context of close relationships with our kids. And as we see countless ones who are mortally wounded by the enemy's attacks, we have the privilege of making Christ's love real and life changing.

What is relational youth ministry? It is the call to keep changing the tags one person at a time. There are lots of red-tagged teenagers. Christ's love through your life may be the only thing that truly changes the color. 

*Jeanne Mayo is youth pastor at First Assembly of God, Rockford, Illinois.*



## TEN RELATIONSHIP BUSTERS IN YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Preach "louder" than you live.
2. In the name of spirituality, be serious most of the time. After all, godly people don't laugh much.
3. Live inside the church walls "24-7." If a teenager wants to see you, be predictably behind the computer in the office.
4. Major on the minors. Do sermon series on important topics like hair length, pierced ears, and loud music.
5. Become a master at T.R.T. (typical religious talk). Have an answer for everything. Make sure your answer is low on feeling but high on facts.
6. Talk down to the teenagers in your ministry. After all, you're the leader, aren't you? Cultivate a sense of "us and them."
7. Never say you're sorry...and rarely admit you are wrong. Doing this will make you appear weak and human.
8. Never ask for their opinion. After all, you're the leader, not them (in fact, they probably need to sing "How Great Thou Art" to you occasionally as a part of the youth worship service).
9. Do things in much the same way you did years ago. After all, if King James was good enough for the apostle Paul, why should you read Scripture out of *The Message*? Change and flexibility are signs of compromise.
10. Last, rotate out of youth ministry every 1-2 years (or at the bare minimum, change youth groups that frequently). Don't stay with one group of students long enough for them to take you for granted or crucify you. Jesus hung around with the same group too long, and look at the trouble it caused Him.

—Jeanne Mayo is youth pastor at First Assembly of God, Rockford, Illinois.

# ADULT LEADERS—

# THE MISSING LINK

They were face to face in the corner of the youth room by the time I noticed them—fingers were pointing, arms were waving, and they were talking loudly. A disagreement had surfaced between one of my adult staff and one of my most promising teenage girls. As I approached what was now a full-blown argument, I heard my adult leader say, “You have to listen to me—I’m older and wiser than you.” With that, the teenager spun around and left the room. That was the night I realized that adult workers are either an asset or an obstacle in youth ministry.

Today, almost 13 years later, things have changed. I now have 53 well-trained adult workers. Every week I receive praise reports from these adults about what God is doing through them to impact teens. We have come a long way since the incident described earlier. What was the change? How did it occur? How did these adult leaders develop a heart to minister?

## ADULT LEADERS ARE NECESSARY

Adult leaders are necessary if you have a growing, high-impact youth ministry. Many youth pastors see the need for adult workers but try to run their program without them. These youth pastors view adult leaders as a threat rather than as sincere individuals who can provide strength and stability to the overall youth program.

Other youth pastors view adult leaders as a necessary evil and feel forced to provide adult supervision for their program. Youth pastors with this attitude are missing a blessing.

Adult leaders provide stability and depth in youth ministry that cannot be achieved without their involvement. Training adult leadership is no different than training any other leadership

team. The youth pastor must spend time, energy, and resources to equip adults to lead. Without this investment, adult leadership will be ineffective or counter-productive. The leadership of the youth pastor determines the effectiveness of adult leaders.

Adult leaders can bring much to a leadership team, but many youth pastors confine their adult leaders to one of the following three areas:

**1. Van drivers.** Several youth ministries use adults to provide rides to camps, retreats, and conventions. With nothing more to do than occasionally driving a van, the adult worker eventually becomes bored and quits because he or she is not involved in the heart of the youth ministry.

**2. Discipline.** Many youth ministers only utilize adult workers to help keep order in the weekly youth service. Training young people to behave in a worship service is only effective when it comes from the youth pastor. In almost 6 years at my church, I’ve never had to remove a young person who was disturbing the flow of the service or my message. The key is to be direct, firm, and consistent when it comes to correction. Consistency will keep the group under control and cause newcomers to conform to the norm of your service.

Young people live in a world without boundaries. Many students’ lives are void of leadership, discipline, and order—things they desperately need. It is unfair to ask adults to come to youth

service and be responsible for policing the youth. This is not ministry—it’s a frustrating and thankless job. Too often youth pastors have other adults handle discipline because they want to remain popular with the teens. If popularity is your goal, may I suggest a career change? Teens will love and respect you as their leader when you demonstrate honesty and love them unconditionally.

**3. The big-event mentality.** Frustration from a lack of growth in your youth ministry can lead to the big-event mentality. Panic

sets in, so you think the big event will be your salvation to a larger, more effective youth program. The Power Team, a popular Christian music group, or a charismatic youth evangelist

is brought in to fix the youth ministry. The event is widely promoted through fundraising, selling tickets, placing posters around town, providing announcements for the radio, making phone calls, inviting friends, and notifying schools.

Suddenly, you realize that if all goes well hundreds of teenagers will be on the church property in just a matter of days, and there is no way you can handle the anticipated crowd. The solution: adult workers. To locate the adult workers you need, you talk to parents of teens, ask friends in the church, and make announcements in the church bulletin. Little discrimination, if any, is used.





As the youth pastor, you get commitments from several adults who agree to help. They are introduced the following Wednesday night as new youth leaders. The day of the big event arrives, and you release the new adult workers into the sea of teenagers. Unfortunately, most of the workers are not equipped for youth ministry. The following Wednesday night, the new adult leaders show up for the midweek service but have no idea what they are expected to do. A couple of weeks later they get discouraged and wonder what happened to the excitement they experienced at the big event. They become disillusioned with the youth ministry and quit.

If adult workers are ineffective and untrained it is the fault of the youth pastor. Adult workers must be trained, equipped, and taught what to do as youth leaders.

#### **ADULT LEADERS ARE SERVANT LEADERS**

The adult leadership team is an incredibly

valuable piece to the overall puzzle of youth ministry. They can do things that make my ministry extremely effective and can teach things that can't be taught in a sermon. I value the adult leaders in my ministry because they are servant leaders. Their specific purpose is to serve the youth. Their job description starts and ends on this single point.

I train my adult leaders to be servant-leaders, and each of my 53 youth workers engages in service-motivated ministry responsibilities at our Thursday night service. After service, it's not unusual to see adults picking up paper or other trash, praying with a teen at the altar, giving rides home, helping in the cafe, or providing change for a phone call.

Each adult worker operates as a row pastor during the youth service. I assign two adults as row pastors for each row of chairs. Instead of me being responsible for 400–500 youth on a Thursday night, each set of row pastors takes care of 12 youth. They greet, welcome, and minister to the youth in their row that

night. When they do this, I have ensured two important things: (1) The needs of all the youth have an opportunity to be met, and (2) every adult worker has an opportunity for real ministry. Every week, just before worship, we allow the row pastors 8 minutes to demonstrate practical servanthood to their youth. It literally makes a difference in young people's lives, because for many it tears down walls of resistance so Christ can change their hearts.

Servanthood transforms adults into youth workers. Average adults will insist on unearned respect and admiration simply because they are older and more experienced. Perhaps you've heard adults say to students, "You have to listen to me—I'm older and wiser than you. In fact, I'm old enough to be your parent." There isn't a 13-year-old today who will respond well to that kind of attitude.

Remember, leadership is influence. It has nothing to do with one's age, experience, gray hair, or ability to nag. The

### **TRAINING ADULT WORKERS FOR SERVANTHOOD**

Training adult workers is vital to the success of your leadership team. Great leaders are not born; they are made. Nowhere is this more evident than with adult youth workers. Because of the age difference and the lack of respect that characterizes today's teen culture, adult youth workers have their work cut out for them. Adult workers will effectively minister to teenagers when they learn how to serve them. Serving is the key that opens doors in teenagers' lives. This belief has led me to develop a training program that is based on servanthood.

#### **1. The mindset of an adult leader.**

This teaching is based on the life of Caleb (Joshua 14:6–12). Caleb's age had nothing to do with his spirit. He was aggressive and ready to do what needed to be done. This is the mind-set I expect in the adult leaders on my staff. There are four key truths I draw from the life of Caleb.

*a. Caleb's age was an asset to him.* He refused to slow down simply because he was older than those around him.

*b. Caleb demonstrated an unshakable faith in God that had been tried and tested by situations and circumstances.*

*c. Caleb possessed a positive outlook on life.* After 40 years in the wilderness, his outlook on life remained optimistic. I love to be around people who have experience because they have experienced life and are excited about tomorrow.

*d. Caleb knew what needed to be done and did it.* He was

not intimidated by the task, nor did he consider defeat an option. This is the mind-set that teens need in their leaders.

**2. Giving like a servant** (Philippians 2:3,4).

**3. Forgiving like a servant** (Matthew 5:23,24).

**4. Thinking like a servant** (2 Corinthians 10:1–7).

**5. Servanthood—the big three.**

- a. Consistency*
- b. Leadership*
- c. Sacrifice*

**6. Seeing like a servant**—The art of spotting need.

**7. Acting like a servant** (1 Peter 2:21).

**8. Having the power of a servant** (Matthew 5).

**9. Building like a servant** (Nehemiah 4).

**10. Harvesting like a servant** (2 Timothy 2).

—Bret L. Allen, Concord, California.





## YOUTH MINISTRY: FORMING TEAM LEADERSHIP WITH LAYPEOPLE

To create an effective youth ministry team, the youth pastor must have direction, goals, and an understanding of youth ministry. The leader must be one step closer to the cross than those he/she leads and committed to those he/she serves. Here are four areas that will lead to a successful youth program.

### CASTING VISION

The pastor and youth pastor are responsible for casting vision for youth ministry. By casting vision, ministry can effectively take place through a lay leadership team. When dreams for youth ministry come from the pulpit, the hearts of the people are opened and this encourages commitment of time, finances, and resources for youth ministry.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Youth worker application forms should be required for each worker and kept on file. The youth pastor interviews those desiring to help in youth ministry. The interview helps assess each person's abilities and gifts, and allows the youth pastor to discuss commitments, challenges, and responsibilities. A job description is helpful. Help youth workers understand that their personal life, conduct, and choices will be paramount in their effectiveness in making a lasting effect on teens (see 1 Corinthians 6:12).



### EXPECTATIONS

The following three levels of commitment are required for youth workers to serve.

*Level 1.* Workers can help with social activities. Encourage participation in other youth-related events and services. Ask workers to pray for the youth group and its leadership.

*Level 2.* Time commitment at this level is approximately 2 to 4 hours a week. Areas of serving include assisting in youth activities and interacting socially and spiritually with youth. Attending weekly youth services is mandatory. Other responsibilities could be added. Their attendance on trips and events is encouraged and welcomed. Ask them to pray for new youth members and visitors.

*Level 3.* This level requires 4 to 8 hours of commitment each week. The principal focus of lay involvement at this level is to help move youth into ministry positions. Workers can be involved in counseling, prayer meetings, planning and carrying out ministries, discipleship groups, and planning trips and events.

Youth workers should begin at level 1. As they develop, move them to the next level. Allow God to help you discern where workers might best be used. They will be most productive if you place them where they are gifted.

### MENTORING AND TRAINING

Leaders need to be mentored and trained. Remember they are volunteers with their own needs. During your mentoring, you may find personal problems, spiritual needs, or gifts that differ from the tasks they are doing.

Those who are at levels 2 and 3 need to attend staff meetings. During these meetings, present training techniques to enhance the youth staff. Allow for ownership and involvement of the youth program by the youth workers.

Each quarter meet with workers and plan the quarter's events. Identify the victories over the last quarter. Cast vision for youth ministry and pray for your leaders and the needs of the teens in your youth group.

Conduct annual staff-appreciation retreats. Allow God to meet staff needs by preaching the Word, praying for each other and the youth group. Evaluate ministry results. Ask, "What core values are being established by our youth group activities and experiences? Which ones are being missed?" Conduct leadership training and recast dreams and visions. Evaluate the methods you are using to accomplish the four aspects of youth ministry: worship, fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism.

A guest speaker can also challenge your team, provide support for your vision, and develop team unity.

### SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Mentoring by example is your greatest asset. Being a servant leader will enhance your ministry. Your willingness and ability to serve will make the youth workers' tasks easier and are valuable to them and the ministry. Layworkers will catch the vision and believe they can make a difference by serving and giving.

—Keith Elder is director of Youth and Christian Education for the Montana District. He lives in Billings, Montana.

only way to influence is to serve with a pure heart. Servanthood will afford you opportunities into the lives of teens. This is why my adult leadership team is on the bottom of my leadership flow chart under the junior high, senior high, and Master's Commission leaders—because they are present to *serve* young people.

Servant leaders have the attitude of Christ found in Philippians 2:5-8: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (NIV).

## DEVELOPING QUALITY YOUTH WORKERS

To get great youth workers you have to make them. Great youth workers don't grow on trees or come parcel post from heaven. They are produced. Here is how I select adult youth leadership:

### The Assignment

When adults inquire about youth work, I schedule a meeting to discuss our youth ministry. I explain the purpose, vision, and mission statement of our program. I ask them to attend a midweek service, a junior or senior high Sunday school class, and a

Saturday outreach in the community. I want potential leaders to experience as many aspects of our ministry as possible. I'm excited if they are coming to help—but if they are coming to change things or straighten me out, I let them know that God has called me to serve as youth pastor and has given me the vision for this ministry. I don't want adult workers who have it in their heart to change the direction of the ministry. After the adults have visited the youth meeting, I arrange a follow-up meeting. I have never had a major problem with our adult leadership when I use this procedure.

### The Probation

After the three-part assignment, 50 percent of the adults never contact me again. Not everyone is called to work with youth. With a 50-percent elimination rate, I've prevented many potential problems. Standards and honesty have a way of doing that.

Those who do come to the follow-up meeting are placed on a 6-month probation. Each adult is assigned to work with another youth worker, but holds no authority until the 6 months are over. Six months may seem like a long time, but it takes that much time for an adult worker to understand my philosophy of ministry and for us to get to know each other. This time requirement contributes to the longevity of adult youth workers.


Another reason I insist on 6 months is because some people can present a facade for a month, some for 2 or even 3 months. But I have never met anyone who can maintain a facade for 6 months. At the end of 6 months, I'll know if they possess the all-important trait of consistency. I will know if I want them to influence the youth or not. Six months isn't that long when you consider the importance of the task surrounding the adult worker—to serve youth who need to accurately see the love of Christ.

### Application and Fingerprinting

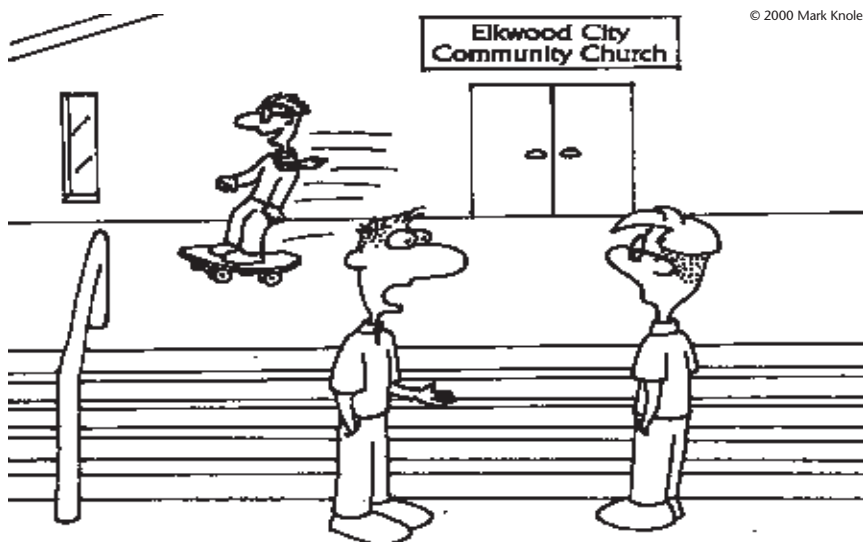
Before I allow adults to join my staff, they must fill out a four-page youth workers application. I also ask them to be fingerprinted at the police department. Each applicant gives me the fingerprint card and completed application. I give the information to our business manager for a complete background check. This ensures that my youth workers do not have criminal records or a history of child molestation.

### Training

After being accepted as youth workers and following 6 months of probation, adult leaders are introduced to the youth ministry in a festive atmosphere during a Thursday night service. Everybody knows the commitment required to reach this level. After they become adult leaders, they are required to attend monthly leadership training sessions where they learn to be better servant leaders. (See the sidebar, Training Adult Workers for Servanthood.)

Adult youth workers are a blessing from God. They will enrich your life and ministry, but only if they are recruited and trained correctly. Troubled teens will know that Jesus loves them when adults serve them week after week in practical and loving ways. 

*Bret L. Allen is youth pastor at Calvary Temple in Concord, California.*



**"He's the envy of the entire staff!"**



# interview

WITH TOM BACHMAN, DAVE MEWBOURNE, AND STEVE PULIS

## Students Reaching Students for Christ



**TOM BACHMAN**



**DAVE MEWBOURNE**



**STEVE PULIS**

*The face and focus of youth ministry are changing. No longer are youth groups seen as merely havens of shelter where weary-worn teens run to escape the pressures of a culture out of control. Rather, local church youth groups are now training grounds where young people are disciplined and commissioned as missionaries to reach their local campuses for Christ.*

*Three nationally appointed Youth Alive missionaries visited with Enrichment to discuss campus missions and how teens are impacting their campuses for Christ. The Youth Alive representatives are: Tom Bachman, Oregon; Dave Mewbourne, Oklahoma; and Steve Pulis, Southern Missouri.*

### WHAT POSITIVE THINGS ARE HAPPENING ON HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES TODAY?

**BACHMAN:** We are seeing young people witnessing to their friends, starting Bible clubs that are radically changing campuses, and leading their friends to Christ. There is a hunger for hope and truth like we've never seen before.

**MEWBOURNE:** Young people are becoming aware of their surroundings and aware of the ministry opportunities on campus. Traditionally, students

went to high school for their education. Young people were also involved in sports and other school activities, but they didn't see it as a place to witness for Christ. The whole focus in youth ministry was Christian events—church, conventions, and camps—and we didn't see the campus as a place for ministry.

Young people today understand that on campus they can flesh out everything their youth pastor has been teaching them. Christian teens are being enabled and made aware that they are getting the strength, resources, and support they need through the local church. These teens understand the missions vision of the church and that they are capable of ministry. It's one thing to feel you are supposed to witness, but it is another thing to feel you can do it.

**PULIS:** Because of the tragedies that have happened at schools in the last 3 to 4 years, parents and grandparents are focusing their attention on the campus. Many of them are wondering, *Is this going to happen in our community? What can we do to keep this from happening again?*

From the students' point of view, there is no longer the jock crowd, the

athletes, or the popular students that we used to see on campus. It is now somewhat different—there are groups of students who get together and hang out together who really don't care who the starting quarterback is or who the cheerleaders are.

### **DESCRIBE THE PARADIGM SHIFT THAT IS TAKING PLACE IN CAMPUS MINISTRY?**

**BACHMAN:** The paradigm shift that is taking place is from church-based ministry to campus-based ministry. This paradigm understands that we have a mission field on school campuses.

we spent 9 months getting students ready for the missions trip during the summer. We need to change our view and our focus needs to shift. More and more groups are going to summer camps and on missions trips to prepare and train students for the 9-month missions trip at school.

### **WHAT IS A CAMPUS MISSIONS PHILOSOPHY?**

**BACHMAN:** Campus missions has a philosophy that takes students from the local church and sends them into the campus as commissioned missionaries. The local church helps students on their campuses. Our strategy

moves the hand of God.

Second, we want young people to become involved in serving their campuses any way they can. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink" (NIV). Serving is loving people. We hope students will grasp this idea and take it to their campuses. Serving builds relationship, and relationship builds influence.

Third, we try to get young people involved in giving; not just monetary giving, but giving their time as well. If we can get young people focused

**We see young people witnessing to their friends, starting Bible clubs that are radically changing campuses, and leading their friends to Christ.—Bachman**



**PULIS:** The public school campus is a mission field. In every community, 5 days a week, 9 months a year, students go to school. We are challenging students to be missionaries to their schools. Whatever people group, whatever group of friends they have, whoever they hang out with before or after school, whatever clubs they are in, they can be missionaries at school. We want students to share Christ with their friends, to be involved in evangelism.

For a long time in youth ministry

is to give teens an overview of what we'd like to see them do, and then the local church's youth pastor can take these guidelines and lead his/her students into what he/she wants to see the ministry accomplish.

Our philosophy consists of five lifestyle areas. First, we want the students to be intercessors and pray for their campuses, administrators, principals, friends, and those who have anything to do with the campuses. And not just the campuses, but their neighborhoods. We know that prayer

on giving to their local churches as well as to their communities, they will be givers the rest of their lives.

Fourth, we want students to live lifestyles that glorify Jesus Christ on their campuses. We want students to stand for Christ.

Finally, we want the youth to tell their friends about Jesus. These students can go onto their campuses and fulfill the Great Commission. We're not going to limit them by telling them to share with just two or three of their friends. We want them to tell



**Our young people, trained through our churches and through our events to become mature Christians, use their training and become active in doing something about their campus mission field.**

**—Mewbourne**



how Christ has changed their lives every chance they can.

Each local youth group can decide how they are going to fulfill those things as a group and then take it to the school. And as a missions organization on campus, they may decide to serve in ways that other groups can't or won't. For example, they can clean the stadium after every basketball or football game, or show appreciation to their teachers by giving them cookies. But the key is looking for ways to serve, pray, give, tell, or live their lives for Christ.

**MEWBOURNE:** In Oklahoma, campus missions has been enriched because our local pastors have seen that it contains a specific plan. There is a strategy for an individual teen who may become part of a club. This strategy makes that campus club stronger because it includes young people who are committed to doing the five lifestyles and commitments that Tom just mentioned. Our young people, trained through our churches and through our events to become mature Christians, use their training and become active in doing

something about their campus mission field.

**PULIS:** One of the key connections with the campus missionary approach is that students receive from their churches direction concerning what they are to do with their lives.

At the end of a service, we call students forward and pray for them (just as a foreign or home missionary would be commissioned) and commission students to go to their campuses. In this, the church gives them purpose and shows them they're supposed to share Christ with their friends. And they will carry that connection with them for the rest of their lives, into the workplace, or wherever God calls them. It also connects the church with the campus because senior citizens and others are praying for these campus missionaries.

**WHY DO YOU FOCUS MORE ON CAMPUS CLUBS RATHER THAN BIBLE CLUBS?**

**MEWBOURNE:** The reason why we're talking about campus clubs

rather than Bible clubs is not to eliminate, water down, or compromise the position of the Bible and Bible clubs. But Bible clubs on campus have been more social in nature, or "holy huddles"—a handful of young people in one corner of the cafeteria having a devotional. That's not going to affect the school. That's not giving them a personal directive for their lives in Christ on the campus.

**PULIS:** We want the clubs to be evangelistic rather than have only an inward focus and building each other up. Discipleship is the role of the local church, and our churches do a great job of that. The campus is the place for evangelism.

For a long time when you thought of Youth Alive, you thought of a Bible club. Now in Youth Alive we have a larger picture of campus ministry. Youth Alive is a strategy to present Christ on campus in any number of methods and tools that we have, one of which is a club. It's an important one, but it's just one tool in the bigger picture of reaching every student on every campus in every community.

**BACHMAN:** God gave us an open door to step onto the campus as evangelists and teachers instead of trying to do “holy huddles.” It is our job to help students fulfill God’s call in their lives, not to hide as Christians, but to fulfill the Great Commission on their mission field.

Here is a testimony from one of our campus missionaries, Tracy Trotter:

We have started a Bible study at Thurston High School, and our numbers have grown dramatically. At last count we had about 85 people. We are meeting during our activity period in the band room, but we need a bigger place.

“We have seen numerous kids saved. Last week alone, we had three saved; the week before that, we had two saved; and the week before that, another two. God is doing an awesome work.

“We’re not allowed to advertise on the announcements or on posters. Tell those other campus missionaries they shouldn’t be shy about telling people about God. At my school, the administration is making it tough on us; but God still has opened doors.

The band teacher has graciously let us use his band room, and that’s the only way the school will allow us to be there. I believe that if we can do it with all the odds against us, that anybody can have an organized outreach for God on their campus too.”

#### **HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOUTH LEADERS TO SPEND TIME ON CAMPUS?**


**PULIS:** The campus is our students’ world. Everything that happens to them primarily revolves around what happens at school. If youth leaders aren’t involved on the campus, they’re going to have a tough time being relevant to what a student is going through. Youth pastors need to eat lunch in the school cafeteria, and attend sporting events and school plays.

**MEWBOURNE:** The old model of campus ministry for youth leaders included their presence on campus with the young people in their youth groups. The paradigm in campus ministry has shifted to youth pastors training students to reach students. When youth pastors go on campus, it

is mainly to support those students. School groups are student led and student initiated, which takes the pressure off the youth pastor. His or her presence is there to reinforce the student.

#### **WHAT ARE PRAYER ZONE PARTNERS?**

**MEWBOURNE:** Prayer Zone Partners is a concept where we link as many people as possible—not just students and youth leaders, but every aspect of the Christian community—with a prayer strategy for school campuses. When Prayer Zone Partners see a school zone sign, they slow down and pray as they’re going through the school zone. They pray for the schools, administrators, and students. The concept is simple. Instead of getting up at 5 o’clock in the morning and praying for our campuses, we pray for them when we see a school zone sign.

**PULIS:** Every time I drive through a school zone I make that school zone my prayer zone. People are catching on and jumping on the bandwagon and praying. 

**If youth leaders aren’t involved on the campus, they’re going to have a tough time being relevant to what a student is going through.—Pulis**



YOUTH MINISTRIES

# URBAN YOUTH MI

## LONG-TERM INVASIONS VERSUS DRIVE-BY

BY KEVIN RAMSBY





# MINISTRY: OUTREACHES

His voice still echoes loud and clear in my mind a year and a half after the news report flashed on the local television station. “I love this neighborhood,” the 15-year-old proudly stated as I drove him home after a youth drama outreach. “It’s mine and my boys.” He was referring to his local gang, the Cash Flow Posse. The tragic story of Jeff has led me to ask hard questions, especially concerning the overwhelming need for urban youth pastors and the ineffectiveness of short-term outreach—drive-by evangelism (John 15:13).

## THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JEFF

Jeff’s life was cut short by a bullet to the back of his head.

His life changed direction between the ages of 11 and 13 when he and two friends decided to get “jumped-in” to one of the PeeWee’s—gangs for 10- to 16-year-olds. As he distanced himself from the church, Jeff’s appetite for money, power, position, and a new family led him to work his way up through the gang.

As one of the top three leaders, Jeff recruited young gang members, some as young as 10 years old. Jeff knew about God through children’s outreaches and the testimony of several born-again brothers and sisters. He would occasionally come to the youth meetings to check things out. His visits became more frequent in his final 2 months. At the last youth service Jeff attended, he bowed his head and accepted Christ as his Savior. His last words at the altar were that he needed to take care of some things next week, but he would be back to church, “for sure,” in 2 weeks. Jeff never had a chance to come back to church.

Jeff went back to his gang, wanting to change his life. A disagreement erupted while talking with one of the leaders. Witnesses said that Jeff finally turned to walk away from the disagreement when a 13-year-old coleader grabbed a .25-caliber pistol from a friend’s pocket and shot Jeff. Jeff’s choice to leave the gang resulted in his body being dumped on the train tracks.

Although over 35 people raised their heads in recognition of the need to change their lives for Christ at Jeff’s funeral, none of his gang family bothered to come and pay their last respects. Gangs are fiercely loyal to their own, and they didn’t come for a reason—Jeff was making a break for life.

Disciplemakers are needed to help these 35 young people grow in their faith. But where are the disciplemakers, the ones who will go into the large inner cities of America and provide long-term, life-producing ministry to urban youth?

## WHERE ARE THE URBAN YOUTH PASTORS?

As Jesus looked over Jerusalem, He wept. He saw people as sheep without a shepherd. Things haven’t changed much in cities in 2,000 years. In youth ministry, the youth of urban America are like sheep without a shepherd. Seventy-five percent of the churches in the inner cities of America do not have a youth pastor or anyone with formal training in youth ministry. Not all Bible colleges offer classes or a course of study in urban youth ministry, although most Bible colleges offer internships.

Regardless, we still need to be proactive in recruiting and training young ministers for the over 50 percent of America's population who live in the cities.

Urban youth ministry presents many challenges, but challenges should not create a detour to putting our hand to the plow and not looking back (Luke 9:62). God's Spirit is calling anointed youth pastors to trust Him for salaries, budgets, and staff who can change a city. In Detroit, we have open doors to 33 recreational centers to impact thousands of youth and children, but few people respond to the call to long-term ministry and mentoring of urban youth.

### LONG-TERM INVASIONS VERSUS DRIVE-BY OUTREACHES

The difference between an invasion and a drive-by outreach is that an invasion results in possession and rulership. A one-time outreach or a drive-by event may create awareness, but not relationships. When Jesus called His disciples to be witnesses, He called them to be life-sacrificing relationship builders, not simply announcers-and-leavers (John 15:16). If we want to reach and change urban youth—and we want them to change as a result of what they see and hear from us—we must invade and possess their territory for Christ, and teach them to rule for themselves (Joshua 1:1–9).

The best form of discipleship is to

teach people to be disciples where they are. City kids see outreaches come and go. City kids are taken out of the city and trained in environments where the challenges needed to survive in the city are not present. Continued life in the city needs to be mentored from the city outward. Our erroneous drive-by, drive-through ministry approach is: What is best for our ministry is best for the city. Instead, we need to ask: What should we do that is best for the city?

### HOW TO DEVELOP AN INNER-CITY YOUTH MINISTRY

There are few models for long-term effectiveness in inner-city youth ministry. Though effective models exist for inner-city children's ministries, substance abuse programs, and community outreaches such as Adopt-a-Block, this is not the case with inner-city youth ministries. Several key elements are crucial for inner-city youth ministry—not only for developing a ministry for long-term, life-building effectiveness, but for maximizing the instant impact that can be made in a field that is ripe for harvest (John 4:35).

#### Find a leader and develop a team.

One of the main assumptions in Scripture is found in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations."\* The assumption is there are believers who are already trained to

make disciples of those who have been taught God's commandments. Urban ministry needs youth leaders who are able to make disciples of others, who in turn can make more disciples.

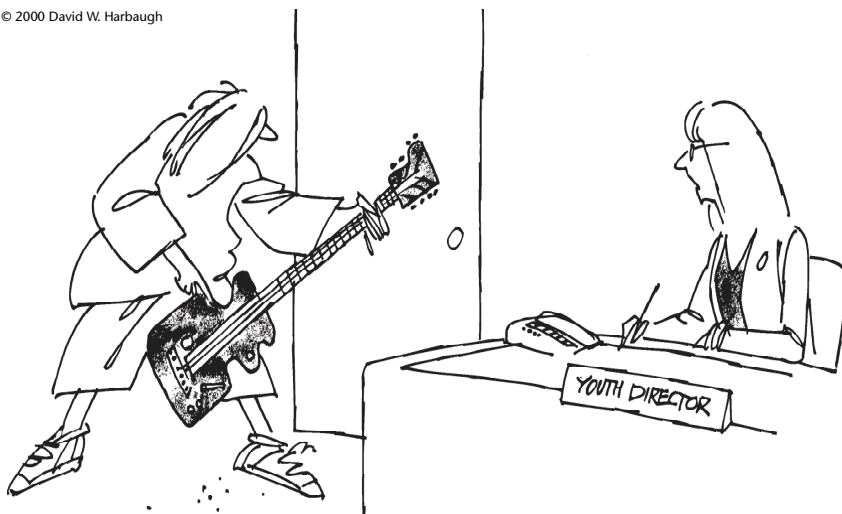
The leader is the key to reaching inner-city youth. The leader must be strong spiritually and emotionally to stay on the roller coaster of urban youth ministry. A youth pastor or youth director must possess vision to launch out into the youth masses of the city for long-term results. He also needs a team of dedicated workers who will help him or her. A ministry's effectiveness drastically declines when it exceeds the ratio of 1 leader for every 10 youth. A youth-ministry team will not only make the difference in the lives of hundreds of youth, but in the longevity and effectiveness of the urban youth pastor.

#### Establish an identity.

Typically every youth group, suburban and urban, has a name for its group. Identity comes in a variety of ways, but identity is never more important than in reaching the masses in inner-city youth ministry. The youth in the city are constantly looking for something to be part of that can impart purpose and vision. Though relationship development will serve as the stream that leads to long-term discipleship, an identity will serve as a magnet to quickly draw youth into the group.

In an urban environment, colors, hand-signs, names, graffiti, and street names identify youth, show their creativity, and mark their territory. They are extremely loyal to the things with which they identify. In Detroit, our youth group, which averaged 20 to 30 for 2 years, increased to over 100 in 1 week as a result of giving new points of identification in displaying Christ's love and power. When we expanded from "Streetside Youth Night" to "Double Dare Nite," our impact level in the school system went from 4 schools to over 30 in 1 month. After 6 months, we wanted the youth to identify more radically in their relationship and commitment with Christ, so we changed our

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**"Kurt, when I asked you to audition, I meant for the bell choir."**



name from Streetside to Club 24.Seven. Since identifying ourselves with the 24/7s of Scripture, we have seen a 50- to 75-percent increase in youth who come with their Bibles, attend church weekly, and who have approached leaders, parents, and friends for forgiveness.

### **Start with a neighborhood but have a vision for the city.**

Define a target area where you will begin, even if it's just one street. To think about ministering to a whole city can be overwhelming, especially if its population is over 1 million. But you can pray, strategize, and walk in faith. Target schools by having students in your group pass out flyers or special materials to other students at their schools. Establish relationships within your target area and partner with other ministries. Don't be a lone ranger by thinking God is going to send everybody to your thing.

### **Provide transportation.**

Whether by bus, van, or car, transportation will inevitably play an important role in your ministry to inner-city youth. In some places, youth may walk or ride their bikes to youth service. But in cities like Detroit, we would reach 10 percent fewer youth on a weekly basis if we didn't provide transportation. In the inner city, many families have only one car, and it is usually not available to the young people.

The target area provides realistic boundary lines for picking up youth. Maximize the amount of youth you can pick up in the least amount of time. At Club 24.Seven, we can pick up 100 to 200 youth within 1 hour and after the service take them home within 30 minutes. By having detailed routes with names, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, and detailed driving instructions, you can establish a team that focuses only on transportation. The key in transportation is consistency, detailed instructions for substitute drivers, and adequate vehicles to bring in the maximum number of youth.

### **Build a bridge from your youth ministry to the children's ministry.**

Be aware of the drop-out factor in your children's ministry. Traditionally, youth groups begin at the junior high level (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade), but in the city the drop-out factor in children's ministry dramatically increases between the ages of 10 and 12. To retain your children, organize a junior varsity group made up of junior high students.

### **Structure your group around age instead of grades.**

Due to a breakdown in the educational system in the inner city (42- to 65-percent student drop-out rate), around half of the teens in our group have failed or have been held back at least 1 year. Students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are sometimes 14 or 15 years old and are peer leaders in their grades because of their age.

### **Compete with the culture.**


If gangs are targeting 10- and 11-year-olds, then so should the church. The culture puts pressure on kids to grow up at an earlier age. This should cause the church to reach out to children and youth to help keep their innocence while equipping them in spiritual things.

### **Develop creative programming that focuses on the Cross.**

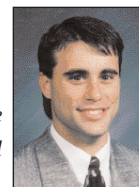
Programming is what takes place in the youth meetings. Though creativity will create excitement, ownership, and increased attendance, it is not the key in changing lives. Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). Paul wrote, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:18,21). The simplicity of our role in youth ministry is that once we have done the

going (Matthew 28:19), Jesus will do the drawing through our preaching and proclamation of the message of the Cross. Many creative techniques can be used to portray the gospel: human videos, mime, dramas, guest speakers. They are all excellent, but unfortunately time plays a role in programming. Use your time wisely. Jeanne Mayo's philosophy: "Pray much...love much...and work much" becomes the cornerstone of reaching inner-city youth.

### **PRAYING IN THE MISSING PIECES**

Youth are waiting for you to bring them the message of Jesus Christ. Whether or not you have a ministry team, vehicles for transport, a worship team to lead in worship, or a building in which to meet—don't quit. Pray, believe, and continue casting the vision. Our urban ministry began with my wife and me, one bus route, 25 youth, no worship team, and no building. God has taken what little we had and multiplied it. By establishing a vision and trusting the Lord with the resources we had, God expanded our leadership team to over 12 adults and 10 students. After we targeted a certain area in our city, three additional bus routes were created—each running 25 to 60 young people a week. For 5 months we were without a worship team. Now God has given us not only a worship team but a youth choir as well. Finally, God has given Club 24.Seven a 3-story warehouse that has become the Good News Gang Metro Club 24.Seven Youth Development Center with dunk basketball cages, activity areas, and even laser tag. No matter what happens, you can do everything through Him who gives you strength (Philippians 4:13) to reach the inner-city youth of America. 

*Kevin Ramsby is the senior associate pastor at Metropolitan World Outreach Center, Detroit, Michigan.*



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



# interview

WITH BRANDI C. DORSETT

## What's a Woman Youth Pastor To Do?



BRANDI C. DORSETT

*The road women in ministry must travel is paved with challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities. Of the 2,690 youth pastors in the Assemblies of God, Brandi Dorsett, youth pastor at First Assembly of God, Wenatchee, Washington, is one of only a handful of women serving in full- or part-time youth ministry positions. Brandi visited with Enrichment to discuss how being a woman in ministry in a male-dominated profession has impacted her life.*

### EXPLAIN YOUR CALL AND DESIRE TO BECOME A YOUTH PASTOR.

I was called to be a youth pastor when I was in the eighth grade. God gave me a passion and burden to reach teenagers. I pursued a youth-ministry degree at Northwest College of the Assemblies of God and have been a youth pastor for almost 8 years.

### WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE AS A WOMAN IN MINISTRY?

My experience has been that some people question the role of women in ministry. They lack understanding of how women in ministry fit with Scripture. Part of my role as a female youth pastor is to expand people's awareness of women in ministry.

### IS THERE ANY AWKWARDNESS IN MINISTERING TO THE YOUNG MEN IN YOUR YOUTH GROUP?

A female youth pastor ministers to the young men in a similar way male youth pastors minister to girls in their youth

group. They need to set appropriate and wise boundaries, and lead by example in knowing and loving God with their lives. It also helps to surround yourself with some male youth staff.

Youth pastors, whether male or female, can be incredible role models and encourage teens to pursue God fervently. I had two great youth pastors growing up who taught me how to be a youth pastor. They were both men, yet they modeled how to be a good youth leader.

I have discovered that personality more than gender is significant. Interests and likes vary depending on the individual. I implement the gifts and qualities God has given me. My interest in drama, science, and the outdoors allows me to relate to guys and girls alike. I connect with kids as we rock climb, river raft, or go out to lunch. I also have surrounded myself with youth staff who have a variety of interests. Together we complement each other's strengths.

I may not shoot hoops with the guys or girls, but I attend their games and cheer them on. I strive to invest my time, love, and life in them.

Respect is earned; gender has little to do with it. I have never had any problems with guys in my youth ministry. From big football players to non-Christian drug addicts, they have respected me as the youth pastor.

### HOW DID THE CHURCH AND YOUTH REACT WHEN THEY FOUND OUT THEY

**I had two great youth pastors growing up who taught me how to be a youth pastor. They were both men, yet they modeled how to be a good youth leader to young men and women.**



#### **WERE GETTING A FEMALE YOUTH PASTOR?**

Many young people told me that at first they weren't quite sure if they would like a female youth pastor. But after we met, they were glad I was their youth leader.

I followed a male youth pastor. I work on building trust and relationships. Guys and girls come and hang out in my office. They feel free to talk about school, sports, family, friends, and other things in their lives. The key for any youth pastor is to be sure the youth know you genuinely care about them.

The staff and congregation have also welcomed my husband and me with open arms. As we began to build friendships and relationships, we gained even more respect and trust. Being here has been a great experience for us.

#### **WHAT ROLE DOES YOUR HUSBAND PLAY IN YOUR YOUTH MINISTRY?**

Chuck and I have been married 6 years. Chuck is confident in who he is and is never threatened by an outgoing wife. We are a team. He leads our youth worship and then I do the message. I take the ladies on a girls' night out, and he takes the guys. We complement each other. He is my number one encourager. Chuck works full time outside the youth ministry.

#### **DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE IN SECTIONAL AND DISTRICT YOUTH MINISTRY.**

When I attend sectional and district planning events, I view it as a meeting of youth leaders rather than a group of men plus me. Everyone has qualities, characteristics, interests, and gifts that make up his or her personality. I consider myself one of the district's youth pastors.

For a long time I have been working with campus ministry through our district council. That has been a fantastic experience. We also support all of the district youth conferences and summer camps. I've been a summer camp director for Silver Lake Camp for several years and have been well received.

Being involved on the sectional and district level has been a bridge in expanding my awareness of women in ministry. This has been an asset. Even though I am a female, my involvement has been as a team player. I may be a female, but I am a fellow youth pastor. I have also helped the district with its Girls Only Retreat by teaching workshops and helping on the planning committee.

#### **WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE TO OTHER WOMEN WHO ARE INTERESTED IN BEING IN THE MINISTRY?**

I have taught classes at Northwest College for women who are going into

the ministry. This has been a great opportunity for me to mentor some young women.

Here are seven things I tell women pursuing the ministry:

1. Women in ministry is not about the cause of women but the cause of Christ. It is not about being a feminist; it's about sharing hope.
2. Walk in His confidence. Be who God created you to be. Let Him continue to shape and mold you to be more like Him.
3. God calls people who are willing to dream His dreams and who are available. He will open doors for you.
4. A leader is a servant. Be humble. Jesus came not to be served but to serve.
5. Be and do your best. Do all things as unto Christ. Strive for excellence. Live to make Him smile.
6. Be a person of character and integrity. If you do not have these qualities, you should not be in leadership regardless of gender.
7. Attitude is everything. Be positive, not defensive. You can be friends with people who do not support women in ministry. We are all on the same team.

For those in youth ministry, the task is the same: Encourage and equip youth to have a passion to know God and make Him known. Together, we can share hope with students who desperately need it. **e**





# Speed the Light: a Worthwhile Idea



BY TOM W. GREENE



**I** prayed almost desperately: Give me worthwhile ideas. In answer to that prayer, God dropped the idea...a dollar from every C.A. [young person] to provide a fund to buy airplanes, Jeeps, motorcycles, cars, motorboats, and other equipment to help our missionaries do a better job. This week at the National Youth Conference, we launched it—Speed the Light. For too long we have sung merely ‘Send the Light.’ Now in view of the great need, the urgency of the times, ordinary effort will not suffice. We must SPEED THE LIGHT to those in the darkness of sin” (Ralph Harris, National Youth Conference, August 1944).

This is how it all started 57 years ago. As the first national youth director, Ralph Harris was given a desk in the hallway and a short period of time to justify the existence of a national Youth Department. In his words, “Prayers of desperation produced a concept that must have seemed as ridiculous in the mid-1940s as it is in the year 2000. Anyone with a right mind knows that self-serving American youth do well to focus on their own future, much less the eternal destination of those they have never met.” However, the Holy Spirit had convinced Ralph Harris that Christian young people, when properly challenged, would accept a major role in the Great Commission.

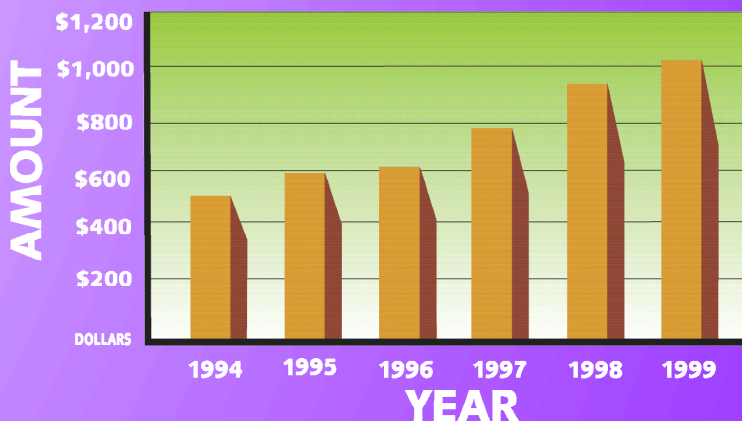
#### GIVE ME WORTHWHILE IDEAS

Scripture gives us reason to believe young people will respond affirmatively to a challenge that seems bigger than life. The youthful David quickly accepted the threatening challenge of Goliath, while experienced soldiers fled in fear. When confronted by his older brother, David confidently replied, “Is there not a cause?”

Generation after generation has sought for those causes that are worthy in spite of risk. A desperate prayer for worthwhile ideas for the youth of our Movement produced a logical answer. After all, the foundation of the Assemblies of God was based on a vision for world evangelism. Together, we could do what others had not—preach the gospel to every creature.

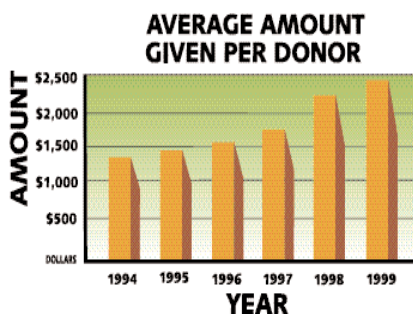
Speed the Light has proven to be more than a worthwhile idea. Twentieth-century giving by the youth and churches of the Assemblies of God totaled \$136,407,483.15. This ministry has provided transportation and communications equipment for our missionaries across America and around the world for more than half a century. However, the greatest aspect of this worthwhile idea may not be what it provides for the missionaries, but for the students themselves.

#### AVERAGE AMOUNT GIVEN PER OFFICIAL CHURCH





Cecil Culbreth, executive director of *Book of Hope*, USA, cites five reasons why he believes in Speed the Light. First, today's youth need a cause greater than themselves. They need to know that life is more important than personal desire. Second, youth need to understand they are a part of something greater than what they see. Speed the Light is more than one student, one youth group, or one church. Assemblies of God youth share in this ministry with more than 300,000 teenagers in more than 12,000 churches. Together, we can have a great impact on changing our world through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Third, Speed the Light teaches a cooperative attitude within a youth group—"Together, we can." Fourth, Speed the Light is an opportunity to build a missions vision in youth ministry. We can train young people to have a heart for missions that will last a lifetime. Finally, Speed the Light is a missions ministry that benefits the Kingdom more than the group. There is no better way to break down a selfish spirit within the youth culture. Speed the Light is indeed a "worthwhile idea."



### THE URGENCY OF THE TIMES

The era in which Speed the Light was born was a time of great need and urgency. Actively involved in the horrors of World War II, our nation was faced with a future of uncertainties and the church seemed at a standstill in the process of world evangelism.

Decades later, uncertainties remain and the challenge of evangelizing the world is even greater. Earth's population has exceeded 6 billion people, and conservative estimates are that almost half have never received an adequate presentation of the gospel. A few have even speculated that the fulfillment of the

Great Commission has become the impossible dream. Pessimists proclaim that we are too far behind. We cannot and must not accept this as fact, knowing that the Son of God would have never commissioned His followers to pursue the impossible.

In view of the great need, the urgency of the times demands that we take full advantage of the opportunity of the times. This generation has witnessed an unparalleled opening of doors to nations around the world. Previous generations could only dream of the fall of communism, the Iron Curtain, and the cracking of the Bamboo Curtain. More fields of ministry have opened than we are prepared to fill.

Along with the vast expanse of the open mission fields has come the technology to do the job. Speed the Light has never been a more necessary ministry. The tools of evangelism are now available to assist us in accomplishing our task. The concept of almost 2,000 Assemblies of God missionaries reaching the nearly 3 billion people who have yet to hear the gospel has appeared to be an insurmountable peak in days gone by. But the completion of the Great Commission has never been more doable.

Speed the Light has teamed with Global University to provide telecommunications equipment that allows

interactive teaching in a number of countries at the same time. The training of Pentecostal leaders has multiplied as a result of this program. Speed the Light continues to equip International Media Ministries, STAR Ministries, and others with video production tools. Radio programming has effectively increased throughout the world, permitting the gospel to infiltrate those areas where missionaries cannot go. District youth directors have committed to a 3-year program of more than \$500,000 for radio facilities in South Africa and Madagascar. Convoy of Hope, outfitted with Speed the Light equipment, is committed to feeding the masses both spiritually and physically.

Although Speed the Light continues to enjoy record offerings annually, the project list expands at an even greater pace. This is not a cause of great concern; these merely represent more opportunities to reach more people. Today's technology and open doors simply make this a generation without excuse.

### ORDINARY EFFORT WILL NOT SUFFICE

The previous decade has witnessed an amazing growth pattern as Speed the Light giving has more than tripled. There must be a reason for this phenomenon. Perhaps the Holy Spirit knew the need for additional equipment

### TO REACH A BIG DREAM, YOU NEED A GOOD TEAM

I remember the first Speed the Light goal-setting rally I attended as a youth pastor. I had invited the entire youth group and had casually invited the pastor as well. About 25 percent of the youth came, but I was pleasantly surprised to see that my pastor had come. After the guest speaker had challenged us, the leaders began announcing the goals from last year and asked that we get our youth together and set a goal for the new year. I gathered my youth and began to encourage them to think big. Our goal for last year had been \$1,800, and we had given \$1,500. I asked each young person, "What is your personal goal?" I then totaled their pledges—\$3,654.

I turned and whispered to my pastor, "What do you think about setting our goal at \$5,000?"

He was quiet for a minute and I thought, *Does this mean I'm fired?* He responded, "Why don't you go for \$10,000?"

That year we gave \$16,800. Praise God for pastors who dream big. This year at the goal-setting rally I turned to my pastor and asked, "What do you think about setting a goal of \$100,000?"

He quickly responded, "I think we should go for \$200,000."

To reach a big dream, you need a good team.

—Marty Burroughs is youth pastor at First Assembly of God, Spring, Texas.

as the whitened fields of evangelism have become available. Ten years ago, there was no need for vans and sound systems in Russia and the Eastern bloc nations. Speed the Light transportation was unnecessary in Southeast Asia. The opportunities for such equipment in so many countries were only prayers on the lips of those with a burden for the unreached regions of our planet. In addition, only God knew all the technology that would and will become available to His army in this age.

The past decade has also opened our eyes to the potential of a generation of youth properly challenged to do what no other generation has done—fulfill the Great Commission. The secular world displays little hesitation in asking teens to spend great amounts on products that generate temporal satisfaction. In fact, today's American teens spend an average \$92 per week. Their buying power exceeds \$140 billion per year, while their buying influence is \$500 billion. If we fail to challenge youth to commit themselves financially to the one thing that can positively impact their world, we have failed as leaders and parents to "train up a child in the way he should go."

Speed the Light provides transportation and communications equipment for missionaries, but also presents an opportunity for dreamers and doers of great exploits within this youth culture. Seventeen-year-old Heather of Fort Supply, Oklahoma, personally gave and raised more than \$2,500 last year; 14-year-old Scott in Phoenix, Arizona, attained his \$700 goal by officiating Little League games; 18-year-old Janell

### STL—A GREAT DISCIPLESHIP TOOL

After challenging students for several years in giving to Speed the Light, I have concluded STL is one of the greatest discipleship tools I can use in youth ministry. There is a direct correlation between the commitments of our students to Speed the Light and their spiritual growth. It's incredible to see that, as they grow in their goals and giving, they develop measurable spiritual growth in their walk with God. This shouldn't shock us because this is a biblical principle. Paul wrote of this correlation, "Now he [God] 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, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:10,11, NIV). Not only will God bless your young peoples' finances, but will also cause them to grow in every righteous way. Now, that's discipleship.

Here are a few things I have discovered as students are challenged to set goals and give to Speed-the-Light:

1. As they learn to give their money, they also learn to give their time and abilities. If God has your time, gifts, and money, He has all of you.
2. As they are challenged to work to raise funds, they discover that all ministry is work. They also discover that it is well worth it.
3. Students begin to take ownership: first, of a lost world, which makes them more passionate in their prayer life; and then of their campus, which causes them to grow in their witness.
4. The discipline of giving overflows into their daily Christian practices—their prayer life and Bible study.
5. As they learn to give to missions, they also grow in paying tithes and offerings. They become tithe payers and missions givers for life.
6. Because they set "God goals" that are impossible without God's help, these students learn to believe God for the impossible situations they are facing in their personal lives. They learn that God is able and we can trust Him.
7. As they continue to reach for higher goals, they also seek a higher level in their relationship with God. They learn not to be satisfied with last year, last month, or last week. They develop a hunger for a new level. They feel as if their commitment to God must measure up to the area of their Speed the Light giving.

—Kalya Brassfield is youth pastor at First Assembly of God, Claremore, Oklahoma.

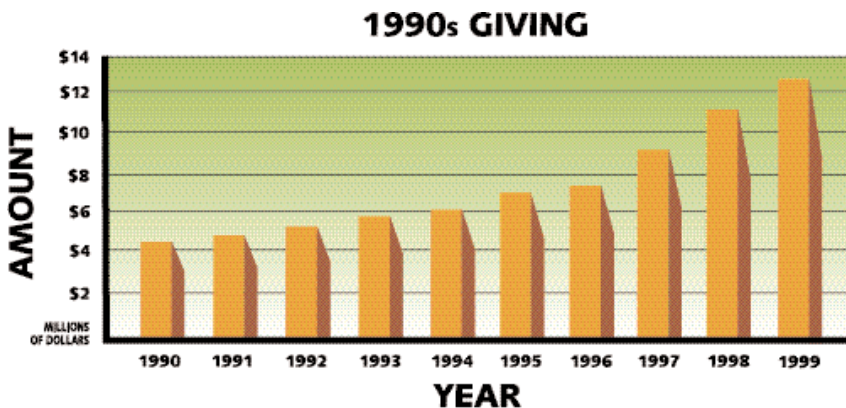
from Carroll, Iowa, committed and gave \$150 a month from her paycheck; 15-year-old Becky from northern Michigan took her paper route through 4 feet of snow to give \$400; 17-year-old Brian set and shattered a \$5,000 goal while sacking groceries in Macon, Georgia; and 18-year-old Dana in Spring, Texas, set pride aside and walked to church and

school so a missionary hero could drive in a distant land. Ordinary effort will not suffice. Thank God for extraordinary Assemblies of God students.

### A NAME AND A PROGRAM

Ralph Harris closed his comments on that hot August day in 1944 with these words: "But a name and a program are not enough." Speed the Light has never been a program; it is a ministry. This ministry trains and challenges youth and churches to assist our missionaries to do what no other generation has done—preach the gospel to every creature. **e**

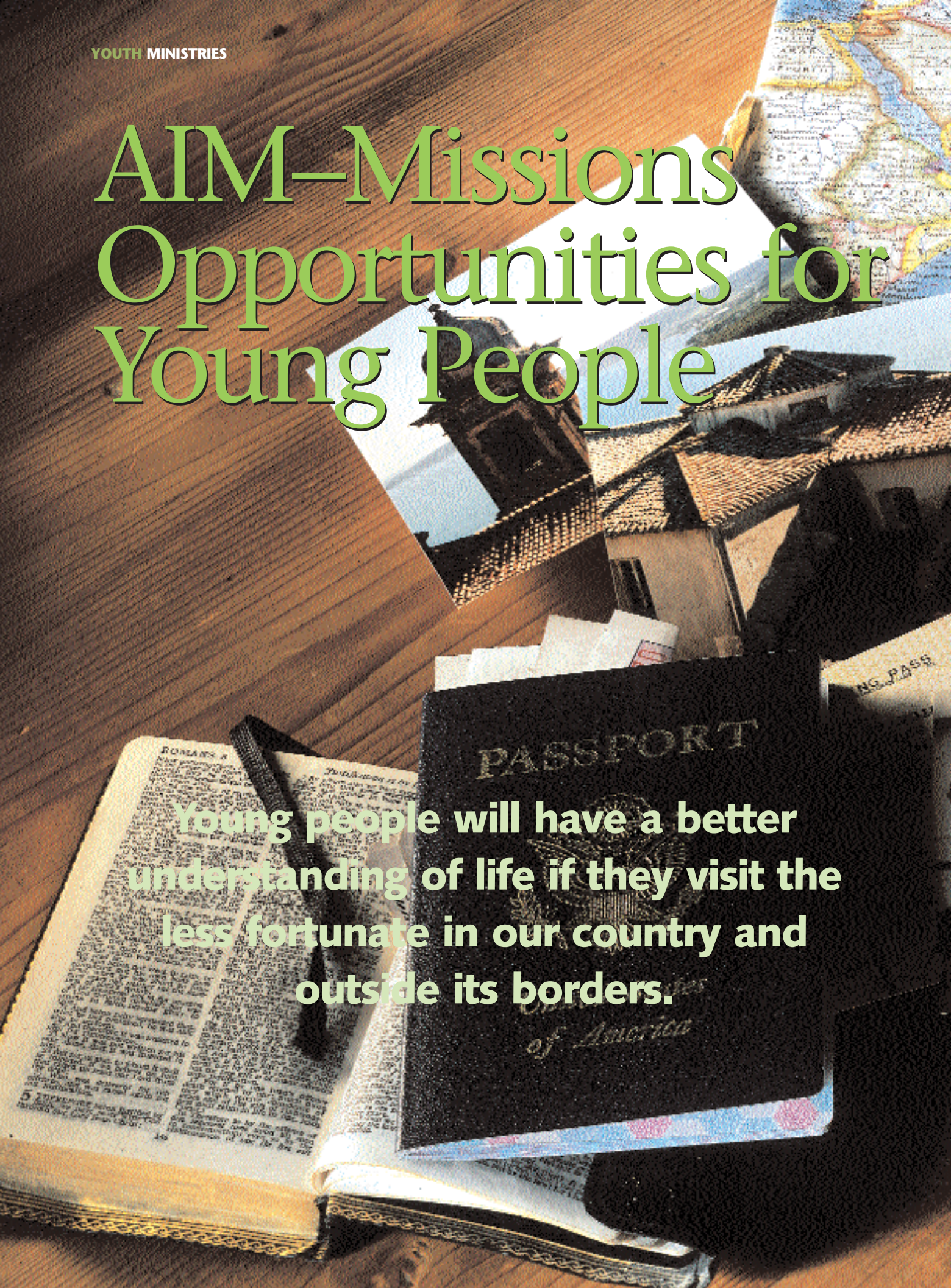
Tom W. Greene is director of Speed the Light for National Youth Ministries, Springfield, Missouri.





# AIM-Missions Opportunities for Young People

**Young people will have a better understanding of life if they visit the less fortunate in our country and outside its borders.**







BY MARK F. MCGRATH



# AIM challenges young people in every area of their lives and exposes them to the call of God and the reality of the world around them.

The heart of God is found in Jesus' final statement on earth, "Therefore go and make disciples."

Missions is evangelism, and evangelism is the heart of God. God loves people. If we love God, we must also love people, even lost people.

One of the greatest ways to keep your youth group growing spiritually and numerically is to have an active discipleship program. Most young people have a difficult time maintaining their spiritual fervor and are spiritually under-challenged. We must challenge our youth to be disciples. Ambassadors in Mission (AIM) is one of the most effective discipleship tools available. AIM challenges young people in every area of their lives and exposes them to the call of God and the reality of the world around them.

If we want a balanced youth ministry, we can't avoid missions. We must not deprive our young people of this ministry opportunity. There is a strong possibility that a future missionary is sitting in your youth group. It is your job to help develop him or her for missions.

The motivation for the AIM trip must be clear. The needs of the national church, the missionary, and the AIM team can all be met if the trip is planned and carried out properly. Youth will respond to strong leadership. Rick Ryan, missionary with the *Book of Life*, states, "I believe every teen should be exposed to the mission field at least once prior to graduating from college." Our motive must be to glorify the name of the Lord in all we do, from beginning to end.

American young people are blessed and may not recognize it because they are isolated from the rest of the world. As Christians, we cannot do this. We are to be light in a darkened world. Young people will have a better understanding of life if they visit the less fortunate in our country and outside its borders. In Matthew 9, Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion on them. He likened

them to sheep without a shepherd. He then commanded His followers to pray for workers to reach the lost (verses 35–38). We have workers—they are in our youth groups.

As leaders we must give our youth opportunity to become missionaries. We give young people a chance to act, sing, and camp. We must also give them a chance to hear the call of God

## PLANNING AN AIM TRIP?

### NATIONAL AIM TRIPS

Contact the national AIM office to request a trip catalog and individual/group application. For more information call 417-862-2781, extension 4039.

### DISTRICT AIM TRIPS

Contact your district to find out about current district AIM trips.

### CHURCH AIM TRIPS

If you are planning your own trip, contact the national AIM office to receive an AIM Outreach Packet. This packet provides information on insurance, consent and liability as well as World Ministries Giving information and more.

## TEN WAYS AIM CHANGES A YOUTH GROUP

1. Teaches them to look outward, not inward.
2. Keeps their focus during the year and on a great event.
3. Keeps them praying.
4. Gives the youth leader a way to challenge youth.
5. Allows the youth group to send out missionaries.
6. Gives perspective concerning the rest of the world.
7. Responds to the Great Commission.
8. Provides opportunity to hear a call to missions.
9. Develops ministry skills.
10. Creates a team environment.



# GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

When planning an AIM trip, it is important that your trip be done properly. AIM trips can be sponsored/led by either the national Youth Ministries, district, or local church. The following questions must be answered to have an effective AIM outreach.

## 1. WHO WILL PLAN THE TRIP?

Several procedures need to be followed to have an effective AIM outreach. The national AIM office has procedures that missionaries and the divisions of Foreign and Home Missions have requested be used.

The host missionary must be in the center of the planning process. He/she either requests or approves an AIM team. His/her help in planning will ensure the trip will be productive.

The senior pastor needs to be involved in the planning. The pastor must totally support the AIM trip. He/she can give it visibility, accountability, and respectability.

Contact your district youth director for options and approval. Do not begin planning your own AIM trip before gaining the support of your district youth director.

## 2. WHY ARE WE TAKING AN AIM TRIP?

Jesus said, "Go." AIM trips are primarily to reach the lost and assist those fulfilling the Great Commission. A secondary goal is to see spiritual growth among the AIMers.

## 3. WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH? WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

Set measurable, attainable, precise, and personal goals. Goals should benefit the missionary and the field, the youth ministry, the youth leader, and the local church.

Some mission fields will produce more results than others. Analyze what you need to touch your group in a practical way.

## 4. WITH WHOM ARE WE GOING TO WORK?

Some missionaries have more skill and experience in working with American teenagers. Find a missionary who will keep your AIMers productively active. A productive, busy AIMer is a happy, fulfilled AIMer.

## 5. WHO WILL LEAD THIS TRIP?

Every group needs a qualified leader. Make sure that he/she is:

- faithful to the Lord, a good example.
- a servant.
- committed to the task, willing to sacrifice.
- comfortable around youth, liked by youth.
- flexible—the mission field has many surprises.
- a team player—one who gives all of the youth on the team an opportunity to participate.
- trained for the task—send him/her on at least one other trip as an AIMer. Let him/her learn under a good leader.

## 6. WHO WILL GO ON THE TRIP?

What are the requirements for each AIMer to meet in order to go? Several factors must be considered.

### Age

Some young teens may not do well in a densely populated city, yet they might excel in the countryside. Younger teens are great with children's ministry. Their experience, maturity, and energy are adaptable to this ministry when properly trained.

### Qualifications

Each trip should be evaluated individually. Short missions outreaches are more suitable to larger groups. For longer trips, we limit the number who can go and have more requirements.

Finances should not be the most important factor in determining who can go. However, I would rather have a teen earn the money for the trip than have a church or parent provide the money. Teens who work hard appreciate the trip more and are generally more committed to excellence.

Decide whether or not a teen from outside your group can join. Use wisdom and consider your goals. Other adults who want to participate must be evaluated as well. Use judgment while keeping your goals at the forefront of all of your decision making.

## 7. WHAT TRAINING WILL BE PROVIDED?

Trips that end in failure are generally the result of inadequate planning. With proper preparation in all the areas, and especially training, every trip can be a success. Training includes dramas, songs, and testimonies, but it also

involves preparing team members to handle different situations that might arise.

## 8. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

AIM trips cost money, time, and energy. Valuable lessons, rewards, and good memories cost something.

Plan ahead for unexpected costs. Make sure you have adequate supervision, health insurance, travel insurance. Consider all possible costs: ground transportation, training costs, leadership costs, food, lodging, airfare, clothing, field costs, entertainment (tours, etc.), tips, transfers, equipment, and tracts.

## 9. WHAT TYPE OF EXPERIENCE DO YOU WANT TO PROVIDE FOR THE AIMERS?

This question coincides with your goals. Your group may be at a maturity level that requires a tougher challenge. Some groups may be ready for sleeping in the church for 2 weeks, while others may not.

I use this rule of thumb: Make it tough if it serves a purpose and doesn't detract from your goals. Young people staying in a church with one shower, sleeping on wooden pews, and never getting away from the crowds will become physically and mentally exhausted in a few days. This can distract from your goals. Rather, stay in hotels where the kids can get a good rest. If an AIMer gets sick, spare no expense. Have professionals take care of him/her quickly and properly.

## 10. WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL BE PROVIDED?

Ask your missionary what he/she needs. Match your equipment to the objectives of your trip. Consider leaving equipment as a gift to the missionaries or national pastors. See who is on your team and utilize their skills. Train your AIMers to use the equipment properly.

Several young people from my group and district are now missionaries. They received the call while on an AIM trip. I often wonder what would have happened if I had not given them the opportunity to see the mission field.

—Mark F. McGrath is director of Global Missions for National Youth Ministries, Springfield, Missouri.

Regardless, we still need to be proactive in recruiting and training young ministers for the over 50 percent of America's population who live in the cities.

Urban youth ministry presents many challenges, but challenges should not create a detour to putting our hand to the plow and not looking back (Luke 9:62). God's Spirit is calling anointed youth pastors to trust Him for salaries, budgets, and staff who can change a city. In Detroit, we have open doors to 33 recreational centers to impact thousands of youth and children, but few people respond to the call to long-term ministry and mentoring of urban youth.

### LONG-TERM INVASIONS VERSUS DRIVE-BY OUTREACHES

The difference between an invasion and a drive-by outreach is that an invasion results in possession and rulership. A one-time outreach or a drive-by event may create awareness, but not relationships. When Jesus called His disciples to be witnesses, He called them to be life-sacrificing relationship builders, not simply announcers-and-leavers (John 15:16). If we want to reach and change urban youth—and we want them to change as a result of what they see and hear from us—we must invade and possess their territory for Christ, and teach them to rule for themselves (Joshua 1:1–9).

The best form of discipleship is to

teach people to be disciples where they are. City kids see outreaches come and go. City kids are taken out of the city and trained in environments where the challenges needed to survive in the city are not present. Continued life in the city needs to be mentored from the city outward. Our erroneous drive-by, drive-through ministry approach is: What is best for our ministry is best for the city. Instead, we need to ask: What should we do that is best for the city?

### HOW TO DEVELOP AN INNER-CITY YOUTH MINISTRY

There are few models for long-term effectiveness in inner-city youth ministry. Though effective models exist for inner-city children's ministries, substance abuse programs, and community outreaches such as Adopt-a-Block, this is not the case with inner-city youth ministries. Several key elements are crucial for inner-city youth ministry—not only for developing a ministry for long-term, life-building effectiveness, but for maximizing the instant impact that can be made in a field that is ripe for harvest (John 4:35).

#### Find a leader and develop a team.

One of the main assumptions in Scripture is found in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations."\* The assumption is there are believers who are already trained to

make disciples of those who have been taught God's commandments. Urban ministry needs youth leaders who are able to make disciples of others, who in turn can make more disciples.

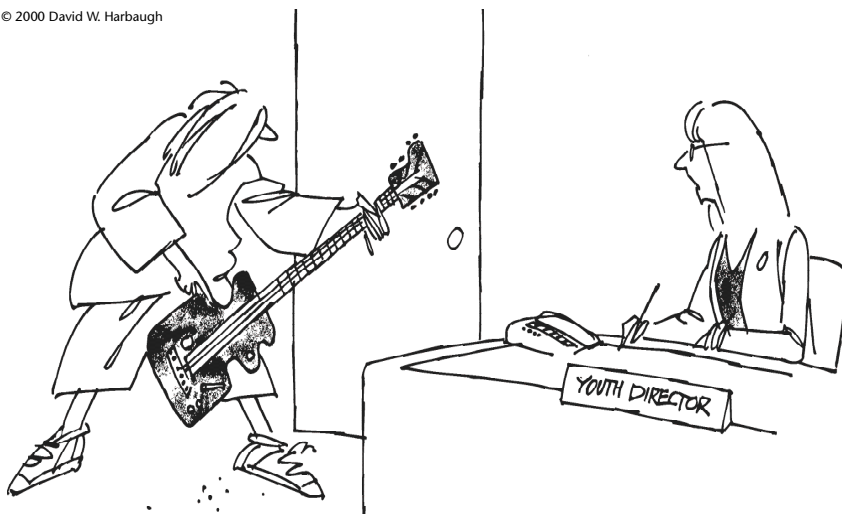
The leader is the key to reaching inner-city youth. The leader must be strong spiritually and emotionally to stay on the roller coaster of urban youth ministry. A youth pastor or youth director must possess vision to launch out into the youth masses of the city for long-term results. He also needs a team of dedicated workers who will help him or her. A ministry's effectiveness drastically declines when it exceeds the ratio of 1 leader for every 10 youth. A youth-ministry team will not only make the difference in the lives of hundreds of youth, but in the longevity and effectiveness of the urban youth pastor.

#### Establish an identity.

Typically every youth group, suburban and urban, has a name for its group. Identity comes in a variety of ways, but identity is never more important than in reaching the masses in inner-city youth ministry. The youth in the city are constantly looking for something to be part of that can impart purpose and vision. Though relationship development will serve as the stream that leads to long-term discipleship, an identity will serve as a magnet to quickly draw youth into the group.

In an urban environment, colors, hand-signs, names, graffiti, and street names identify youth, show their creativity, and mark their territory. They are extremely loyal to the things with which they identify. In Detroit, our youth group, which averaged 20 to 30 for 2 years, increased to over 100 in 1 week as a result of giving new points of identification in displaying Christ's love and power. When we expanded from "Streetside Youth Night" to "Double Dare Nite," our impact level in the school system went from 4 schools to over 30 in 1 month. After 6 months, we wanted the youth to identify more radically in their relationship and commitment with Christ, so we changed our

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**"Kurt, when I asked you to audition, I meant for the bell choir."**

































































































# PASTORAL LONGEVITY

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of pastoral longevity has had a philosophical change in the Assemblies of God since the founding of our Fellowship. This is probably true with regard to other church organizations as well. Pastoral longevity has not always been a subject of primary importance among the ministers of our Movement.

Part of the reason for this lack of interest in pastoral longevity in the early days of our Fellowship may have been due to the major emphasis on revival and evangelism with lesser emphasis on conserving the results. However, with the growth and development of the Assemblies of God came the need to refocus on the continuity of the fledgling assemblies that were being started.

In their beginning, the Methodist Church experienced the same zeal for evangelism and oversight of conservation. An interesting story is told of C.C. McCabe, assistant secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Church Extension Society, who noticed a newspaper article in which the famous agnostic Robert Ingersoll proclaimed: "The churches are dying out all over the land; they are struck with death." McCabe leaped off the train at the next station and fired off a telegram to Ingersoll. It read: "Dear Robert, All hail the power of Jesus' name—we are building more than one Methodist church for every day in the year and propose to make it two a day!"<sup>1</sup>

Other factors why we have become more interested in pastoral longevity are:

1. We have learned by experience that rapid pastoral turnover greatly contributes to the instability, lack of growth, and the demise of a local church.

2. The realization of the need for strong and sustained pastoral leadership has brought about an increased number of long-term pastorates over the years. It is not uncommon to conduct anniversary celebrations for pastors with tenures of 25, 50, or more years.

3. National and district training through pastor/board leadership seminars has brought an increased understanding to local church leaders and members of the value of pastoral longevity.

4. Church pastoral staffs and lay leaders have access to more conferences dealing with church growth and ministerial retention. Subjects such as developing people skills, building relationships, and team-leadership concepts are dealt with in detail.

## ESSENTIAL PERSONAL QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR PASTORAL LONGEVITY

Luke 2:52 mentions the areas of personal development Jesus modeled for His followers: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." This has been referred to as the mental, physical, spiritual, and

social development of Jesus. Any person seeking long-term ministry will strive to excel in these areas as well.

### Mental Stability

A minister must strive to keep his\* mental attitude in alignment with the Word of God to have healthy and biblical thought processes. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Keep in mind that what we think, we do; and what we do, we become. It is essential that we strive to stay mentally refreshed, alert, and logical. Every minister needs a close friend with whom to test his thinking. For a minister to develop an unhealthy mental attitude—such as a God-complex in which he sees himself as never wrong and never to be questioned about any decision made or money spent—is in a condition of mental instability.

### Physical Stability

We must look to the Lord for our health. Many have difficult physical infirmities to overcome. We must use discipline, restraint, and wisdom to stay in the best physical shape possible. The help of our physician is valuable and is not a contradiction to faith. Many times our problems can be solved if we will just obey our physician's advice.

### Spiritual Stability

Staying healthy spiritually is vital to our

**The elder is called to shepherd the flock of God and also to serve as an overseer. One cannot be a shepherd and a hireling, compassionate and unsympathetic, caring and selfish, faithful and disloyal, or genuine and superficial at the same time.**



pastoral tenure. We must be known as people of spiritual moderation. It is important to be spiritually balanced, not an erratic up and down leader. To be known as a spiritual person means one is a person of prayer, of the Word, and of the Spirit, whose walk with Christ is close and personal, showing spiritual maturity.

### **Social Stability**

Having a proper relationship with the people to whom we minister requires that we have emotional maturity. Emotional instability manifests itself in many ways, such as an explosive temperament or an inferiority complex. Jesus modeled a relationship with people that came from having the wisdom of God. James described the wisdom that is from above as pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (3:17). With such traits, it will not be difficult for a minister to develop strong and solid relationships with members of the congregation.

## **ESSENTIAL PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR PASTORAL LONGEVITY**

### **Elder, Shepherd, Overseer**

The New Testament uses several titles to refer to the chosen leader of the church, each shedding light on the various aspects of the ministry. As a spiritually mature leader, the minister is referred to as an elder (*presbuteros*); as the pastor/teacher, the minister is referred to as a shepherd (*poimēn*); and, as the overseer/administrator, the minister is spoken of as a bishop (*episkopos*). In these professional roles, as some would term them today, the Scripture is quite clear concerning what is expected of the minister (Acts 20; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1).

In 1 Peter 5:1–4, the apostle Peter writes to the elders as one of their group: a fellow elder (*sumpresbuteros*), showing how these ministerial roles exist in the same person. The elder is called to shepherd the flock of God and also to serve as an overseer. All three offices are referred to in this passage. Peter made it

clear that these ministries had to be carried out willingly, eagerly, and in an exemplary manner. Fulfilling our duties with the right attitude is essential to pastoral longevity.

One cannot be a shepherd and a hireling, compassionate and unsympathetic, caring and selfish, faithful and disloyal, or genuine and superficial at the same time. A passion for the ministry and a passion for the lost are not the same thing. Some ministers love the office of pastor with its prestige and influence, but do not love people. Our business is about people, not religion and its trappings.

### **Prophet, Preacher, Teacher**

Other callings for which the minister is responsible relate to the proclamation and communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pastoral longevity depends a great deal on a minister's pulpit presence. As a minister conducts the services of the church, it doesn't take a congregation long to understand who is increasing and who is decreasing. John said, "He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease." The American superstar mentality has crept into the church, and this mentality is contrary to the servant-leadership style our Lord intended for His ministers. It is hard to be humble and arrogant at the same time. A minister's pulpit gestures and manners are a dead giveaway to the congregation and countermands whatever he may say if he is not for real.

The New Testament prophetic ministry is set forth in 1 Corinthians 14:3: speaking "unto men to edification (build up), and exhortation (stir up), and comfort (cheer up)." Some ministers try to act as Old Testament prophets who spoke *ex cathedra* and expect to go unchallenged. But New Testament prophecy is to be judged by the Word of God (verse 29). A minister cannot claim infallibility. Keep in mind that the first prophets and apostles are the foundation of the Church, with Christ as the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). We are the superstructure. Acknowledging this will help keep our role and ministry in proper perspective.

Longevity has much to do with how seriously a minister will prepare for ministering the Word of God. The preaching and teaching ministry is vital to a long tenure. Your people will forgive you for not knowing more about business or politics than they do, but they will not forgive you if you don't know the Bible better than they do and help them apply it to their lives. You can only preach social issues, hot topics, and current events for so long. If this is a smoke screen for your inability to "rightly divide the word of truth," then you are in for a short duration. Long-term pastors, while preaching topically on occasion, are generally expository preachers. They realize that short-changing themselves and their people in areas of biblical study and sermon preparation is really a shortcut to a short tenure.

We are hearing much talk today about people not being interested in doctrine. People today are very interested in any subject that directly impacts their lives. It is up to the minister to apply the doctrines of Scripture in a relevant manner. To deal with subjects such as death, abortion, homosexuality, heaven or hell, requires a minister to know the Word of God. This is a biblically illiterate and skeptical generation, and the communicator of the Scriptures must be thoroughly versed in the Word, having studied the text exegetically and sought to apply it in a manner that is hermeneutically sound.

### **A Necessary Warning**

While exegesis and hermeneutics are valuable disciplines for the minister of the gospel, this is an area where dangers exist that can cause one to lose his way. Like John Bunyan's Christian falling into the slough of despond, many Pentecostal preachers and educators are falling into the slough of skepticism and unbelief, because they have lost their hold on the authority of the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. We are in a subtle age theologically; some teachers say one thing and mean another. We must not play games with the Word of God. Our statement of faith speaks

clearly: “The Scriptures...are verbally inspired...the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.” When you lose your authority, you lose the edge of being able to preach and teach with full faith and conviction. You then lose your anointing and the dynamic of the Spirit that draws people to your pulpit. A Pentecostal pulpit must have a genuinely Pentecostal preacher who is full of faith, wisdom, the Holy Spirit, and has an honest report (Acts 6).

We should be deeply concerned about the inroads of unbelief found in the systems of interpretation and application employed by evangelical scholars today. Some have drawn an interesting parallel between Jesus and the Bible. They claim the Scriptures are both divine and human in the same manner as Jesus is both divine and human. Of course, the purpose for this analogy is to establish that the Word of God is human and as such it is filled with imperfections and should be subjected to the scrutiny of human reasoning and criticism. Those who use this parallel forget that, even though Jesus was human as well as divine, in His humanity He was sinless and without imperfections.

It is imperative that Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal theologians blaze a trail on the solid foundation of the Word of God that will avoid the slough of blatant modernism on one side and the slough of an enigmatic existentialism on the other. One robs us of our faith; the other robs us of truth. To accomplish this will take the Holy Spirit doing for us exactly what Jesus did for the disciples when He “opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). This is what Pentecostals are all about—allowing the Spirit of Truth to lead us into all truth. Our founding fathers blazed this trail before us and successfully avoided the sloughs and pitfalls, and so can we. And so will we.

**ESSENTIAL POINT-PERSON QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR PASTORAL LONGEVITY**  
**The Point Person is the Lead Person.**  
 In sports, the front player around whom

the team forms to execute its offensive drives is called a point guard. In the military, point guards are those persons in the advance position of the squad, platoon, or company—out in front, leading the forward advance of the troops. In a sense, the entire pastoral staff are front people leading the church; ultimately, however, the pastor is the point person who is responsible for the advance of the church.

#### **Knowing the Difference Between the Variables and the Invariables**

To lead the church, the pastor must know the difference between those things that can and should be changed, and those things that do not and must not change. Techniques and methods change with time and custom, but truth never changes. A pastor who is confused about the unchanging and immutable truths of the Word of God is like a compass whose needle keeps spinning and will not point north. He will lose his way.

Technologies and methodologies are constantly changing. Yet, according to George Barna in his book, *The Second Coming of the Church*, the church and pastor who fail to use current technology are viewed with a certain skepticism by this tech-literate generation. A church utilizing the technology to which this generation is accustomed will be much more accepted than those who do not. While this may be true, the church without the funds to purchase costly high-tech equipment must not be discouraged. Keep in mind that the Early Church did not have any of the modern technical advantages of today, yet they reached their world with the gospel.


#### **Relating to Our Publics**

A pastor who understands the age, characteristics, and needs of the people to whom he ministers will enhance his ability to give servant-leadership to the church. People are identified in their age groups beginning with the oldest—seniors, builders, boomers, busters, and mosaics. The needs of these age groups

vary greatly, but the pastor who seeks to minister to all of them is not only advancing the church but his pastoral longevity as well.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Concerning longevity, George Barna stated: “The average tenure of a pastor in Protestant churches has declined to just 4 years—even though studies consistently show that pastors experience their most productive and influential ministry in years 5 through 14 of their pastorate.”<sup>2</sup> We have much work to do in the Assemblies of God to increase the average pastoral tenure. We are certain it is vital to the health of the local church, and it is beneficial to the success and well being of our ministers.

We have discussed initiatives the pastor can take in personal and professional areas that foster attitudes and relationships that lead to long tenures. While we have not discussed them in this article, there are initiatives a congregation can take that will also encourage its pastor to make long-term commitments to the church. It is a marvelous experience to participate in an anniversary celebration where a pastor and congregation have been united in the bonds of Christ’s love for many years and the love affair is continuing. May this be the portion for many more of our pastors and churches. 

James K. Bridges is the Assemblies of God general treasurer, Springfield, Missouri.



*\*Though this article uses the masculine pronoun for pastors, the General Council of the Assemblies of God supports women serving as pastors.*

#### **E N D N O T E S**

1. Richard B. Wilke, *And Are We Yet Alive?: the future of the Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 23,24.
2. George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998), 5.







# interview

WITH RON F. MCMANUS

## Spiritual Leadership Series (Part 2): Challenges to Spiritual Leadership

*Conflict in the ministry is a complex and challenging subject. It is an area that most who lead the church would prefer to avoid. But, anyone who has been in ministry for any length of time has experienced conflict. Someone once said that conflict is neither good nor evil—only inevitable.*

*Is it wrong to have differences of opinion in the church? Certainly not. Much of the conflict we encounter in the church is the*

### **HOW CAN PASTORS LEAD PEOPLE WHO HAVE STRONG PERSONALITIES?**

**MCMANUS:** If a pastor views people with a them-and-us attitude, there will be trouble in the camp. Instead, a pastor needs to meet with the key leadership in the church and help them determine why their church exists. Until the pastor and church leaders can get on the same page



**RON F. MCMANUS**

**As long as the pastor is the doer,  
and the people sit around determining  
how well the pastor does it,  
you have produced a system  
that creates conflict.**

*result of change. Does this mean we avoid change altogether? No! But certain principles if followed will ensure successful change and a resolution to conflict.*

*In this second of a three-part leadership series, Ron McManus, president of EQUIP, a nonprofit ministry that provides leadership training for pastors, discusses this area of spiritual leadership.*

concerning the mission of the church, there will be challenges at every turn in the road.

Acts 2:42–47 clearly delineates the mission of the church. The pastor must talk and preach this purpose. I tell pastors, “Don’t talk about vision, and don’t launch any ministries until you and your congregation have thoroughly

come to terms with why your church exists, and have become people of worship, people who are biblically committed in relationship to one another, who are growing as disciples of Jesus Christ, and who are reaching the lost.”

When I became pastor at one church, I met with about 25 key leaders—Sunday school teachers, board members, ministry leaders. I asked, “Why does our church exist?”

I received a different answer from everyone in the room, including one lady who said, “We have to pay off the mortgage.” I knew everything I would try to do would have 25 different ideas about whether or not we should do it.

Pastors need to find common

is one of our reasons for being, then we need to decide how we are going to accomplish this. If my idea is not what you believe is right, then what is your idea? But we are going to reach the lost, because that’s our mission.

Two principles will help pastors guide their churches: understanding the mission of the church, and understanding the biblical philosophy of ministry in Ephesians 4 and how to implement this philosophy. I want to help pastors understand that the biblical philosophy of ministry is to equip God’s people for works of service—for ministry. We’ve given lip service to that for years, but we haven’t implemented it. As long as the pastor is the doer, and the people sit

### **WHAT IF A PASTOR HAS GONE THROUGH ALL THE PROPER STEPS, AND HE STILL HAS SOMEONE WHO DOESN’T WANT TO FOLLOW HIM? HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THIS PERSON?**

**MCMANUS:** If you have those in leadership who seem to be against everything you want to accomplish, ask that they help you understand why they are opposing you. Often you discover issues that have nothing to do with what they are opposing.

I had a leader who was against a church building program. When we talked, I found out his issue wasn’t the building program at all. It was something that had happened 2 years earlier.

**As pastor you want to take the congregation where they want to go. But you shouldn’t force people to go where they don’t want to go. —McManus**



ground and a base on which to build ministry. This is the 101 percent principle in building relationships with people: find 1 percent you can agree on and give it 100 percent of your attention. If it takes a year to do this, don’t do anything else until you get there. Once this common ground is understood, it will diminish conflict in the church.

In leading the church, the pastor needs to get everyone’s agenda on the table so it’s not what you want to do and what I want to do. The issue becomes focused on purpose. If reaching the lost

around determining how well the pastor does it, you have produced a system that creates conflict. People in the church will only find fulfillment when they are fulfilling the calling and the gifts of God in their lives. Only then will you have a church with happy people. Otherwise, they will be frustrated because they know they are not using what God has given them. But they don’t know what to do about it, because we haven’t taught them. I want to help pastors understand how to implement this in the local church.

Once we got that resolved, he had no problem with the building program.

There are some people who will never agree with the pastor, no matter what he or she does. At that point, it’s the desire and will of the church that matters. Pastors need to fulfill God’s purpose for their lives in and through the church. Sometimes pastors need to proceed, even when everybody doesn’t agree.

I have never seen anything accomplished in my pastoral ministry that did not have people who said we

couldn't do it, and it would never happen. But after it happened, they were ready to rejoice in all the good things God had done.

Remember, Jesus lost one of the Twelve. Not everyone is going to follow the pastor's leadership. But it is important that pastors do everything they can, from their perspective, to encourage a person to follow. There are no accolades for pastors bragging about how many people have left the church. If you are a shepherd, you have a heart for God and for people. You grieve over any loss. This doesn't mean you let people sabotage your ability to move forward; but you love

to follow you. There was a day when we could say, "Here's where we're going," and people would follow. That day is gone. Today's generation is totally turned off by autocratic styles of leadership. Pastors who don't understand this are going to have difficulty leading. People will not respond; they will react and resent that approach to leadership. I tell pastors, "You can preach commitment until you are blue in the face; you can talk about commitment, but people are not committing to commitment anymore. They will commit to something that is going to make a difference in their

credibility. When that happens with pastor after pastor, it's no wonder laypeople don't believe what the pastor says anymore.

### **HOW DOES A PASTOR HANDLE THE PAIN PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCED BECAUSE PREVIOUS PASTORS HAVE HURT THEM?**

**MCMANUS:** People have been abused and hurt by authority, and they bring that baggage to the church. People have a tendency to do one of two things with a spiritual leader: either not trust anybody in spiritual leadership because they have been hurt; or, they will put the leader on a pedestal

**This is the 101 percent principle in building relationships with people: find 1 percent you can agree on and give it 100 percent of your attention. —McManus**



people and have a heart for them, and it hurts when they oppose you or leave the church.

As pastor you want to take the congregation where they want to go. But you shouldn't force people to go where they don't want to go. Through the ministry of preaching and teaching the Word you can help the congregation come to a new understanding of how to be effective for God. You should try to lead them to that point.

You can't force or browbeat people

lives, that will help them feel valued, and will help them fulfill the call of God in their lives." The ministry is not about the pastor; it's about people. And the pastor's job as spiritual leader is to see the people in the congregation succeed for God.

To be effective, pastors need to be consistent in leadership. Over the years pastors have told people what they believed God had said to them, but their follow-through has been lacking. When that happens, pastors lose

because the pastor represents the authority they never had in their lives. Both are equally dangerous for a pastor. If they put you on a pedestal, all you have to do is make one mistake in their eyes, and they will remove you from that pedestal so fast you will never know what hit you. The best thing you can do as a pastor is to make sure you operate with integrity. Follow through on the commitments you make, and love people anyway. Those qualities will help you gain respect with most of the congregation. **e**



# A HELPING HAND!



*Sometimes the one who serves needs to be served.*

*A spouse and family that you rarely see...long hours at work...conflict management. It's no surprise that you feel like you are drowning. What's a pastor to do?*

*The unique pressures of ministry can be overwhelming, and the challenges are*

*beyond your personal strength. However, the Lord of the harvest will enable you to do all that He has asked you to do. We want to assist Him in encouraging you as a shepherd of God's flock. We are here to serve you in any way we can.*

*"When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other so that his hands remained steady." Exodus 17:12, NIV*

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**PRAYER**

**SHARPENS**

**THE BLADE**

**OF MINISTRY.**



**OUR LORD**

**KNEW THIS;**

**YET WITH ALL**

**THE DEMANDS**

**ON HIM, HE**

**WENT ASIDE**

**TO PRAY.**

**A**n African proverb states: “Every morning a gazelle gets up knowing it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be eaten. And every morning a lion gets up knowing it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. So whether you are a gazelle or a lion, every morning when you get up you’d better be running.”

Running has different priorities and values for the gazelle and the lion in the African bush than it does for the gazelle and lion in an American zoo. The realities of life and death, as they relate to running, are a daily priority. Prayer must have this same inviolate priority if we are to experience its power to change everything in our lives.

A very distraught and tearful lady called one day and explained that her sister had just been murdered. “How can people be so evil?” she asked, unable to cope with the pain and the disillusionment.

I immediately began counseling and comforting, but I heard an inner voice saying, “She doesn’t need counseling; she needs prayer.” Without hesitation I directed her to the One who could heal the anguish of her soul and still her storm. Because I was prayed up, I was confident and ready to pray for her and with her. Within seconds the storm began settling and peaceful calm introduced hope. Prayer was our weapon, and it brought victory.

**PRAYER MUST BE MANAGED**

It seems unbelievable that God would give us such a significant and accessible medium through which we can commune, grow, and effectively live overcoming lives. However, like most things that are available and common to daily life, prayer often becomes commonplace and optional. In our unmanaged and undisciplined world, prayer seems important only in crisis moments or for self-serving causes.

Most people agree on the significance of prayer and would like to pray more often and more effectively, but the common enemy is time. We say, “I just

don’t have time.” That simply isn’t true. When the average person finds time to watch television each day, there is no reason why prayer cannot be managed into one’s schedule.

We decide what we will do with time. Someone once said, “If you want to get something done, ask a busy person.” Why? Busy people manage priorities and make the best use of time.

Prayer time must be managed or it will never have a significant place. Aristotle said, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

If that is true, prayer will have a place of productivity only when it has a place of preeminence. We must include it in the nonnegotiable side of life.

**YOU CAN DO IT**

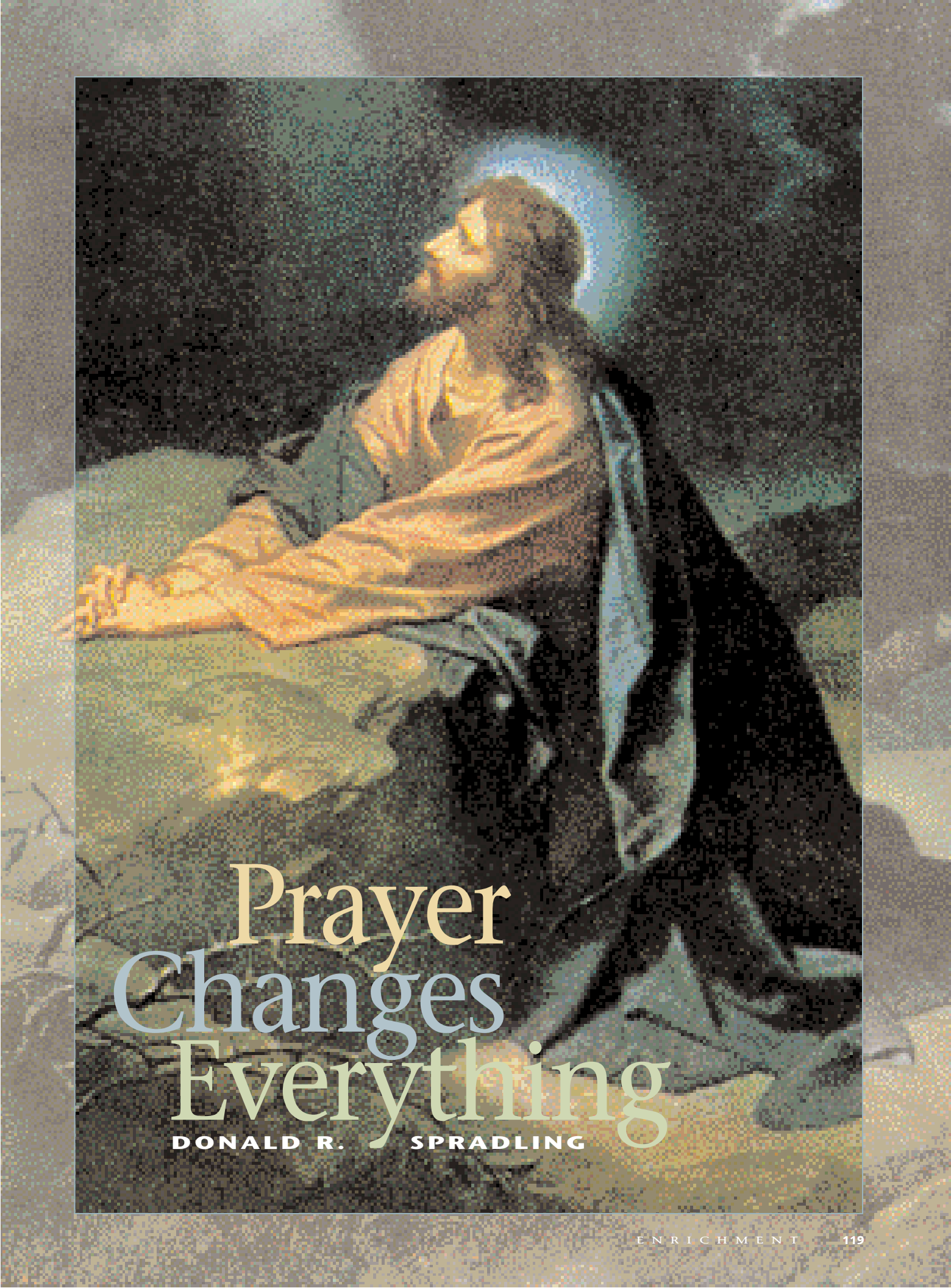
Most people have excuses why they can’t or don’t do something important. For example, those who need to lose weight excuse the challenge by saying, “It is genetic; I can’t change.” Or, “My problem is chemical; therefore, I will create more problems by dieting.”

In almost every case there is a way to do the important. You need to hear God’s Word one more time: “The spirit he has bestowed on us is not one that shrinks from danger....” (2 Timothy 1:7, Knox).

The Amplified New Testament completes that verse this way: “[He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.” God has already given us the gift of discipline and self-control. You have a challenge, but you can overcome and become mighty through prayer. You can pray more often and more effectively. It’s a matter of choice.

**OUR PRAYER PARADIGM**

A dramatic event is profiled in Luke 9. Jesus gave His disciples authority to preach the good news, cast out demons, and heal the sick. They went throughout the region proclaiming the Kingdom news, healing the sick, and performing miracles. A few days later



# Prayer Changes Everything

DONALD R. SPRADLING

**I don't know anyone who consistently enjoys the first few moments of an exercise program. It is after we begin in prayer that a euphoria and an anointing emerge.**

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and went to a mountain to pray, and "as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered" (verse 29).

The correlation between Jesus' change in appearance and prayer is undeniable. Dramatic and glorious things began to transpire as He prayed. While it would be unwise to think every prayer will have flashes of lightning and visitations of heavenly couriers, every prayer prayed in God's will has His audience and affirmation.

The paradigm on prayer in Luke 9 is as much for us as it was for those on the mountain. The Lord wants us to view this altering experience. Disciples were invited to this encounter for learning and perpetuity.

As Jesus prayed, His countenance changed; His clothing took on supernatural

brightness; friends from heaven dropped in for exhortation; a voice of confirmation from the Father himself, and the disciples witnessed the glory of God in extraordinary measure—all from prayer.

The residual of this power was evident as Christ and the disciples descended into human impossibilities. A young son was made whole.

Three things emerge from this prayer paradigm that can change your life.

#### **The Expediency of Prayer**

Urgency and a prophetic sense of the immediate ministry surely had moved Jesus to this prayer vigil. He was accustomed to prayer and knew its value. He prayed early (Mark 1:35); He prayed alone (Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16); He prayed with great commitment (Luke 6:12; 22:41). He established a priority of

prayer that remained a discipline from childhood to the cross.

Some say, "It is not the quantity but the quality of prayer that is important." This is another of our smart mechanisms of escape. While it is true that quality is more important than quantity, it is also true that to accomplish more and do greater exploits for the Kingdom, Jesus said, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29, NKJV). It is wisdom to grasp the importance of prayer as it relates to our effectiveness.

In his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey shares an appropriate story:

Suppose you were to come upon someone working feverishly sawing down a tree in the woods.

"What are you doing?" you ask.

"Can't you see?" comes the impatient reply. "I'm sawing down this tree."

"You look exhausted," you exclaim. "How long have you been at it?"

"Over 5 hours," he replies, "and I'm beat. This is hard work."

"Well, why don't you take a break for a few minutes and sharpen the saw?" you inquire. "I'm sure it would go a lot faster."

"I don't have time to sharpen the saw," the man says emphatically, "I'm too busy sawing."

We have too often fallen prey to a dull blade. We are busy, in constant motion. Our calendars are full. But the blade is dull.

Prayer sharpens the blade of ministry. Our Lord knew this; yet with all the demands on Him, He went aside to pray. There a metamorphosis [change] happened. His conversation with Moses and Elijah regarding the cross at Jerusalem as well as the confirming presence and voice of the Father were linked to the prayer



**"Well, we've got 2 minutes left. Who has some heartfelt prayer requests we can lift up to the Lord?"**

# Most people agree on the significance of prayer and would like to pray more often and more effectively, but the common enemy is time.

time. The ministry of deliverance awaiting Him at the foot of the mountain had direct correlation to this prayer session also. The expedience of prayer is forever established in this paradigm of prayer.

## The Exercise of Prayer

Prayer, like all other disciplines, is difficult. The best way to pray is to begin. I don't know anyone who consistently enjoys the first few moments of an exercise program. It is after we begin in prayer that a euphoria and an anointing emerge.

Miracles can happen as we approach the hour of prayer or following it, as in the case of the tormented son (Luke 9:37–42). A young son was delivered from demonic activity. While Peter and John were en route to the temple to pray, a lame man was made whole (Acts 3:1–10). We must learn to schedule this exercise of communion and intercession.

The timing of prayer is not as critical as the fact of prayer. Some people are early risers and can pray early. Others pray better at midday or evening. An intentional time and agenda of prayer are important. Some excuse this function by saying, "I am prayerful all the time." That same person will also say, "I get my exercise by walking on my job." Each has its good, but nothing can substitute for intentional grids of prayer.

An eight-step program I have followed for the past 4 years has given me the greatest lift of my life. Each step is significant either to my personal life or vital to the Lord's work. It begins with prayer and thanksgiving, family, church, nation, missions, friends, ministry, and projects and needs. I pray an hour on this prayer track every day—365 hours, 15 days of prayer every year. Many of my congregation also chose this

exercise for their personal prayer, and it became a renaissance to spiritual life.

There are as many prayer options as there are personal schedules, but ultimately you must tailor a prayer track to change your world and then pray that prayer plan.

William Hinson, pastor of the First Methodist Church in Houston, Texas, spoke of an exceptional prayer exercise related to his congregation. He sensed that his prayer for a large congregation was too generic, so he grouped his people in 10s. By letter he informed them of his prayer over them every day for a week and asked them to share any special needs. The church experienced great success as this pastor's prayer for his church became a personal exercise. I started that same process in my church, and response has been overwhelming.

The exercise of prayer will always be difficult, but results are unbelievable. The expression of prayer continues to work as it has for millennia. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

## The Exponential Power of Prayer

All that could be accomplished in prayer has never been challenged; but when people call on God, the synergism of God's Word and His Spirit releases in them a life-altering experience.

The agenda of prayer is our responsibility, but the affirmation of prayer is God's business. J. Edwin Orr said, "Whenever God is ready to do something with His people, He always sets them to praying."


David Barrett, of the current worldwide prayer movement, says:

- 170 million Christians are committed to pray daily for revival and evangelization.
- 20 million claim that prayer is their calling to the body of Christ.
- 10 million prayer groups claim revival is one of their primary prayer agendas.

This could be the hour for the exponential power of God to be released through prayer for a worldwide revival and ingathering of souls. Acts 4:31 tells us that when the people prayed the place where they prayed shook. This reference was not meant to be an isolated event but an inspirational principle.

The gazelle and the lion know that running is where survival pivots. Men and women of ministry know that prayer is crucial to survival. If we don't pray, we will be overtaken and devoured by the roaring lion. If we don't pray, we will never have ministry gifts and grace to remain victorious.

The Early Church leaders sensed its critical place; so when schedules became overloaded with other ministry needs, they made a strategic resolution: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:3,4).

Prayer that changes everything must be above and before everything. 

*Donald R. Spradling is senior pastor of Christian Life Church, Long Beach, CA.*







# THE EQUATION OF

# PENTECOST

*Prayer + Missions =*

*Pentecostal Fire (P+M=PF).*

*This formula worked for the Early Church, and it is working for us.*

BY RANDY L. VALIMONT

Einstein's theory of relativity— $E=MC^2$ —has proven itself true. This equation has been used countless times in the scientific community as scientists conduct various experiments. In a similar way, Assemblies of God pastors who desire a Pentecostal church that epitomizes the Book of Acts are looking for an equation that will help them have a Pentecostal church like the Early Church.

The first Pentecostal church had several components: first, it was a growing church. Growth denotes health; it is a God-given sign of life. There's nothing more exciting than to be a pastor of a church that is growing

because God is at work.

Miracles were another component of the Early Church. Signs and wonders took place in that early Pentecostal setting.

A third component was the church's prayer and intercession.

Any Pentecostal-charismatic pastor would love to have all three components active in his or her church. But what is the thread that connects all three of these components to make a dynamic church? The answer is missions.

Jesus gave His church a mission statement in Matthew 28:19,20. Jesus knew that if His followers were to

fulfill that mission, they would need the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why Jesus told His disciples to tarry in that Upper Room until they were endued with power. Then they would "be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

Peter began fulfilling Christ's mission for the Church when he proclaimed the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Paul received his mission from Christ on the Damascus Road. The Holy Spirit also empowered him to preach the gospel with authority. Through the power and authority of Christ and the



Holy Spirit, signs and wonders occurred in the Early Church.

Pentecost cannot be separated from missions. We cannot have a true, thriving, New Testament, Pentecostal church without missions. At First Assembly of God in Griffin, Georgia, we have seen the following miracles take place because we began to fulfill the vision of being a missions-minded church.

The first miracle began when we started giving to missions. God began to pour out His Spirit in our church in an unprecedented manner, and people were being saved, drug addicts delivered, and families restored.

An individual who was a bartender for an Atlanta gay bar was miraculously saved. Someone bound by drugs and alcohol was instantly delivered. In one dramatic occurrence, a man bound in homosexual perversion came under the strong conviction of the Holy Spirit during one of our services. He jumped up from his seat and bolted out the back of the sanctuary, only to fall to his knees in the church foyer before he could reach the door. The power of God would not allow him to leave the building until he repented and was delivered from the bondage of sin.

An alcoholic sitting on his back porch cried out to God, "If You love me, please send somebody to help me." Within 5 minutes a visitation team from our church knocked on his front door. He gave his heart to the Lord that night. Not only was he saved, he was also delivered from alcohol. He is now serving the Lord in our church as a Royal Rangers leader.

Since August 1993, over 10,000 people have come to the Lord Jesus through the ministries of the church. God has also called 20 to 30 young people from our church into the ministry. Some of them are already attending Bible college. We take at least four Mission America Placement Service (MAPS) trips each year. Our members build churches, conduct medical clinics, and lead evangelistic crusades on these trips. As a pastor, it is amazing to

sit in a board meeting and watch the board rejoice when our monthly expenditures for missions exceed our budgetary expenses.

The Pentecostal mission is to preach the gospel to the whole world, but we must also do this for our Jerusalem. On Sunday we bus in between 70 to 100 children, feed them breakfast, then teach them God's Word in Sunday school and children's church. We are now seeing the parents of these kids becoming a part of our church.


In 1992, our church gave \$9,999 to World Ministries. In 1996, that figure rose to \$300,000. In 1997, we gave almost \$400,000; in 1998, we gave \$577,574; and in 1999, we gave over \$770,000 to World Ministries. This means that in over 7 1/2 years, the church has given over \$2 million to missions. As we began to give to God, the church's annual income went from \$400,000 to \$2.6 million. With God's blessings, we have accomplished over \$1 million of capital improvements and buildings and have paid cash for this out of excess tithes and offerings.

In 1997, we began a \$1.5 million building program that added an additional 28,000 square feet to our facilities. We needed this extra space for

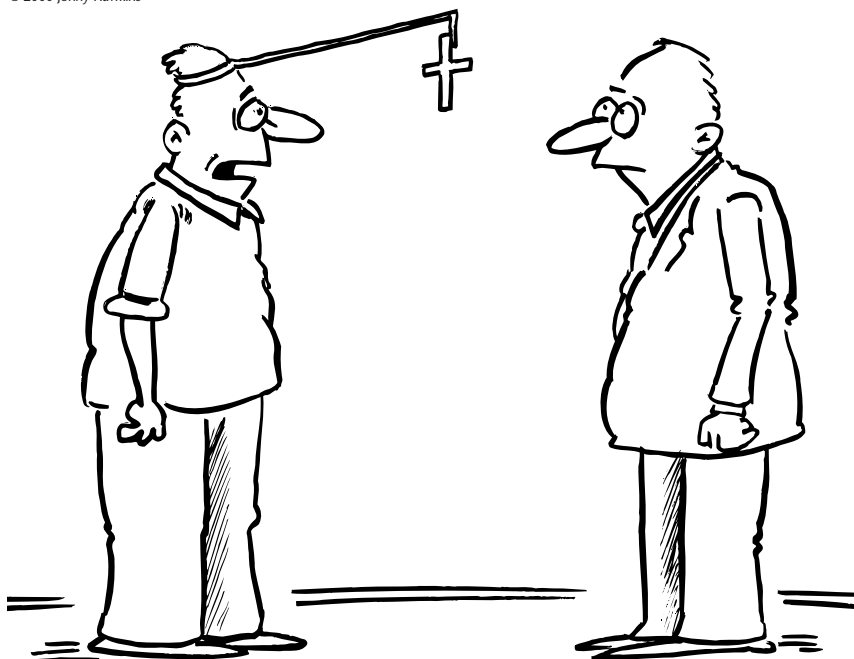
educational needs and the growth of various ministries in the church. This has been completed, and we are getting ready to build a new 2,000-seat auditorium. We plan to expand it to a 4,000-seat auditorium later. During this time, we continued to increase our missions giving.

During a building program there are always financial needs. Our board decided that we would give \$35,000 to an inner-city ministry in 1997. We gave another \$65,000 in 1998, and \$70,000 in 1999.

What is the result of seed sown into this home-missions project? People continue to be saved by the power of God. Lives have been changed, people have been released from spiritual bondage, and the joy of the Lord has been restored in people's hearts.

We cannot be Pentecostal unless we have a mission. What is the equation for growing a Pentecostal church? Prayer + Missions = Pentecostal Fire (P+M=PF). This formula worked for the Early Church, and it is working for us. 

*Randy L. Valimont is pastor of First Assembly of God, Griffin, Georgia.*



**"Anyone can wear a cross around his neck."**





# interview

WITH THOMAS E. TRASK  
AND RANDY HURST

## The Commission on Evangelism: Fulfilling the Great Command



THOMAS E. TRASK



RANDY HURST

*Jesus left no greater commandment to the Church than to reach the lost. This mandate from the Master has been the driving force behind the Assemblies of God since its beginning. A continued expression of the Assemblies of God's commitment to evangelism is evident in the newly established Commission on Evangelism. The commission's purpose is to seek effective ways to fulfill the Great Commission by focusing on evangelism, especially through local churches. Randy Hurst, who has served for the past 3 years as director of communications for Foreign Missions, has been appointed to chair the Commission on Evangelism.*

*Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, and Randy Hurst met with Enrichment to talk about this commission and its purpose.*

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM?

**TRASK:** Pentecost was given for evangelism. God birthed the Assemblies of God for evangelism. For nearly 87 years this church has fulfilled that purpose. We want the fire of evangelism to continue to burn within this church as we enter the 21st century. The Commission on Evangelism will help keep the Assemblies of God's mission on evangelism in focus. We must reach the lost before Jesus comes.

The commission will be a resource team to bring people together especially to help pastors. One pastor may be successful in evangelizing his community while another pastor is wondering how to reach his community. Those who are successful can provide practical ideas for pastors who want to be more effective in their communities.

The commission will also work with the ministries at Headquarters. I pray that the desire for evangelism moves through every fiber of this church and that millions will come to know Jesus Christ.

**HURST:** Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another" (NASB). The Commission on Evangelism will serve as a contact point to bring people together, who will also affect others. We especially need to encourage one another. We want to expose pastors who face challenges reaching their communities to what God is doing in other communities...not so they can pattern themselves after other pastors or other churches. There is a difference between *following an example* and *copying a pattern*. Each church needs to seek the Holy Spirit for God's direction for its ministry and community.

### WHO WILL BE ON THE COMMISSION?

**TRASK:** Members of the commission will include pastors of various sized churches who have demonstrated zeal and effectiveness in evangelism. It will also include national leaders, district leaders, evangelists, and others who have been effective in various aspects of evangelism. We want to bring together people who already have a mind and heart for evangelization. Collectively, we will look at how we can bring awareness for evangelism to the local church and explore avenues we can utilize for touching our communities.

### WILL THE COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM IMPLEMENT AN EVANGELISM PROGRAM?

**HURST:** We will encourage a variety of programs. Evangelism must be implemented in a wide variety of cultures and contexts. Having just one program for every state and community would not bring maximum results.

The constant challenge for churches is to understand where they cannot budge in their commitment to their distinctive priorities, yet learn to follow fresh dynamic leading of the Spirit and respond to ever-changing cultures. This dynamic cannot be reduced to just one program because each community is different. Programs can be helpful, but the more important issues are the character and competence of our people.

**TRASK:** The factor that runs through any culture or church is passion. A passion for the lost will be the driving force. The Holy Spirit in the hearts of people must birth this. The Commission on Evangelism will endeavor to awaken the need for passion for the lost.

### HOW WILL THE COMMISSION SERVE THE LOCAL CHURCH?

**HURST:** Both through *education* and *motivation*.

A major objective will be to help bring to believers in local churches awareness and understanding of what God can do in and through them personally. Some people think, *I'm not gifted for evangelism*. But all believers are commissioned to be witnesses and the Holy Spirit empowers us to fulfill that commission. Every pastor, deacon, and layperson can do the work of an evangelist.

Evangelism is not merely proclamation; it is providing people with an adequate witness so they come to the point of a decision concerning Christ. It is not our responsibility to convince someone of sin; the Spirit does that. The same Holy Spirit who inspired the written Word will illumine its truth to the mind and heart of the unbeliever to convince of sin. People in our churches need a fresh understanding that the salvation of souls is *God's* business, and we have the privilege of working with Him.

### WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE FACE WITH OUR OWN CHURCH PEOPLE IN EVANGELISM?

**HURST:** We should begin by addressing what we *believe*.

First, we must reaffirm our conviction that the lost are really lost. Many American Christians have unconsciously drifted in their personal convictions about the lost. If the businessman in his BMW does not know Jesus, he is as lost as the witch doctor in Africa.

Second, we need to understand the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some people think, *The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is evangelism because Jesus said, "You will be witnesses."* Evangelism is certainly the result, but the purpose is much broader. The purpose of the Baptism encompasses every aspect of a believer's life. The promised "power" that accompanies the Baptism means "ability"—whatever ability is required to fulfill the task God has called us to do. It

may include the ability to forgive someone who has wronged you. But people don't often talk about that in terms of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word *dependence* describes a Pentecostal's relationship with the Holy Spirit and evangelism. The Spirit-filled believer depends on the Holy Spirit to do what only the Holy Spirit can do.


Pentecostal evangelism is God-centered. One of the reasons the gospel is so effective in some foreign countries is that people in foreign countries have to depend on God. They may not have the technology or the tools, so they pray and seek God more.

God has chosen to work through prayer. Any church that is effectively reaching the lost in its community is a praying church. In prayer we submit and humble ourselves before Him. This puts us in a posture of dependence on Him.

### WHAT DO YOU SEE HAPPENING IN EVANGELISM IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

**TRASK:** We want to see the Assemblies of God worldwide double in size. In 1999, the overseas church grew 10 percent. By the year 2005, the Assemblies of God worldwide could grow to 65 million adherents. And by the year 2014, our 100th anniversary, we would like to see that number be at 100 million.

My prayer is that we, as a church, will capture again the thrill of personally seeing people find Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If a church can be zealous about sharing Jesus and then disciple its converts, it will grow.

The task of evangelism is not finished. We cannot be satisfied with 35 million bushels of wheat in the barn when there are fields upon fields that have yet to be harvested. 







# Youth That Are Choice

B Y S T A N L E Y M . H O R T O N

The Bible has much to say to young people. One verse that needs to be emphasized more is: “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecclesiastes 12:1).<sup>\*</sup> “Youth,” Hebrew *bechuroth*, is derived from *bachar*, “to choose.” It speaks of a time of life that is choice because of strength and beauty. Proverbs 20:29 says, “The glory of young men is their strength.” Psalm 144:12 states, “Our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.” This Psalm also speaks of a time of testing and purifying. God chooses to refine youth to make them what He wants them to be.

The Hebrew also has a more general word for youth, *na`ar* (fem. *na`arah*). This word includes boys and girls, teenagers, and even some up to the age of 40 (usually unmarried).

*Na`ar* usually implies inexperience and immaturity. But God wants to make them choice. How does He do this? First, He teaches them by giving

When David offered to fight Goliath, King Saul said, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy [*na`ar*], and he has been a fighting man from his youth” (1 Samuel 17:33). But David had experienced the power of the Lord when He helped him rescue his sheep from a lion and a bear. He also was taught by the Lord. Unlike his brothers, he recognized that Goliath was not just defying the armies of Israel, but “the armies of the living God” (1 Samuel 17:36).

Samuel had already anointed David as the one God chose to be king. The anointing was no mere form—“from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power” (1 Samuel 16:13). “From that day on” is literally “from that day upward” (Hebrew, *ma`alah*). He had a continuing, increasing experience. He was not only chosen; he was not just a *na`ar*. He was *bachur*, “choice.”

Another thing that made David “choice” was his concern for God’s

Joshua was another who was “choice.” He had been Moses’ aide since youth (Numbers 11:28). But when Eldad and Medad kept prophesying in the camp without following Moses’ directions, Joshua was so concerned for Moses’ authority that he asked Moses to stop them. But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them” (Numbers 11:29). Joshua learned his lesson. When God told Moses to commission Joshua to take his place, God identified Joshua as “a man in whom is the Spirit” (Numbers 27:18). He too was not only chosen, but also choice.

That does not mean Joshua had no difficulties or problems. He still needed the encouragement God gave him. He needed to know that God would never leave him or forsake him (Joshua 1:5). As a choice person, he was strong. But he still needed to hear God say, “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:7,8).

Most of the men and women God used were young when they responded to God’s call. They humbled themselves and recognized their need of Him. When the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, Solomon said, “But I am only a little child (Hebrew,

**David had experienced the power of the Lord when He helped David rescue his sheep from a lion and a bear.**

them His Word and by letting them see His marvelous deeds (Psalm 71:17). Those who are taught by Him can say with the Psalmist, “But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long” (Psalm 71:14,15).

will. Paul, in his sermon at Pisidian Antioch, drew attention to the fact God bore witness to David—he was a man after His own heart who would do all God’s will (Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 13:14; Psalm 89:20). The desire to do all of God’s will is the thing that made David a man after God’s own heart.

na`ar) and do not know how to carry out my duties. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" (1 Kings 3:7,9). Jeremiah said, "I do not know how to speak; I

features" (Esther 2:7). But her beauty was not what made her choice in God's eyes. When the wicked Haman threatened the Jews, Mordecai said, "Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as


**Most of the men and women  
God used were young when they  
responded to God's call.**

am only a child (na`ar)" (Jeremiah 1:6). But the Lord told him not to say he was only a child. He must go to everyone God sent him to and say whatever God commanded. God would be with him and he did not need to be afraid, for God would rescue him.

Esther must have had a great deal of courage and a sense that God was with her. She was an orphan adopted by her cousin Mordecai. "This girl (Hebrew, na`arah)...was lovely in form and

this?" She asked that Mordecai and the Jews fast for her and she would fast. She would dare to go to the king, "even though it is against the law." And she said, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:14–16). She was willing to sacrifice herself for the sake of the people of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus had concern for children and youth. Most of His disciples were probably young men. Paul also set an example by training young men such as Timothy and

Titus. To Timothy he said, "Flee the evil desires of youth" (2 Timothy 2:22). That is, those desires that are common to fallen humanity—desires for selfish pleasures and self-exaltation. But he did not stop there. He had surely taught Timothy that we must "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). Paul also told Timothy that it is not enough to flee sinful desires. We must "pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure [clean] heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). This means that we should not try to pursue these good things alone. We need to do it in company with others who are also "choice" in God's eyes. 

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

*Stanley M. Horton, Th.D., is project coordinator for the Pentecostal Textbook Project and professor emeritus at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.*

# How To Bridge the Gap of Worship Between Generations

BY BRENDA A. RASMUSSEN

Christians worship differently. From a child in Sunday school doing the actions to “Deep and Wide,” to a high school student on his or her feet, hands raised, pounding the gates of heaven, or an adult interested in harmonious music and lyrics that focus on worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

Bridging the generation gap in worship is a challenge many pastors and music directors face each week. I once asked a pastor, “What is the most difficult part about pastoring the church?”

He simply said, “Hymns versus choruses.”

As we look over past generations, music in the church has changed tremendously. In the fifties and sixties, the focus was more on a liturgical style with lyrics that talked about the greatness and sovereignty of our Lord. The seventies and eighties saw a music style that centered on the name of Jesus. Today, music is written with more of an emphasis on our relationship with God.

to stand at great lengths. Some long for the days when we sang about the majesty and splendor of God; others want to focus on how they can know God better.

These are only a few of the different items we bring to the table as we worship God each week. How then do we provide a blended worship experience for everyone?

## THREE WAYS TO BRIDGE THE GAP IN WORSHIP

### Teaching

One Sunday I was sitting next to a 17-year-old student who had accepted Christ 3 weeks earlier. The worship began and we started singing from the hymnal. This new convert leaned over and asked, “Why do you sing songs with so many words I don’t understand?” I asked her which words she did not understand. I was amazed at the number of words and phrases she could not comprehend.

To help bridge the gap between the young and the old, instruction during

focus to the different styles of worship:

*Why does God deserve our worship?* “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Romans 11:36).\*

*Why do we stand during worship?* “Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with very loud voice” (2 Chronicles 20:19).

*Why do we give audible praise to God?* “When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God” (Acts 4:24).

*Why do we worship this way?* “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks” (John 4:23).

*Why do we lift our hands?* “I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands” (Psalm 63:4).

*Why do we use instruments when we worship?* “Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing” (Psalm 150:3,4).

*Why do we clap our hands?* “Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy” (Psalm 47:1).

*Why do we kneel?* “Come, let us bow down and worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalm 95:6).

It is important that the focus remains on the worship, but a time of teaching is important to draw us together during our worship experience.

### Variety

A story is told of a soul-winning church where the pastor preached the gospel Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. He followed each

**Bridging the generation gap in worship is a challenge many pastors and music directors face each week.**

Every Sunday the congregation is filled with people who represent different generations, and every person has his or her own preference for worship style. Some people wish it were formal, others informal. Some people want to sing hymns; some want choruses. Some wish the organ and piano were the lead instruments; others look for a guitar-driven band. Others stand to worship, while some are unable

worship is important. We talked about hymns versus choruses, but there are many students and new converts who do not even know what a hymnal is. There are many books published with stories about the hymns that would help people connect with the lyrics. It might be good to pull out a sentence from the hymn and give some explanation and background.

Teaching by use of Scripture brings a

service with an invitation for the lost to pray and receive Christ.

The pastor and staff visited a pastors conference and returned to implement all they had learned. The choir and organ were replaced with praise teams and electronic keyboards. The hymnbooks disappeared, and the words to the praise music were flashed on the screens. Modern

lyrics of our new worship choruses.

A worship service should be like a banquet with different types of food. In a worship service, there needs to be a variety of choruses and hymns so when we worship we feel we have had a spiritual feast. We need to be willing to grow and incorporate the familiar with the new styles of worship.

**In a worship service, there needs to be a variety of choruses and hymns so when we worship we feel we have had a spiritual feast.**

dramas were added and announcements were no longer spoken, but only given via large screens. Everything traditional disappeared. People left feeling abandoned without singing the music they grew up with in the church.


We often feel we must make an either/or choice in style when it comes to worship. A great church music program does not divide the styles but brings them together. Students need to hear the anthems that were written years ago. Adults need to appreciate the heartfelt

#### **Open Heart, Open Mind**

Christians are experiencing a growing hunger for worship. They want to encounter God and revel in His presence. As leaders, we must have an open heart and open mind, allowing worship to release people and give them freedom. Jesus offers His people the privilege of touching God in worship and having God touch them.

For 12 years I was the music director at the same church. Following this time, my husband and I became district youth

directors and traveled every Sunday to different churches. I had no idea how difficult it would be to sit in different worship services. The songs were new, the instruments changed, the tempos varied, the styles were unique, and each week I found it increasingly difficult to worship. I soon dreaded going to church on Sunday. I finally made a decision. I decided that the truth of worship was God himself and He never changes. When I took my focus off the music and began to seek the One we were worshiping, I truly began to experience the heart of worship.

Worship is our response to all that God is, says, and does. Even though the generations may respond differently, it is not how we worship but whom we worship. As we blend the different styles of worship through teaching, creating a variety, and keeping an open heart and mind to the Holy Spirit's leading, we can begin to dissolve the gap of worship between generations. 

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

*Brenda A. Rasmussen is the national Fine Arts Festival director, Springfield, Missouri.*



# Christian Education and Millennial Teens—A Case For Beefing Up Your Teaching Ministry

BY CAREY B. HUFFMAN

The second largest generation in American history is now making its way through our schools, youth groups, and classes. A generation full of contradictions, it is causing even the most seasoned youth ministry veterans to rethink their approach. Millennials are perhaps the most spiritually open group of young people ever in this country, and yet we will fail to reach most of them—including many of them who attend our churches. Something must change.

## A DISCIPLESHIP DEFICIT

Statistics vary, but presently the church is losing over half of its graduating seniors who enter the work force, and roughly three-fourths of those who attend secular colleges. Students are being challenged, given opportunities, and experiencing God like never before. Nonetheless, there is a lack of connection between beliefs and behavior. In spite of the activity, effort, and resources we are putting toward teens, ministry

inspiration without providing instruction are, at best, promoting ineffective involvement—at worst, wasted idealism and reckless emotionalism.

## A CULTURAL CONFRONTATION

Some issues and concerns facing millennials require more attention than can be provided in services and events. These questions warrant coverage in an ongoing context of practical, systematic Bible study.

**Who is God, and what does He say about himself?** Young people need to learn to worship and respond to challenges—but more than that, they need to know God. The faith that inspires that relationship grows as students learn of God's attributes and actions through His Word.

**What is right?** In this postmodern society, personal knowledge and experiences become the measure of truth. Values conveniently bend to match actions. God's Word exposes the futility of human reasoning and reveals the

they can see God's unending compassion for the sinner and imminent judgment on sin.

**Isn't there more than one way?** In today's society, it is becoming increasingly common to encounter young Christians who do not believe we should impose our beliefs on those who are equally sincere in other religious faiths. We must maintain salvation in Christ alone, based on His own claims from the Word. Students need biblical training that equips them to share absolutes in a morally and spiritually pluralistic society.

**Will my future be fulfilling and secure?** Time in the Word yields peace by revealing God's plan in action and how it applies to lives today.

**Who am I, and where do I belong?** Getting students into God's Word on a regular basis helps them develop their ultimate sense of identity and purpose.

**WWJD?** It's time to get beyond speculation. In His Word, students will "See What Jesus Does," and who He is. The goal of discipleship is to be and do like Jesus, and that goal will be accomplished as we teach.

**Students need biblical training that equips them to share absolutes in a morally and spiritually pluralistic society.**

involvement is not becoming embedded in their priority structure.

What accounts for this shortfall may be more obvious than we have been willing to see. If you take seriously Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19,20 and how He demonstrated this, you will conclude that discipleship is not possible without solid, practical, consistent teaching. Youth ministers who provoke

One whose unchanging character and unfailing compassion are the proven basis of right and wrong.

**What about tolerance?** Teens today are passionately tolerant—that is, intolerant of those who oppose what is culturally acceptable. When people appear to be closed minded and judgmental, students tune them out. We must let the ever-relevant Word speak for itself so

**A PRIME OPPORTUNITY**  
If our students are to remain on unshakable spiritual footing—rather than on the short end of a statistic in the years ahead—we must take advantage of every opportunity to instruct our students in the Word.

**Why Sunday school?** Why not? It's still the second-largest context most groups have outside the main youth service, with 40-to-90 percent of the group participating weekly. Imagine what could happen if this ministry received

more serious attention.

**Why look for another time?**

Students are busy, but most are available on Sunday morning—why not use it for discipleship? In a high speed, low-reflection society, class time can furnish time to ponder tough issues.

**Where is everybody?** Since the mid-week service is usually the largest regular gathering of students, regardless of commitment level, involvement in this event may not translate into participation in other ministries. However, those tied into Sunday school are more likely to be involved in other prominent ministry times.

**What about cell groups?** The same dynamics of focused personal attention apply to classes. Although not as casual, the broader setting is perfect for interactive presentation and group discussion. Cell group ministry and Sunday school shouldn't be an either/or proposition.

**Will they come?** Don't expect to throw together Saturday night specials and get students to attend Sunday morning. Do what it takes to make it worthwhile for everyone.

Students can be involved in every other ministry available; but if there is

not a deeper connection to the fellowship on Sundays, they will almost certainly drop out soon after their youth group days are over.

**PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND POSITIVE CHANGE**

Millennials value diversity and thrive on change. Leaders now have more freedom than ever to make immediate, effective changes in programs and processes to find what works best. Sunday school helps alleviate the challenge of providing ministry that spans a wide range of ages and spiritual levels. Whatever you purpose to do, keep these practical directives in mind:

**Get them involved.** Experience creates a context for learning. Effective student discipleship not only includes ministry to youth but more important, with youth and by youth. Let students assist creatively in preparation, presentation, and follow-up. Maturity develops as focus turns from what they get from church to what they can contribute.

**Make the connection.** Students will pay little attention to a message unless you help them tie it specifically to

people and situations in their lives.

**Incorporate technology.** It is the language of the culture in which students have grown up.

**Take time for ministry.** Signs will accompany ministry of the Word as we take time in class for Spirit-dependent ministry (not just prayer requests) that meets specific needs.

**Challenge students.** Current research indicates that high-expectation ministries are experiencing the greatest growth. Life will challenge students' faith. It's better if you as youth pastor will help them challenge it first.

Many youth ministries have been slack in providing the solid base of teaching necessary to combat the culture and disciple students for the long haul. We may not see the fallout while students are under our care, but the church overall has suffered. However, if we invest time in Christian education ministries, we will reap discipleship dividends among those who may well fulfill Christ's Great Commission once and for all. **e**

*Carey B. Huffman is youth ministries consultant for the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.*

# The Pastor's Wife and Her Role in Ministry

BY JANA JONES

**T**he Assemblies of God has many gifted pastors and leaders. As we step into the new millennium, the church is beginning to tap into one of the greatest resources it has ever seen—a greater awareness of the role of the pastor's wife. But there are some questions that need to be asked concerning her role in ministry:

- What is my role as a pastor's wife?
- Where do I fit in?
- How do I balance raising a family with using my ministry gifts?
- What about my marriage?

## THE HEART OF THE PASTOR'S WIFE

### Our Dreams

The Word of God says to love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength, and mind. God is looking for righteous women who will serve in His kingdom. It is easier to watch your husband do all the dreaming, motivating, and training in the church. But when was the last time you awakened in the middle of the night and thought about your dreams for God? When did you become so burdened for that hurting

There is a role for you in ministry. It can be challenging to find where that is. If you will walk in the giftings God has given to you, He will open a door of ministry and help you move into that special place He has designed for you.

Your role may be different from your last place of ministry; but if God has called your husband to a new place of ministry, He has also called you. Find your new role and fulfill it to the best of your ability. Someone once said, "The only person who likes change is a wet baby." If we will recognize that change is not always easy, it will help us find peace during times of change.

### Our Attitudes

Our attitude about ministry will determine the destiny of those who observe us. If we complain about everything, others will pick up on what we say and shy away from serving the Lord. The Bible says, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" (Matthew 5:13, NIV). Salt does many things, and one is

speaking life rather than speaking death. When you discipline your mind and tongue, you will find a new love for God and life.

Sometimes a pastor's wife can become discouraged with the difficulties of ministry. This may prevent her from ministering to others and bringing hope to their lives. During times of discouragement, a pastor's wife may need to confide in her husband or another pastor's wife to help her overcome her discouragement.

It is also important not to gossip and complain about life and ministry, especially in front of your children. This may destroy your child's perspective about ministry and the church. Let your children know that serving the Lord and His church is the greatest honor we can have. My husband and I point out to our girls how ministry is a blessing. Life is what you make of it. By having a good mindset, you will implement that into the spirit of your home.

## THE MIND OF THE PASTOR'S WIFE

### Our Choice

When I was little, someone told me, "You can choose to be bitter or better." This quote has stuck with me over the years, especially when people whom I have poured my life into have said unkind things about me. At that point I had a choice: to feel sorry for myself or keep going on. Because of past hurts, we sometimes keep from getting too close to people for fear of being hurt again. But how can we afford not to be close to people when God has chosen us to disciple and train them for His kingdom?

When small children fall down, we tell them to get back up and try again.

**How can we afford not to be close to people when God has chosen us to disciple and train them for His kingdom?**

lady in your church that you called her on the phone? Or when did you write a note of encouragement to a person struggling with thoughts of suicide? If you don't find your purpose and define your calling, you will miss some of the greatest blessings that will ever come into your life.

to create thirst. When was the last time you were with your peers and gave them a thirst for knowing God better? It is easy to talk about the things and people we don't like. James tells us to keep a tight reign on our tongue because it is the hardest part of our body to control (James 3:3-6). We need to work at



But some wounded pastors' wives do not get back up for fear of being hurt again. Our God can take care of all our hurt and pain. If we make mistakes and fall, He will help us get up and minister again.

### Our Bibles

We need to read the Word and discover that God has chosen us to be salt and light in a world that desperately needs Jesus Christ. We will never be able to share the wonderful works of God with anyone until we read our Bible each day and obey it. James said, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22, NIV). We cannot have spiritual power without reading and meditating on the Word of God.

The Word of God is our weapon against the enemy. It is also our shield of faith. We can be strong in the Lord, but this does not happen within ourselves, it happens as we stay close to Jesus and learn more about His ways for our lives.

## THE HAND OF THE PASTOR'S WIFE

### Our Family

When our two daughters came into our home, we had to adjust our lives. How was I going to be involved with ministry and raise my family? I decided that if Troy was called to ministry and I was called to ministry, Kaylee and Chelsey would have some incredible opportunities many children would never experience.

When they were born, I made a commitment to the Lord that they would grow up knowing that Mom and Dad weren't too busy to spend time with them. Children grow up fast, and I never wanted to look back with regret.

We can't bring back time, but we can remember the times we have created together as a family. God intended for every family to be strong and healthy.

Does that mean we will never face hardships? Raising children can be hard work. The Bible clearly tells us that when we walk through the waters and through the flames, He will go with us and we won't be burned or we won't drown. We serve a mighty God who has our best interest in mind. When I come through the challenges, I have learned lessons that will help me in the future.

We can offer much to the people to whom we minister. We can let them know they have someone with them who cares and understands what they are going through. This may be the determining factor in how they respond to their situation. Hugging a hurting woman will tell her she does not have to go through divorce by herself. Remember, you are God's hand

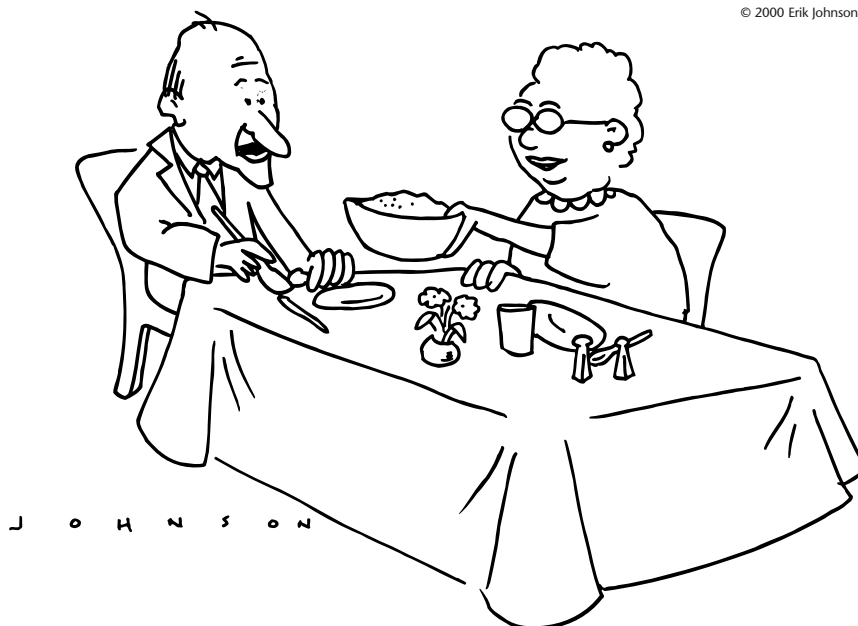
extended to others. They will have a greater picture of His love through your loving involvement in their lives.

### Our Gifts

I have said many times: "I wish I could sing like her" or "I could never speak like her." I don't have to. Each of us has important gifts in the body of Christ. God made the Body to function together as one unit. We all have a part in the big picture. If you haven't determined what your role is, begin by doing something you enjoy. Perhaps you want to encourage ladies in your church. Purchase some cards and write notes of encouragement to those whom God has laid on your heart. Perhaps you have a gift that nobody else has. Dream big. The sky is the limit. **E**

*Jana Jones is a pastor's wife and lives in Renton, Washington.*

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**"I think it's time for me to retire, Mildred.  
I've worn out all my insights."**

# How To Destroy a Christian

B Y S C O T T Y G I B B O N S

**B**efore your morbid thoughts run away with you, I want to assure you that I'm not giving a thesis on the finer points of marksmanship. When I speak of destroying Christians, I'm not talking about physical death, but spiritual death. The war youth leaders are fighting is a spiritual war, not a physical war. Youth leaders aren't just laboring to reach the lost; they are struggling to keep young people on the straight and narrow once they are saved.

Youth pastors often boast of the decisions made at an outreach, only to ashamedly admit that only a small portion of those converted have developed into devoted followers of Christ. This causes frustration for hardworking leaders. Why do we fail at discipleship though we appear to be winning young people through conversion? In many cases, it's a spiritual issue—the Word of God is not sown on fertile soil and fruit is not produced in the lives of our young people (Matthew 13:18–23). When we fail to disciple young Christians, it places the total responsibility for their spiritual growth on their

The youth ministry may be so focused on a decision for Christ that there is little focus on discipleship. Before a leader finishes the celebration of the altar cards, he or she is interrupted with the reality that the life represented by the card was dead in sin. Often the problems of spiritual growth in our young people are a lack of attention to proper care. When faced with the stories of commitments gone nowhere, youth leaders ask, “What am I doing wrong?” The answer could be that it's not what they *are* doing wrong as much as it is what they *aren't* doing right. By following the steps listed below, your youth ministry can destroy any converts it has worked hard to reach. Examine your ministry. Are you equipping your students to become devoted followers of Christ? Or are you following these steps and leaving them to their own destruction?

**1. Don't give them a personal encounter with God.** Some ministries are steeped in religion and ritual rather than relationship. They produce students who merely go to church,

cannot deny. Teach them that talking with God is essential to their Christian walk; it's their lifeline to Him. Teach them to love the Word of God—to hide it in their hearts—not for the approval of man, but so they might not sin against God. Teach them that morning devotions aren't just something to mark off their to-do list. Instead, teach them to be so dependent on God that they can't start their day without Him. It's time we give our students a personal encounter with God, not just a church experience.

**2. Don't give them a cross.** Too many times we are so concerned with getting sinners down the aisle, we neglect to explain to them the price they will have to pay. Jesus said to follow Him we must deny ourselves and take up our cross.

The cross is associated with death. When someone carried a cross in Jesus' day, everyone understood it to mean that person had no rights. There was no turning back. There was no changing his mind. He was as good as dead.

It's time we teach our students what it is to die daily to the things of the world. The Christian life is not something to be taken lightly. It's not a whenever-you-feel-like-it lifestyle. It's a decision to daily lay down your rights and pursue the things of God. Students are looking for something to give their lives to. Show them that a life following God is the very thing they are looking for.

**3. Don't chase them with love and encouragement.** Junior high and high school years can be lonely years. Students are willing to do almost anything to be accepted by their peers—to

**When we fail to disciple young Christians, it places the total responsibility for their spiritual growth on their shoulders.**

shoulders. In these cases, the leader can do little more than intercede for a change in the hearts of the students. Ultimately, the choice is theirs.

In many situations the spiritual growth of our young people is not a spiritual issue, but an issue of neglect.

convinced that prayer is a meaningless ritual, worship is singing a few songs, and “reading a few Scriptures a day will keep the devil away.” It's time to break the pattern. It's time to give our students an opportunity to truly encounter God and experience Him in a way they

feel a part of something bigger than they are. If we leave them to walk alone, it will only be a matter of time before they find the acceptance they long for from the world. As youth pastor, it is your responsibility to chase your students. Follow up on them. Get

reading—not to stand in judgment over them, but out of genuine concern for their spiritual well-being. And finally, be a godly example. Spend time with them and show them what it is to live a Christian life when you're driving down the highway, or going to the

shame that the church so often fails to recognize the talents and abilities God has put in our trust. Look at the things your students are doing. Break out of the mindset that they can only minister if they sing or preach. Are they good at drama? Start a drama ministry. Are they athletic? Encourage them to use that as a platform to bring glory to God. Are they artistic? Let them paint a mural in the youth room, or use them to design a mail-out. Let them use the talents God has given them to further His kingdom. Don't try to fit them into the mold of what's always been done. Be willing to let them dream. Give them ownership of their dreams, and let them realize how God can use them. Before you know it, you'll be developing true disciples—devoted followers of Christ. **e**

*Scotty Gibbons is the youth pastor at James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.*

**Youth leaders aren't just laboring to reach the lost, they are struggling to keep young people on the straight and narrow once they are saved.**

into their world. Find out what they're interested in. Let them know you care about them and miss them when they're not there. Hold them accountable in their walk with God. Ask them how their prayer life is going. Ask them what they're getting out of their Bible

bank, or picking up your dry cleaning. Let them see you living for God, and let them know that you love them.

**4. Don't give them a ministry.** Your students are talented. Their friends, school, and coaches recognize their talents. It's a

## A FOUNDATION FOR DISCIPLE-MAKING

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) is not simply a command for evangelism, but to discipleship. Acts 1:1 implies that we are to continue doing and teaching as Jesus started. In addition to reliance on the Father for guidance and the Holy Spirit for power, Jesus' ministry was marked by these "requirements" of effective youth discipleship:

**Relationship**—He called them that they might be with Him (Mark 3:13,14). Ministries experience a discipleship shortfall as they sidestep the personal, individual nature of making disciples. At the heart of youth ministry, relationship must permeate all you do with students if you are to have significant influence on their lives spiritually.

**Relevance**—He spoke in their terms (common language and parables) and to their needs. Regardless of its importance, young people are not likely to pay attention to the message unless they can see a connection to their lives and concerns today.

**Reason**—Jesus gave ultimate purpose for living—to love God, to reflect Christ's love toward others, and to spread the message of forgiveness and eternal life in Him (John 15:12–17). Without a large-scale unifying cause, teens today are unjustly labeled as unmotivated and undisciplined. When students grasp a vision and purpose, motivation and discipline will follow.

**Release**—Jesus sent them out with the opportunity and authority to exercise their faith and gifts—even though they did not yet understand everything (Luke 9:2; 10:1–19). Experience substantiates truth for this generation. Boredom, apathy, and lack of spiritual appetite set in if ministry outlets are not provided. As students mature, their focus turns from what they get out of ministry to how they can contribute.

The bottom line: Students will pay attention to you as you pay attention to them (relationship). They will pay attention to what you communicate as you focus on their needs and interests (relevance). They will share your vision as you help them discover and commit to Christ's purpose for their lives (reason). Teens will respond to your challenges and expectations as their God-given gifts and abilities are utilized (release).

*—Carey B. Huffman is youth ministries consultant for the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.*

# Working Through Loss: The Nature of Grief and the Tasks of Mourning

BY FRED T. DARBONNE

Death and loss confront us with life's ultimate realities, and pastors often find grief issues constitute a major portion of their care ministry in the church. This article is an introduction to the nature of grief, an overview of the human capacity for attachment to help us better understand the impact of loss, and a discussion of J. William Worden's four tasks of mourning. This will provide pastoral caregivers a better understanding of the challenges in the grief process.

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF GRIEF AND LOSS

Grief is the complex interaction of responses to the loss of something with which a person has become identified.<sup>1</sup> The loss element is what initiates the grief process, and we grieve in response to the loss of anything that has become a significant part of our identity. We usually associate grief with losing someone significant to us; but losing a meaningful job, a limb, physical capacity, or an event that limits future prospects—a child being diagnosed with a developmental disability—can activate the grief process and its related symptoms.

al bonds with others. Bowlby helps us understand the strong emotional reactions that occur when these bonds are threatened or broken.<sup>3</sup> He shows that these attachments develop early in life from our need for safety and security, usually involve a few certain individuals, and tend to endure throughout life. Our attachments are often related to our need for survival, as in the emotional attachment to our parents. Worden expands on Bowlby's ideas by describing the goal of attachment behavior as the maintenance of our affectional bond. Situations that threaten this bond create specific reactions. The greater the loss potential, the more intense and varied a person's emotional reactions will be.<sup>4</sup> This is why a person is more threatened by the loss of a spouse than a distant relative.

The grief responses to a variety of losses are similar, and Bowlby's principles of attachment can be expanded to the loss or threat to other human emotional bonds. The loss of a job, which involves a person's need for safety and security, as well as social status and

their sense of meaning and purpose in life, and the loss of something which once ordered their existence. Parents of children with physical or mental disabilities experience grief at the prospect of limited futures for their children, and they mourn the loss of the cherished hopes they carried as they anticipated parenthood.

## THE NATURE OF GRIEF

It is important to note that grief is a process, and that each person's way of handling grief is as unique as his or her individual personality. While theories of grief stages are helpful in understanding the general processes of grief, grief does not always evolve in such an ordered way, and a person's grief process doesn't often fit the same models.

Since everyone's response to grief is unique, the nature of the grief process resists the setting of time limits. While most people return to preloss levels of functioning within 1 to 2 years, the pattern seems to be that grief feelings ebb and flow and, while waning gradually over time, are sometimes present and sometimes absent.<sup>5</sup> Well-meaning people often expect the bereaved to be over it in a certain time frame, yet this idea often arises from the anxiety of those who experience discomfort in the face of another's pain. The bereaved are confronted with the reality that life can never be exactly like it was before the loss, and adjusting to this new reality and finding a new "normal" take time.

## GRIEF AND MOURNING

Grief is the complex response to a loss. John Patton has defined mourning as "the period of time it takes to let go of

**Grief is the complex interaction of responses to the loss of something with which a person has become identified.**

J. William Worden, in his work, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*, discusses British specialist John Bowlby's theory of attachment as an important foundation for understanding loss and human response to loss.<sup>2</sup> Attachment is our propensity to develop strong affection-

relationship networks, can generate a grief process similar to losing a loved one. The loss of a limb creates the anxiety of diminished ability and the mourning for lost capacities. Retirement creates a loss of personal identity for many, creating intense anxiety as individuals reconsider



what has been lost and to become accustomed to living without it.”<sup>6</sup> Worden outlines four tasks of mourning that must be accomplished for balance to be reestablished after a significant loss.<sup>7</sup>

### Accept the reality of the loss.

To grieve, a person must face the reality that the person is deceased and will not return. The opposite of not accepting the reality of the loss is to be in denial of either the fact of the loss, the meaning of the loss, or the irreversibility of the loss.<sup>8</sup> If a person is unwilling to accept the reality of the loss, he or she will become stuck in this stage of mourning and may develop what professionals term “pathological grief,” requiring therapeutic intervention.

Here is where the funeral becomes important in the grief process. Michael Zedek, speaking in Kansas City at Compassion Sabbath, a clergy conference on end-of-life care, stated that “[funeral] rituals exist to help us acknowledge what has happened, [to know] how to proceed since something has happened, and help us not act as if nothing has happened.”<sup>9</sup> Funerals help us acknowledge the reality of the loss. This allows the grieving process to begin, and pastors have a tremendous opportunity to enable the healing process through their ministry at these services.

### Work through the pain of grief.

Not everyone processes grief in the same way, but some level of pain is an inevitable part of losing someone to whom we are attached. While the intensity of feelings may make those around the mourner uncomfortable, possibly increasing their own anxiety about dealing with loss issues, it is important that mourners allow themselves to experience the pain to press through to the resolution of their grief. Zedek stated, “Grief cannot be repressed—it will come out in [either] a healthy or an unhealthy way.”<sup>10</sup> Worden amplifies this: “If [this task] is not adequately completed, therapy may be needed later, at which point it can be more difficult for the person to go back and work through the pain he or she has been avoiding.”<sup>11</sup>

### Adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing.

While this means different things to different people, the bereaved are often inexperienced in the roles previously handled by the deceased. Surviving spouses sometimes must assume new responsibilities, such as managing finances, caring for children alone, or working through legal problems, tasks for which they may feel unprepared. These situations present challenges, yet are crisis opportunities for personal growth. People can fail to accomplish this task by promoting their own helplessness, or not developing the skills needed to cope. However, most people seem to realize the importance of filling new roles and developing new skills, and often develop new personal strengths that might not have been possible had they not been faced with new challenges.

### Emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life.

In his first edition, Worden described this fourth task as “withdrawing emotional energy from the deceased and reinvesting it in another relationship.” He now sees this definition as “too mechanical, like one could merely pull a plug and reattach it someplace else...[one] never loses memories of a significant relationship.”<sup>12</sup> In task four, people don’t totally give up their relationship with the deceased, but find a suitable place for the deceased in their psychological life that allows them to move on and begin reinvesting in life. Worden illustrates this by telling the story of a teenage girl who had a difficult time in the grief process following the death of her father. As she eventually began to progress through task four, she expressed her own process of withdrawal and reinvestment in a letter to her mother: “There are other people to be loved...and it doesn’t mean that I love Dad any less.” Withdrawing and reinvesting doesn’t imply that we love them less, or forget them, but we now have room for new relationships. This is often what survivors mean when they say of their deceased loved one,

“They will always be a part of me.”

## REFLECTIONS

Leo Tolstoy once said, “Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.” That grief and loss are an inseparable part of life is perhaps a measure of the greatness of our capacity to love and form attachments to others. This comes from our creation in the image of God who is love. To be spared the sorrow of the losses of life would require a diminishment of our divinely given capacity for love and relationship. Yet, those who have experienced the joy of meaningful relationships would probably agree that a life without loss, at the price of a life without love, is really no life at all. **e**

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## E N D N O T E S

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# Cybersex and the Church

B Y A L A N W . A R A M

**W**hen radio made its debut, some heralded it the “devil’s box” because of its potential for corrupting people. When television made its debut, it was also called the “devil’s box.” But radio, television, telephone, movies, recorded music, and the Internet are technological inventions and are morally neutral. They are as good or evil as the people who use them. Tim Berners-Lee, one of the creators of the Internet, said, “Technology can’t make us good. At the end of the day, it’s up to us: how we actually react, how we teach our children and the values we instill.”

## HOW LARGE A PROBLEM ARE CYBERSEX AND INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY?

Estimates vary, but the *National Psychologist* reported that one in five adults is on-line, and more important, two out of three teens are on-line.<sup>1</sup> Patrick Carnes, Ph.D., an expert on sexual addictions, estimates that between 3 to 6 percent of adults are sexually addicted.<sup>2</sup> That computes to about 14 million Americans, many of whom are

Approximately one-third of Web sites are sexually related, and sex is the number one topic searched for on the Internet. Males are more susceptible to Internet problems with pornography and women are more likely to be hurt by E-mail romances (E-romances).

## WHY IS CYBERSEX SO POWERFUL?

God made us sexual beings, and He blesses sexuality in the intimacy of marriage. Our modern society has twisted that to the point where sex is the panacea for every ill mood, bad day, or feeling of boredom or loneliness. We are constantly taught that we are entitled to have “great sex,” and if we don’t, we should be able to get it somewhere.

Alvin Cooper, Ph.D., noted researcher on cybersex, has described “the three As” of cybersex addiction: anonymity, accessibility, and affordability.<sup>3</sup>

### Anonymity

There is a myth that when people go on-line they are anonymous and nobody can find out who they are (the

for your company’s computer whiz to accidentally discover them when he helps you with something as innocent as setting up a Web page.

The perception of anonymity lessens a person’s inhibitions. Cybersex is fast replacing phone sex. Cybersex allows the individual to type in specific instructions to a woman/man who then acts out the individual’s sexual fantasy in front of a camera, as the person views it on his/her computer. Cybersex is more than just viewing *Playboy*-type pictures. Sound complements the images—for a fee.

Cybersex feels safer than buying pornographic magazines, visiting your local adult movie store, or having your pornography delivered in a plain brown wrapper. It feels like you are alone and nobody sees what you are doing. Yet we know that our Heavenly Father sees everything and is grieved when He sees us secretly committing these sins.

### Accessibility

Whether you are at home in the privacy of your study, at work in your cubicle, or at the public library doing research, you are just a click away from smut. You can get in and out quickly—when your spouse leaves the room for a minute while you are working on taxes—and receive a thrill that may stay in your consciousness for hours, days, or weeks. The power of the Web gives you access to any kind of sexual information or perversion you can think of, and some you haven’t.

### Affordability

At first cybersex is cheaper than print

**Approximately one-third of Web sites are sexually related, and sex is the number one topic searched for on the Internet.**

secretly struggling with their addiction while trying to live Christian lives.

It is estimated that pornography is a \$12-billion-a-year business, with cybersex making up about one-third, or \$4 billion. And this figure is growing at an alarming 20 percent a year.

sites they access or what they view or download). This is not true. Each time you access a site you leave technocrumbs that can be traced back to you. Many pictures or texts that have been downloaded and erased are still in the depths of your hard drive, waiting

pornography. Often the site will ask for a credit card number when you log on for a free peek and then ask you if you'd like to see more, "hotter, sexier... for just \$3.95 a minute." That minute will only lead you to another and another.

### **WHY IS PORNOGRAPHY PSYCHOLOGICALLY ADDICTING?**

Pornographic images that create sexual arousal, and the altered brain chemistry that accompany them, are deeply etched into a person's memory. However, like most addictions, what is exciting and arousing today becomes boring tomorrow, so the person needs to look for sexier, hotter, and kinkier images and fantasies to maintain the same level of arousal.

Sexual arousal and sexual climax can create a state of brain chemistry similar to that of addictive drugs, where there is an increase in dopamine, serotonin, and adrenaline. These powerful neurotransmitters make us feel good, and in our modern age of entitlement, we are taught by society that we should have these good feelings.

Initial and early sexual experiences tend to channelize or direct the sex drive in the future. Learning from the first exposure to pornography is more powerful than would be expected, based on traditional learning theory, and is similar to the imprinting described by Conrad Lorenz in his work with baby geese.

Can you recall your first sexual experience? If so, it probably has unusual clarity and detail and perhaps even some strong emotions. Do you remember your early contact with pornography (*Playboy*, the Sears catalog, or *National Geographic*)? Notice how strong those images still are.

Some people are more vulnerable to sexual compulsions and/or addictions than others. Those who are isolated socially are vulnerable. This may be due to a lack of social skills, physical isolation, or being placed on a pedestal by a congregation that demands its pastor

show no human frailties. People who have unfulfilling marriages are vulnerable. Media images influence our expectations of marriage and the reality of our marriages cannot compete with these images. Religious hang-ups against sexual expression in marriage can limit the quality of the sexual relationship. Some people have been sexually abused or have had inappropriate sexual experiences at critical life stages that interfere with their ability to relate with the opposite sex.

At the root of many sexual compulsions or addictions is an Intimacy Disorder, where the individual does

not have the skills, time, energy, or spouse that allows him or her to develop true intimacy—emotional, spiritual, and sexual. Some people try to fill the vacuum of an Intimacy Disorder with raw sexual arousal, but it is never enough to satisfy.

Many people who suffer from dysthymia, a chronic, low-grade depression, find that sexual arousal can temporarily lift their mood. But when the sex act is over, the depression comes back with accompanying shame. What do people do with these bad feelings? They act out sexually again, just like having another drink, and another, and another.

### **HOW DO PEOPLE KNOW IF THEY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH SEXUAL COMPULSIONS OR ADDICTIONS?**

People have sexual compulsion or addiction if their sexual activity interferes with the rest of their life, rather than their life (work, children, spouse) interfering with their sexual activity. As a sexual compulsion increases, energy, time, and money are withdrawn from family, work, and one's relationship with God and diverted toward the

compulsion or addiction.

The terms *sexual compulsion* and *sexual addiction* are not accepted as psychological diagnoses at this time. Sexual compulsion is used when a person has a strong drive or feeling that he/she must do some sexual act. Sexual addiction takes that drive to a higher level where the individual believes he/she cannot control it and has to engage in the sexual act. In either case, the sexual act interferes with daily functioning.

There is no clear dividing line between sexual compulsion and sexual addiction. Rather there is often a

**Males are more susceptible to Internet problems with pornography and women are more likely to be hurt by E-mail romances (E-romances).**

slippery slope where the person gradually and often unconsciously increases his/her use until life is out of control.

Here are some questions to help a person know if or to what extent he/she has a sexual compulsion or addiction:

- Do you find yourself doing the sexual activity more often, or do you need to do something special or different to get the same good feelings?
- Do you feel down, depressed, or agitated when you quit engaging in the sexual activity?
- Have you tried unsuccessfully to control this sexual behavior?
- Do you spend more and more time planning for the sexual act or looking forward to it?
- Does your sexual activity interfere with other important areas of your life—money, work, or time with God, spouse, and children?
- Do you continue the sexual activity even though you know it is hurting you?

### **HOW CAN WE COPE WITH CYBERSEX PROBLEMS?**

The recent White House Internet Summit reported that 42 percent of



parents supervise their children's Internet usage a little, and 52 percent provided no supervision at all.<sup>3</sup> Parents are often too intimidated by their own ignorance to ask their children what they are surfing for on the

they may accidentally find pornography on the Internet and (especially for boys) they will be tempted to look at it. Remind them that while Jesus encouraged us to stand up and resist temptation, He tells us to "flee" sexual

impossible to keep all the smut out of your home.

Resisting the temptation for cybersex at work is more challenging, but crucial. People caught with child pornography on their computers can be cited for a federal offense, even if they have repented and tried to delete it. Many employers will automatically fire employees for theft of services if they use their company computers and company time for noncompany activities. While inroads have been made in corporate America where alcoholism is considered a disease deserving treatment rather than automatic firing, sexual compulsions and addictions are not usually considered a disease that employers want to help their employees overcome, particularly in a Christian business or ministry.

If your problem with cybersex is severe, and you realize you cannot control it by yourself, consider the following suggestions, similar to those from Alcoholics Anonymous:

**One of the best ways to control cybersex is to have your personal computer in a room where people frequently walk through.**

Internet. We try to hide our ignorance behind "trusting our children." One of the best ways to control cybersex is to have your personal computer in a room where people frequently walk through. Don't let your children have their own passwords; and if they do, tell them you expect to know their passwords. Allow Internet use only when you are home and before you go to bed at night.

Be proactive. Tell your children

temptation, knowing how strong it can be on us.

Many software programs help block out pornography or other adult material. Some Internet service providers sell a filtering service along with their regular on-line services. An excellent and updated list is available through Focus on the Family. However, none of these blocking programs or filtering services are foolproof; and with hundreds of sites being established daily, it is

*Stay off-line.* If you must be on-line, use a filtering service or blocking program.

*Have an accountability partner.* If you must access sexual material (for example for an article on cybersex), establish an accountability partner (like a sponsor from Alcoholics Anonymous) and call him prior to logging on.

*Pray for help.* God wants to help you stay pure. Put Post-it Notes on your screen to remind you to avoid the temptation.

feelings, and/or behaviors that form a chain of events that lead to accessing cybersex. As you bring to light these thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, you can learn to stop yourself before you've gone all the way.

*Confess your sin.* If you fall, quickly confess the sin to God and contact your accountability partner who can help you learn from your failure.

## CONCLUSIONS

Technology is morally neutral, and Christians need to learn to use the

Internet, then unplug your computer from the Internet. If this doesn't help, then seek professional help. Some communities have Christian psychologists who are trained to deal with sexual compulsions and addictions. They will build on your Christian faith as they help you learn to control these problems. There are also 12-step programs for sexual addictions in many cities. There is no temptation we cannot overcome if we seek God's help. **e**

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**Technology is morally neutral, and Christians need to learn to use the cyberworld to bring glory to God rather than be tempted by cybersex.**

*Define your ritual.* It feels like there is no time between the impulse to access cybersex and the act of accessing it. Usually, however, there are thoughts,

cyberworld to bring glory to God rather than be tempted by cybersex.

If these insights alone are insufficient to control your use of the

# Marketplace Mania

B Y R A N D A L L K . B A R T O N

## INTRODUCTION

The financial markets have experienced momentum perhaps unparalleled in the United States since the 1920s. For 5 years in a row, a particular asset class—growth stocks—substantially outperformed all other asset classes. Within the growth stock class, the high-tech, communications, and “.com” sectors have shown phenomenal gains and price increases.

While these last 5 years may have little precedent in the context of modern theories of asset allocation, financial euphoria surrounding a particular “can’t miss” investment opportunity is as old as the free enterprise system itself.

## FINANCIAL EUPHORIA

A brief discussion of financial euphoria helps put the current market mania into perspective. History is full of examples of financial euphoria and the corresponding “can’t miss” investment opportunities:

- In the 1630s, tulip-bulb mania struck Holland. Nearly every adult traded

surrounding the New World economy with promises of fabulous mineral deposits and lucrative trade routes resulted in unprecedented growth in joint-stock companies given the privileges to take advantage of the wealth of the Americas. By 1720, the speculation came to an end, with disastrous results for the economies of both France and England.

- One of the United States’ first “can’t miss” investment cycles came with the railroad boom in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The opportunity to take advantage of the new economics from the expansion to the West came to a complete crash by 1873.

- The most famous economic crash in United States history occurred in the 1920s as the U.S. stock market (through leverage) experienced unprecedented growth from 1924–29. The crash of October 1929 brought in the era of a Great Depression and a somewhat passive investment climate for almost 25 years.

- In the 1960s there was the “nifty fifty” large corporations reflecting the new economy in the United States.

precious metals. This boom became a giant bust by the mid-1980s.

- By 1989, Japan was the hot opportunity for all investors. Japan’s unparalleled economic growth and unbelievable stock and real estate valuations created enormous wealth for the country and its citizens. Of course, the crash came in 1990.

In most episodes of notable financial speculation, at least three elements are present:

- Pride in seemingly the discovery of something new in the world of investment opportunity, which is confirmed as others rush in to exploit their own, usually slightly later, version of this investment opportunity.

- Debt or asset valuations that in one fashion or another have become dangerously out of scale in relation to the underlying means of payment or producing profit.

- Participation by the masses in the financial euphoria so demand outstrips supply of the investment. Speculation building on itself thus provides its own momentum.

**Diversifying works because the value and return of different investments rise and fall independently of each other.**

in tulip bulbs. By the end of 1636, a single bulb was exchanged for “a new carriage, two gray horses, and complete harnesses.” By 1637, the end came, and rare tulip bulbs trading for \$25,000 became worth \$25 overnight.

- In the early 18th century, both in France and England, speculation

These “can’t miss” stocks dominated market capitalization. The correction in the market experienced in 1969 resulted in a decade of flat market experience and left millions of people disillusioned with the market.

- In the late 1970s, “can’t miss” opportunities abounded in oil, gas, and

## OUTGUESSING MARKET CORRECTIONS

Unfortunately, investment success often develops in the participants an attitude of investment superiority relative to an understanding of the market. A common characteristic of those with that newly discovered “genius gene” is the supposed ability to outguess when the correction will come.

Can you expect to be able to predict market corrections and prophetically adjust your portfolio to take advantage of fluctuations? For that matter, can

sophisticated professional investors expect to add value through tactical adjustments to investment strategies? Ernie Ankrim, director of portfolio research for world-renown Frank Russell Investment Company, declares an emphatic “No” to these questions.

Consider these studies:

- In 1975, William F. Sharpe analyzed results of market timing over 43 years from 1929 to 1972 and concluded *a market timer must be right three out of four times merely to match the overall performance of those who stay fully invested.*

- In 1985, a study of 100 large pension funds reported that only 11 improved rates of return through market timing and 89 underperformed the benchmark by 4.5 percent annualized over the five-year study.

- In 1996, Ernie Ankrim examined 70 years of historical returns, searching for any patterns that could be exploited by investors with foresight to recognize those patterns. The result? Past returns hold no predictive value or significant patterns to help investors decide when to get in and out of the market based on past performance.

What is the cost of bailing out through market timing? Ankrim writes, “Timers tend to get out too early and get back in too late, so they miss the up markets before and after the bailing. You’d have to be very accurate twice—getting out and getting back in.” Getting back in is especially difficult because upward moves happen in accelerated bursts. In fact, an average annual return of 9.5 percent is concentrated in the first 20 trading days of a bull market.

The bottom line? Don’t be seduced by short-term market timing success. After more than 25 years of evaluating the most talented investment managers in the world, Frank Russell Company has consistently concluded, “We haven’t seen anyone who has consistently added value through market timing. Some win big, but they lose big, too. Unfortunately, the public often only hears about the upside of a market timer’s performance.”

## AVOIDING THE COLLAPSE

As responsible investors, we should avoid the greed brought about by financial excesses. Proverbs 28:20 promises, “A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.”\* Proverbs 23:4 further admonishes, “Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.”

Success in the investment world does not come by jumping on the bandwagon of financial speculation (or off at just the right time); it instead comes from consistency and diversification.

For your retirement and investment planning, follow three simple rules:

- Diversify and invest in equities and fixed income. Diversifying works because the value and return of different investments rise and fall independently of each other. As you get older, gradually reduce your exposure to equities but still diversify.

- Diversify among different investment managers. Invest with those who consistently perform in the top 25 percent over a number of years. Don’t pick last year’s biggest performer, and definitely not the hottest sector. They are probably due for a correction.

- Diversify with different investment styles. Some investment managers invest only in large cap companies; others look for value; still others look for growth. Styles of investing fall in and out of favor in the marketplace; but by investing in managers with different styles, you reduce the volatility of your

investments while providing an opportunity to share in the upswing when a particular investment is in style.

Ministers Benefit Association provides the investment opportunities, educational tools, and choices to assist you with making decisions that are right for you. Through the award-winning LifePoints program, you can accurately and effectively understand your individual risk tolerance and translate that into an appropriate allocation between equities and fixed income. Examine the opportunities for yourself at: [mba.ag.org](http://mba.ag.org).

## CONCLUSION

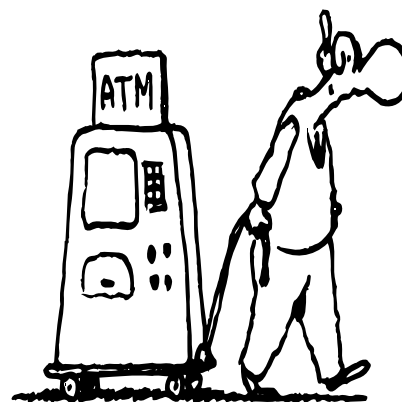
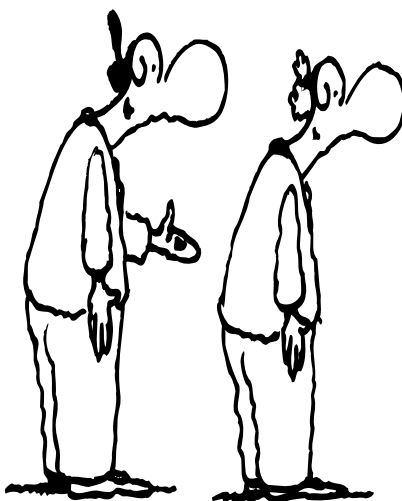
History teaches us what happens once a particular investment becomes so popular that financial euphoria replaces rational market behavior. Unfortunately, at the end of such episodes, a fall always occurs. Built in is the fact it cannot come gently or gradually. Simply put, all groups participating in the speculation prepare for sudden escape.

Through proper diversification and a disciplined investment strategy, you avoid the need for an exit strategy. While market corrections will affect your returns for the current cycle, it should have little impact on your long-term investment goals and objectives. **e**

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

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**“He’s a legend in the usher community.”**

# A Winning Pace: How To Balance Family Life With Ministry Demands

B Y P H I L J . R A S M U S S E N

I once received a custom-made card that said, “Sometimes a leader comes along who sets a pace that allows the team to win.” Pastor, are you setting a pace in your personal and professional life that will allow your marriage, family, staff, and congregation to win? A long-distance runner who tries to maintain a sprint will often not finish the race; but one who charts his course and keeps a steady, deliberate pace will finish and win.

Ministry is demanding. Consider these scenarios: church activities scheduled every weeknight compel you to attend every event rather than trusting and empowering your staff and congregation with responsibility. Perhaps you’re in a building project; and although you’ve put in countless hours toward building completion, you feel the need to supervise every phase or

with the Lord? Anointed ministry flows from a vital relationship with Christ. Interact with God daily. He’s not as concerned with the size of your church, youth group, or budget as He is with you.

The next relationship intended to produce energy in your life is your relationship with your spouse. How often have you heard regarding priorities, “God first, then my spouse, next my children, and then the ministry”? Is this in your Day-Timer? Plan a monthly date with your spouse—and keep it. Let your congregation know. A minister in Ohio did this and a woman told him, “Thank you, Pastor, for setting such a good example for our husbands.” So you’re a great communicator in the pulpit? Strive for meaningful, beneath-the-surface communication with your spouse.

you’re going to be at church late for your monthly board meeting, consider spending the morning with your spouse. Allow your staff the same privilege. When you go home, leave your “pastor persona” at church. Your family doesn’t need another sermon; they need *you*—your unconditional love, friendship, and affection. Turn solo activities into family activities. Is exercise a part of your daily routine? Walk, rollerblade, or bike as a couple or family. Cook with your spouse; wash the car with the kids. Laugh and talk together while you do it.

If the budget allows, take your dress shirts to the cleaners, pay for a housekeeper a few hours each week, or hire someone to maintain the lawn so you can have more time for family and less domestic distractions. Sure it’s a trade-off: less money in the budget, but more time for relationships.

Include your family in the work of the ministry as much as they desire and are able to participate. Make ministry an enjoyable family activity just as you would enjoy each other’s company at a ball game. One pastor took his 3-year-old son on hospital visitation, and the patients enjoyed the child’s company as much as the pastor’s.

Keep the fourth commandment by observing a weekly day of rest. It’s not a feather in your cap to work on your day off (that includes doing church work at home). Take an annual vacation. Even if your budget cannot afford a long-distance trip, stay home and recreate with your family. What if you need time off, but your workaholic senior pastor forbids it? Perhaps the current situation will not change, but in your next

**Pastor, are you setting a pace in your personal and professional life that will allow your marriage, family, staff, and congregation to win?**

feel guilty for spending a much-deserved evening at home. Perhaps you’re the minister who runs to the rescue of others without contemplating if the issue could be handled over the phone, delegated, or scheduled for another day. Without careful thought and a consistent pace, you stand to lose a lot more than just the race.

## YOUR PRIORITIES

What could be discovered about your priorities by examining your Day-Timer? Are you spending adequate time

As you plan your annual church calendar, be family-friendly. Preserve a night of the week with *no* scheduled church activities. Not only will you get a weekly family night, so will every family in your church. Also refrain from scheduling emotionally, financially, and physically draining activities too close together.

As much as possible, keep regular office hours so your immediate family and your church family know when you are available to them. Be willing to flex your schedule when necessary. If



ministry interview, share with the pastor and board your personal life mission and how that includes your family. Get the vacation policy in writing.

Throughout Scripture, God is called our Father. In the New Testament, Jesus is called our Bridegroom. The two most powerful relationships in our world are those of husband and wife, and parent and child. If God created these relationships and identifies himself in these roles, it's obvious that He prioritizes those identities. We should too.

### YOUR PARAMETERS

Set and lovingly communicate parameters to your church family to protect your family time, and encourage them to do the same. A good minister will always respond to legitimate emergencies, but it's important to define an emergency. Be candid with your church about how they can expect you to respond to various crises. Your clearly communicated responses will diffuse misunderstandings before they develop, and often prevent the manipulation of your time.

A pastor in Tennessee cooks the family breakfast as a point of contact and communication before the day begins. Preserve mealtimes as family time and screen calls. Of course, pick up the phone in response to legitimate emergencies, but other calls can be returned.

### YOUR PACE

If you live the life of a workaholic, consider the example you are portraying. What contribution does your example play into the breakdown of marriages within your congregation? Your life is the loudest sermon you'll ever preach. Consider the example you set for

young ministers on staff. You may be their first, close-up glimpse into the life of a minister. Is your pace one of burnout or long-term, effective ministry? What are they learning to replicate in their homes by your example? Will their marriages be strong as you hold them accountable to nurture that relationship? Or weakened because you expect an unrealistic workload?

Consider the minister who will one day follow you. If your self-imposed work expectations are unrealistic, the person who follows you will never measure up in the eyes of the congregation. Your pace becomes detrimental to long-term church ministry as they compare the work ethic of their new leader to yours.

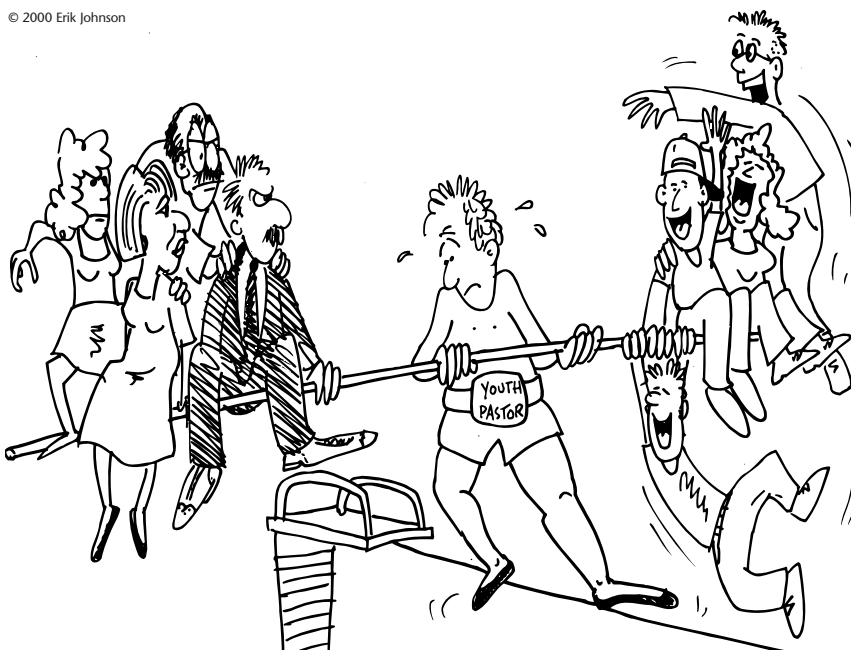
If you're too busy, you're probably not delegating. Pastor, you're not the only one who can do the work of the ministry. Trust and train people to coordinate and lead programs and

events. Investing time in the training of others will not only save you hours, but fulfill Ephesians 4:11,12. People in your church desire to live lives of Kingdom significance. Let them.

### YOU WIN, THEY WIN

The world today is desperate to see authentic, Christlike family relationships. If Jesus isn't evident in your marriage and family, why would others want to follow Christ? They need to see that Jesus makes a difference. When you prioritize marriage and family, everyone comes out a winner—you, your spouse and children, your staff, your church family, and the world. **e**

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**The challenge of intergenerational ministry.**

# Spiritual Formation

B Y W A Y N E E . K R A I S S

I will never forget the incredulous shock I felt as I stared at the title page of the document: “Verdict and Discipline of the Rev. \_\_\_\_.” The following pages chronicled the charges followed by the word, “guilty.”

He had been one of my seminary professors. I will never forget some of the dynamic illustrations he had used to simplify complex theological principles. The books he had authored were powerful and persuasive. How could this have happened? Tears welled up in my eyes, and I had a difficult time reading the severe process he would be required to follow to regain his ministerial credentials. A congregation had been betrayed; a marriage was in deep trouble; a seminary had a vacancy; a pulpit was empty; a man was near destruction.

Within a few days another shocking story of a fellow minister’s moral failure shook me again. He, too, had been a great leader. Another pulpit was vacant, another marriage was in trouble, and another promising ministry had been compromised. These were ministers

fullness in helping us to be witnesses. It seemed so clear from the text that this was not about power to do but power to be. Both of my fallen friends had done a lot, but somehow they had not become the persons the Holy Spirit designed them to be. I remember thinking about the word *witness* which comes from the word *martyr*. One does not do martyring, but becomes a martyr.

So much in our culture today is focused on doing. This preoccupation with action and experiential living creeps subtly into the church and even infiltrates our doctrine. Many students in our colleges are urged to only focus on what they are going to do when they graduate. Tension even develops over which course of study or which institution can prepare a student to do something the fastest. Certainly the need to adequately prepare for what we will do is important. But if that overwhelms the primary focus of the Holy Spirit in giving us power to become witnesses—persons whose lives have become

leaves the soul anemic. Great preaching and teaching are necessary, but they do not substitute for character and internal formation by the Spirit. Something is radically wrong when we deceive ourselves into thinking we are doing well because the crowds are voicing their approval and the plaudits are plentiful. When the soul is barren, we are neither doing or being well.

Christian colleges and universities are not serving the church if they succumb to the popular trend of preparing graduates to do and neglect the need for spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is intentional and personal. It requires an investment of time and hard work. A mature mentor is often the key to such formation. Jesus is the greatest model of how to mentor a disciple. Spiritual formation is personal and tedious. When a faculty member serves the student in the role of teacher/mentor, the student is most fortunate, especially if the faculty member is a good model and has allowed the Holy Spirit’s power to help him or her become a witness.

The Spirit-filled life is much more than what can be observed in public. It is what shapes our thoughts and actions when no one is watching to give us approval. It is the moral and ethical structures that the Holy Spirit builds into our character as He reveals the nature of Christ. It is the construction of barriers that serve as boundaries in our lives and keep us from crossing into forbidden zones. This unseen work has few, if any, shortcuts in our spiritual formation. **e**

**The Spirit-filled life is much more than what can be observed in public. It is what shapes our thoughts and actions when no one is watching to give us approval.**

who had embraced the reality of the Spirit-filled life. I had personally observed evidence of that in them. Something had gone wrong. Something did not take. What was it?

A few days later I was reading a commentary on Acts 1:8. The writer was extolling the power of the Holy Spirit’s

Christlike—we have failed miserably in our preparation for ministry and understanding of the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

As Pentecostal believers, we must be vigilant about spiritual formation and not blinded by the flurry of experiential activity that captures the headlines but

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# Encouraging Our Youth To Serve God

BY CHARLES E. HACKETT

I read in *Christianity Today* that the Mormon Church commissions 5,000 new missionaries every 3 weeks. These young missionaries serve their church around the world for 2-year terms at their family's expense. In light of this, are we underestimating and underchallenging our Assemblies of God youth? Are we expecting too little when they are willing to give much?

I have been encouraged as I have visited our Bible college campuses and Chi Alpha groups on secular college campuses. We have a generation of young people who are excited about Jesus and are bold in their witness for Him. The amount of money our youth is giving to Speed the Light—over \$12 million in 1999—indicates they have dedicated their money as well. We have a generation willing to go anywhere and pay any

price to take the gospel to any culture. We are blessed.

But we need to ask: Is the older generation (I'm a part of it) doing all within their power to encourage our youth to be all they can be for God, or are we hung up on things that are without spiritual foundation but have to do with cultural and personal choices? There are many types of food I don't care for, and some I don't like at all, but that does not make me the official connoisseur of foods for the human race. As long as food is nutritious and healthy, people have the right to choose their menu. Can we make that comparison in the church?

I have my likes and dislikes when it come to music, dress, and other trends; but God has asked me to hold fast to Scripture, not tradition. Much disagreement in the church

today has more to do with personal taste than Scripture. John the Baptist dressed differently, ate different foods, and held church on the banks of the Jordan River; all which did not fit very well into the customs of the day. He was criticized by many, but Jesus held him up as an example. The church must unite around the Cross and the person of Jesus Christ, and not be divided by things that are personal tastes rather than scriptural values.

This issue is critical as we reach out to the youth to gain their support and participation in this end-time harvest. We cannot accomplish the mission without them. They are eager to help; but when we make major issues out of nonessentials, such as the style of Christian music one prefers, we are headed in the wrong direction.

I grew up in this Fellowship. One of the memories I have from the past is, "If it's fun, it's sin." Some things were taught as essentials when actually they had no scriptural basis. Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past. Let's stay with our Statement of Fundamental Truths and not add our personal bias and call it number 17.

We have a generation of youth who are smart, who know the Word, and who have a passion for God. Let's make it as easy as possible for them to come alongside and help us in the formidable task of providing a clear presentation of the gospel to every person. **E**

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# S E R M O N S E E D S



## CALLED WONDERFUL

### INTRODUCTION:

"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). In the Hebrew, *wonderful* means, He shall be miraculous and perform wonders. No other person has ever been so worthy of being called Wonderful.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Wonderful in His virgin birth.

Angels marveled and shepherds worshiped because He was the Son of God. He was free from sin because He was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit before her marriage to Joseph.

#### 2. Wonderful in His character.

His enemies could find no fault in Him (John 18:38). He manifested love,

kindness, understanding, and truth at all times.

#### 3. Wonderful in His teachings.

The people had never heard such a Teacher for He spoke as One having authority. His teachings, which interpreted the Old Testament, reached humanity's moral, physical, and spiritual needs.

#### 4. Wonderful in His miracles.

He caused the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the lepers to be cleansed, and the dead to live. He healed the whole man—body, mind, and spirit.

#### 5. Wonderful in His conflicts with Satan.

He destroyed the works of the devil, first overcoming him during a personal confrontation in the wilderness, casting out demons from people they had possessed,

and providing victory over sin and Satan through His resurrection (Hebrews 2:14-18).

#### 6. Wonderful in His death.

He prayed, "Father, forgive them." He who had done no wrong died as a criminal. God draped the noonday sun and shook the earth while Jesus hung on the cross. An onlooker cried, "Truly this was the Son of God."

#### 7. Wonderful in His resurrection.

Jesus showed He was miraculous by rising from the dead. He had said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17). Christmas was only the beginning; the Resurrection was the culmination.

—Joseph T. Larson

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## ENCOURAGEMENT AT YEAR'S END

### INTRODUCTION:

As you look back over the past year, you may want to relive part of it, but you can't. Remembering who you are, and whose you are, you can encourage yourself by taking a close look at some values that are yours in the Christian life.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Life's commencement (Philippians 1:6).

- There is assurance.
- There is a future.

#### 2. Life's continuance (Philippians 2:13).

- God works in us.
- Our part is to trust and obey Him.

#### 3. Life's control (Philippians 3:10-14).

- Controlling power can characterize our lives (verse 10).
- Controlling power can give us a singular goal (verses 13,14).

#### 4. Life's consummation (Philippians 3:20,21).

- Begins with the citizenship of our birth (verse 20).
- Is consummated in the coming of our Bridegroom (verse 20).
- Results in the change of our bodies (verse 21).
- Results in a conformity to our Beloved (verse 21).

#### 5. Life's communion (Philippians 4:6,7).

- Our attitude should be:
  - Fretful over nothing.
  - Prayerful in everything.
  - Thankful for anything.
- Our gain will be:
  - Unexplainable peace.
  - Unusual preservation.

#### 6. Life's contentment (Philippians 4:11-13).

- Through past experience—"I have learned."
- Through schooling—"I am instructed."
- Through ultimate success—"I can do."

#### 7. Life's completeness (Philippians 4:19).

- The Father's checkbook:
  - The Provider: "My God..."
  - Promise to pay: "shall supply."
  - Amount to be paid: "all your need."
  - Account from which drawn: "his riches."
  - Address of bank: "in glory."
  - Signature on check: "Christ Jesus."
- Proper endorsement—we claim it by faith.

### CONCLUSION:

We certainly can be encouraged as we review these values in our Christian life. We can exclaim with the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

—John F. Walker

## A VISION IN THREE DIMENSIONS

Isaiah 6:1-8

### INTRODUCTION:

Long before the development of the three-dimensional concept, Isaiah had a vision in three dimensions. This vision had a life-changing effect on his life. We can and should also have such a vision.

### MESSAGE:

- He saw God (verses 1-4)—"I saw...the Lord."
- He saw himself (verse 5)—"Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."
- He saw others (verse 5)—"I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."

### CONCLUSION:

When we truly get a vision of God in His holiness, power, and love, we will see ourselves as we are in relation to Him. Then we will see the needs of others.

—Jesse K. Moon, Waxahachie, Texas

# S E R M O N S E E D S



## GETTING WHAT YOU DID NOT ASK FOR

1 Kings 3:5–15; Luke 18:9–14; Romans 5:1,2

### INTRODUCTION:

Soon after Solomon became king of Israel, the Lord appeared to him in a dream. Solomon was told to ask God for anything he desired. Overwhelmed by this responsibility, he requested wisdom. God honored that request. God also gave Solomon things he did not request—riches, honor, and length of days.

The abundance of God's blessing from the New Testament covenant of redemption is even more wonderful than Solomon's.

What do we ask when we come to Christ? Forgiveness. Man is depraved. We are sinners by nature and by actions.

1. Sinful by nature (Psalm 51:5). In David's prayer of repentance, he confessed his depraved state. Paul and Peter verify this truth (Ephesians 2:1–3; 2 Peter 1:1–4).

2. Sinful by actions (Psalm 14:1,3; 53:1,3; Romans 3:12. See also Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23). Like the publican (Luke 18:13) we cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." He answers our cry. Romans 5:1,2 identifies four additional blessings that come in abundance.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Justification

- Justification is the formal acquittal of sin.
- In Jeremiah 31:34, the prophet described the New Covenant and its two separate concepts, forgive/forget.
- This passage is repeated in Hebrews

8:12 and 10:17.

d. How could a holy God get past man's sin? God himself provided a substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21).

e. When you ask for forgiveness, He gives more than you ask—He justifies.

#### 2. Peace

a. The basis of peace is a restored relationship with God.

(1) Since the Fall, humanity has not been at peace with God.

(2) Christ made peace through His blood (Colossians 1:20).

b. The evidence of peace is an obedient, submissive life. The peace Jesus promised to His disciples was predicated on His willful obedience to His Father's will.

c. The manifestation of peace is found in struggles of daily living. After the Resurrection, the disciples were behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19).

d. When you ask for forgiveness, He gives more than you ask—He gives peace.

#### 3. Access to grace

a. Mercy—not getting what is deserved—is used 276 times in Scripture.

b. Grace—getting what you could not earn—is used 170 times in Scripture.

c. Through Christ we can come to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:15,16).

d. This is not one-time privilege; we "stand" in this grace.

e. When you ask for forgiveness, He

gives more than you ask—He supplies grace.

#### 4. Hope of glory

a. Experience the present revelation of glory in daily living (2 Corinthians 3:18).

(1) Revealed by the Spirit's illumination of the Word in personal application.

(2) Revealed by willful submission to the plan and purposes of God.

(3) Revealed through resisting temptation and overcoming trials.

(4) Revealed by understanding transitory nature of this present life.

b. Anticipate the future perfection of glory.

(1) The saints are God's inheritance (Ephesians 1:18).

(2) Heaven is a reality (Revelation 21:3,4).

(3) Our hope is not an escapism that creates an unrealistic view of this present life.

c. When we ask for forgiveness, He gives more than we ask—He showers us with glory on the way to glory.

### CONCLUSION:

The blessings of God are abundant and cannot be comprehended. When we ask for forgiveness, God grants that, but adds much more. He gives what we did not ask for—justification, peace, grace, and glory.

—H. Maurice Lednický  
Springfield, Missouri

## HOW'S YOUR CONSCIENCE

### INTRODUCTION

Even pagans have a conscience (Romans 2:14,15). The conscience is "the moral sense or consciousness within oneself that determines whether we consider our own conduct to be right or wrong." It may be reliable or unreliable, depending on whether the individual has been properly taught the truths of God.

An example of how the conscience works is given in John 8:9.

#### 1. An evil conscience

- A guilty conscience (Hebrews 10:22).
- David's conscience (Psalm 40:12).
- Belshazzar's conscience (Daniel 5:6).
- The only real cure is cleansing through Christ's blood (1 John 1:9).

#### 2. A seared conscience

- A dangerous condition (Ephesians 4:19).
- A latter-day situation (1 Timothy 4:2).

#### 3. A defiled conscience

- It calls evil good, and good evil (Isaiah 5:20).
- Pollution of the mind can lead to this (Titus 1:15).

#### 4. An unreliable conscience

Even a very conscientious person can be lead astray by his conscience if it is not aligned with Scripture. "To the law and to the testimony" (Isaiah 8:20).

#### 5. A purged conscience

- Purged by the Blood (Hebrews 9:14).
- Educated by the Word (Psalm 119:9).

#### 6. A weak conscience

- Some are more sensitive than others (1 Corinthians 8:12).
- Love will keep the strong from offending those who are weak (Romans 14:13).

#### 7. A good conscience

- It is precious and desirable (1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 3:16).
- God expects us to have a pure conscience (2 Timothy 1:3).

### CONCLUSION

Let us adopt Paul's motto: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

—R.C. Cunningham

# S E R M O N S E E D S



## HONEY, I ENDANGERED THE KIDS

Joshua 7

### INTRODUCTION:

1. The defeat at Ai is a warning that one man can cause the defeat of an entire nation.
2. The story is built on two spiritual principles:
  - a. solidarity and corporate responsibility.
  - b. removal of protection in response to a broken covenant.

### MESSAGE:

1. **Solidarity and corporate responsibility (verse 1).**
  - a. The consequence of Achan's action was not limited to himself. It affected his family, his army, and his nation. The principle of corporate responsibility

is seen twice in Joshua:

- (1) Rahab's family was saved by her actions (Joshua 6:17).
- (2) Achan's family was doomed by his actions (Joshua 7:24-26).
- b. We are unified with others. Our destinies are tied together. We are interdependent. What one person does affects the whole.
- c. The New Covenant abolished the practice of punishing the entire family, but the Holy Spirit has not abandoned the principle of corporate purity (Acts 5:1-10).
2. **Removal of protection in response to broken covenant (verse 12).**
  - a. Achan desired to enrich himself with the things dedicated to God.

- b. Achan did not respect the command of God. He broke the covenant. God's laws are not options, suggestions, or recommendations.
- c. Achan was not the only one who sinned. The entire nation had become overconfident and casual with the things of God. They had lost their edge.
- d. In the church today there may be sin, greed, and a carelessness about the things of God.

### CONCLUSION:

Whatever is buried in your tent, dig it up today.

—Jay Herndon  
Burlingame, California

## LOOK AT THE NEW YEAR

### INTRODUCTION:

As we look into the New Year, we need to evaluate ourselves. Too often we only see the faults and failures of others.

1. Look at ourselves in the light of God's Word. How does our life measure up according to God's Word?
2. Look at ourselves as God sees us. God doesn't just see our actions; He sees our motives.
3. Look at ourselves as others see us. Others see us differently than how we see ourselves.

### MESSAGE:

1. **Look into the past.**
  - a. This will cause us to praise.
  - b. Praise for help (Psalm 46:1). Not only for present help, but all the help in the past. Reflect on God's goodness during the past year and praise Him.

- c. Praise for hope (John 3:36). Those who believe in Christ have a hope of everlasting life.
- d. Praise for heaven (John 14:1-6). Death is not the end; there is life beyond death. Christ died, rose, and ascended into heaven. He is preparing a home for all who love and serve Him.
- e. Praise for happiness (Psalm 16:11). By knowing Christ, we have joy that the world does not have.

2. **Look at the present.**
  - a. This will cause us to plan.
  - b. Plan sensibly (Psalm 90:12). Time is short. Budget your time so you have time for the important things.
  - c. Plan spiritually (Psalm 37:23; 119:123; Proverbs 16:9). Read the Bible and pray. Make Christ first in your plans.
  - d. Plan our substance (Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 16:2). We need to be good

stewards of God's resources. Tithing needs to be a priority in our lives.

### 3. Look at the prospects.

- a. This will cause us to be dedicated.
- b. Dedicated to live for God (Daniel 1:8).
- c. Dedicated to love (Matthew 22:37-39).
- d. Dedicated to learn (Psalm 143:10). Learn God's plan for your life, how to grow in the Lord, and do His will.
- e. Dedicated to look (1 John 3:2). Looking for Christ will help us live right and purify ourselves.

### CONCLUSION:

Look to Christ in the New Year. Allow Him to change, charge, and commission you. When you look to Christ, you will find encouragement, enlightenment, peace and pardon, justification, and joy.

—Croft Pentz  
Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

## LOVING GOD MORE

### INTRODUCTION:

When a lawyer asked Jesus concerning the great commandment in the Law, Jesus indicated it was to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37).

### MESSAGE:

1. **Loving God faithfully results in:**
  - a. Obedience to Christ (John 14:15,23).

- b. Separation from the world (1 John 2:15).
- c. Surrender to Christ (Matthew 16:25).
- d. Service for Christ (John 21:15-17).
- e. Generosity to others (1 John 3:17).
2. **Loving God more results from:**
  - a. God's great mercy (Luke 7:47).
  - b. Keeping God's Word (Deuteronomy 11:1; 1 John 2:5).

- c. Yielding to the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- d. Exhortation of others (Psalm 31:23).
- e. Earnest prayer (Philippians 1:9).

### CONCLUSION:

The quality and measure of our service for the Lord will depend on the degree of our love for the Master. Develop this love.

—Fred Smolchuck, Springfield, Missouri



# S E R M O N S E E D S

## INVITED TO A WEDDING

Matthew 22:1–14

### INTRODUCTION:

To the multitude, to those who “sought to lay hands on him” (Matthew 21:46), to His disciples, and to believers today, Jesus spoke this parable of divine grace. Through the familiar and joyful features of a wedding, Jesus portrays the relationship between God and all humanity.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. The fullness of God’s grace.

“A certain king, which made a marriage for his son...sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding” (verses 2,3).

#### 2. The completeness of man’s rejection.

- “They would not come” (verse 3).
- “They made light of it” (verse 5).
- “The remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them” (verse 6).

#### 3. The fierceness of God’s wrath.

“When the king heard thereof, he was wroth” (verse 7).

#### 4. The wideness of God’s mercy.

“Go...and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants...gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good” (verses 9,10).

#### 5. The brashness of man’s response.

“The king...saw there a man which had

not on a wedding garment” (verse 11).

#### 6. The anguish of man’s punishment.

“Cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (verse 13).

### CONCLUSION:

God’s invitation to the wedding of His Son is going out. Each person must respond in one way or another. The wise will respond promptly and positively. Our eternal destiny—whether joy or judgment, salvation or sorrow, heaven or hell—is at stake.

—Warren D. Bullock

Reprinted from Advance.

## A NAME ABOVE ALL OTHERS

### INTRODUCTION:

Bible names are significant; they indicate personal characteristics or life accomplishments. That is why the prophet said, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. He is our Day-Star (2 Peter 1:19).

- The “Morning Star” (2 Peter 1:19, NIV).
- The “Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2).
- The “Light of the world” (John 8:12). When Christ was born, a star led the

Wise Men to His side (Matthew 2:9). Now He is the Light that leads men to God.

#### 2. He is our Daysman (Job 9:33).

- Our Advocate (1 John 2:1,2).
- Our Reconciliation (Colossians 1:21,22).

#### 3. He is many other things.

- Immanuel—God with us (Isaiah 7:14).
- Judah’s branch (Zechariah 6:12).
- The Door (John 10:7).
- The Good Shepherd (John 10:11).
- The True Vine (John 15:1).

#### 4. Above all, He is our Savior (Matthew 1:21).

- Our means of salvation (Acts 4:12).

b. Our Redeemer (Ephesians 1:7,8).

c. Our Sacrificial Lamb (John 1:29).

d. Our authority over the enemy (Luke 10:19; Acts 16:18).

### CONCLUSION:

So precious is He that believers rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer for His name (Acts 5:41).

That name is above every name (Philippians 2:9). At Christmas we are grateful for all that is wrapped up in God’s unspeakable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15), but mainly we thank Him for a Savior.

—E.S. McQuillen

Reprinted from Advance.

## WISE MEN—YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Matthew 2:1–12

### INTRODUCTION:

While there is some difference of opinion concerning the profession of the Wise Men, there is no doubt concerning the wisdom of their activity.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. The search of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:1,2).

- Prudent men seek after Christ (Acts 13:7,12).
- Prudent men understand the ways of God (Hosea 14:9).

#### 2. The worship of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:11).

- Christ is worthy of worship (Revelation 4:9–11; 5:12).
- Worshippers join in activity with the heavenly host (Luke 2:13–20).

#### 3. The gifts of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:11).

- Cheerful giving is rewarded by God (2 Corinthians 9:6–11).
- Giving of self should precede giving of gifts (2 Corinthians 8:5).

#### 4. The obedience of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:12).

a. Obeying God has priority over obeying man (Acts 4:19; 5:29).

b. Obeying God is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22,23).

### CONCLUSION:

The world has many standards for measuring wisdom, but no one is wise until he fears the Lord (Psalm 111:10).

—H.W. Steinberg

Reprinted from Advance.



## GET 'EM PUMPED

With the new wave of game shows flooding prime-time television, I hear a culture shouting, “I want to play; I want to get in the game.” We’re seeing a generation that wants to be participators and not just spectators. For many years, I’ve used interactive games and activities to pump up students in any setting, whether the youth rally, discipleship class, or even school assemblies. Students want to get involved. I’ve always approached youth ministry from a holistic point of view: a balance of physical, mental, social/emotional, and ultimately spiritual growth. When students participate and interact with each other, walls are torn down and they are ready to receive from God. The following are just a few games, activities, and crowd breakers I’ve used to get students pumped for action.

### Pentecostal or Friendly Handshake

Students roam the crowd shaking hands with each other, giving their name, what school they attend, and something about themselves no one knows. Five students are chosen ahead of time. When they shake the 20th hand, they bring that person to the front to receive a prize (cash, CD). This is a way for students to mix with each other and get them talking.

### Pyramid Clumps

The leader calls out a random number from 3 to 10. Students quickly gather into groups of that number and build a pyramid within a specified time (a few seconds). When time is up, the leader yells, “Stop.” If too many or too few teens are in their pyramid, these students are eliminated and return to their seats. The process starts over until only two people are left.

### Anatomy Clumps

This game is the same as above except the leader calls out a number and a body part—“five, ankle.” (Please use discretion.) The members of the groups must all be touching ankles. Too many or too few in the group and the group is eliminated. The winners keep playing. The process continues until only two people remain.

### Back to Back

Students find a partner and stand back to back. At the signal by the leader, students turn around quickly and hold up several fingers on one or both hands. Each person tries to

add the total number of fingers being held up on theirs and their partner’s hands. The first to yell the correct number wins. Losers sit down. Winners partner with another winner, and the process continues until there is an ultimate winner.

### Sweat Pants Stuff

Choose a few students (may represent sections of students or schools students attend). Give each group XXXL sweat pants. The leader distributes balloons to each group. At the signal, students begin blowing up the balloons, a designated runner takes them to the student representing their section and stuffs them into the sweat pants. After a particular time limit, the one with the most balloons, or the one that seems the most stuffed, wins. Then the drawstrings are pulled tight and the participants must bounce up and down on the sweat pants without using their hands, to pop as many balloons as possible.

### Video Vision

Prior to the meeting, the leader videotapes objects around an office (stapler, keyboard, tape dispenser). Start showing the video out of focus at first and slowly zoom into focus. The first student who yells out the name of the object wins.

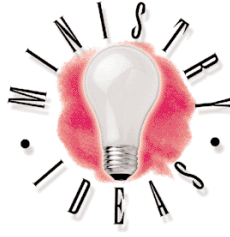
These are great ways to get students mixing together. These games can be used as an object lesson or an illustration for the topic of a message. The more students interact through these games and activities, the more the group is pumped and bonds together. I have a variety of PowerPoint video projection games to be used along with my *Get 'em Pumped* book that contains several hundred games.

—For more games and ideas, contact Jaroy Carpenter, Solid Rock Resources, P.O. Box 3042, Coppell, Texas 17019, or call (972) 304-1618, or E-mail: [solidrockresources@hotmail.com](mailto:solidrockresources@hotmail.com).

## COLLEGE AND CAREER MINISTRY

Bridging the gulf between the local church and the needs of young adults is essential if we are to keep this generation. Thankfully, more and more churches recognize they must not abdicate their responsibility to a student once he or she receives a Bible for high school graduation. Churches that intentionally reach college students with relevant, life-application ministries are flourishing.

**1. Student Emphasis.** Students appreciate connecting with families. Any version of an Adopt-a-Student program is effective and provides the student with a friendly off-campus



environment to enjoy a surrogate family. Churches that prepare care packages (snacks, toiletries, and coupons) for students or serve a meal on the first couple of Sundays of the fall semester send a clear signal to students, “We’re glad you’re here.”

**2. Sunday School Classes.** The key to reaching and keeping college students is creating an atmosphere uniquely suited to them. A Sunday school class can take on a “service feel” with acoustic guitar worship, interactive discussions based on applying biblical truth to life, and fellowship. To accommodate a college student’s natural desire to process information in groups, build small group time into every lesson.

In the past 10 years of ministry to college students, I have been asked about curriculum. Unfortunately, there isn’t much quality material from which to choose. I have written material that allows students to view truth in a fresh perspective. In one church’s college class I taught a series called “Losers Win.” We studied the biblical concept of humility by contrasting famous losers in the Bible who won (John, Mark, Saul of Tarsus, and Peter) with “winners” who lost everything (King Saul, Herod, and Pharaoh). Students nominated each other for an award called “Loser of the Week” by sharing embarrassing stories from the past 7 days where they felt like a “Loser.”

**3. Coffeehouse.** College students appreciate a relevant approach to outreach. First Assembly of God in Rockford, Illinois, understands this. The Union is a branch of Cross Current (the youth and young-adult ministry led by Jeanne Mayo) geared to college students. On the first Thursday of the month, the Union volunteer staff transforms the church fellowship hall into a coffeehouse with flavored java, theatrical lighting and staging, and round tables with candles. Live drama and comedy, as well as an acoustic jazz combo and other musicians, set the stage for a clear, relevant gospel presentation. Some nights have included improvisational comedy where the audience selects the material. Others have featured a somber drama. One night an original short film called *Dark Intent* was shown.

Shawn Johnson, director of the Union, explains that the 200-plus students who regularly attend each month appreciate the attempt the church has made to understand where students are coming from spiritually. “Most of these students would never come to a regular church service,” he says. “The Union is a safe place to hear a dangerous message—that Jesus Christ can radically change your life.”

Johnson has prepared original scripts for youth and young adult outreach. You may contact him at 815-877-8000 for more information.

Reaching college students from the local church is all about relevance and relationships.

—Clint Bryan is young adult pastor for ages 20–35  
at First Assembly of God, Rockford, Illinois.

## DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is more than a class or a program; it’s a lifestyle. The phrase “actions speak louder than words” really comes to life when dealing with discipleship. You will earn the trust and respect of students when they see you living what you preach. To do that, you have to make students a part of your life and vice versa. If you are going to disciple them, don’t limit your relationship with students to inside the church. Here are several methods I use that have been effective in discipling teens:

**1. Go where they are.** Show students they are important by spending time with them. Let them see what God has made you through discipleship and His Word. Go to their games, plays, concerts, and even to their schools for lunch. Go shopping at the mall with them. This may also be an opportunity to evangelize with them.

**2. Be accountable to your students.** Memorize Scripture with students on a weekly basis. Not only does this challenge them, but it also challenges you to know the Word of God.

**3. Be a part of worship.** Take advantage of every opportunity to show students how to worship. If you teach and preach about worship, make sure you give God your best in worship. Students will follow the leader only if the leader is worth following. Make God worth following in worship and discipleship.

Discipleship is a never-ending process that will help your students, your leaders, and you to grow in God.

—Justin Smith is youth pastor at Spanaway Assembly of God,  
Spanaway, Washington.

## DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING OUTREACH EVENTS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

If you want to make a lasting impact on the teens of your area, plan outreach events. To do an event, it is important to:

**1. Be determined.** If you’re determined, you will follow through. When you invite 200 unchurched teens to your church for an event, it can’t be business as usual—they don’t know how to behave in church. When you’re determined,



you know it is worth the inconvenience, effort, and cost (time, resources, personnel, and love).

2. *Develop a plan.* Get 10 of the most creative people in your church and brainstorm every possible idea for a youth event. When you find the idea you believe will work, put together a plan that will make it a reality. Find out what types of events would be relevant to the students in your community. A tractor pull may not go over with inner-city teens, but a basketball contest would. Build a skate park, have a carnival, develop a multimedia presentation and give out free tickets, have a concert on the lawn, or have a Super Bowl party. Remember, the message is sacred, not the method. Don't be afraid to try something new, something outlandish, something crazy. If it draws teens, it's worth it. Get creative with your resources. There may be businesses that will donate money or products when they find out you're doing something for teens. Don't be afraid to ask.

3. *Implement the plan.* Follow through on one of your ideas. Take time to cast your vision to the congregation. The more people who own the vision, the more likely it will succeed. Recruit key people and delegate areas of responsibility. Pick strategic times to host the event. Be purposeful in your timing and promote the event through flyers, tickets, billboards, mailers, and word of mouth.

4. *Evaluate the event when it's over.* List the positive and negative aspects of the event so you can be more effective the next time. Get your brainstorming team together and use this knowledge to come up with ways to improve your outreach. Even if an event wasn't as successful as you had hoped, it's given you insight for the next event.

Don't be afraid to try new things, and don't become attached to past success. Keep relevant. Any church, anywhere, any size can host a successful outreach. All you need is creativity, a want-to, and a lot of love.

—Al Davis is the former youth pastor at Faith Church, Anderson, Indiana.

### IT'S A JUNIOR HIGH THING

What do you picture when you hear the words *junior high*? A 13-year-old boy with enough energy to run a marathon without breaking a sweat? How about a 12-year-old girl giggling because the guy she has a crush on is in the same room? Or maybe you see an eighth grader with black lipstick, eyeliner, and earrings in places that make you shake your head and say, "Bless her heart." Regardless of what you picture, there is one thing that remains a constant...working with junior

highers is extremely interesting.

Ministering to this age group is exciting, but can also be tricky. Here are a few tips as you endeavor to capture the junior-high heart.

*The age is awkward.* Junior high students are trying to figure out who they are. With the physical changes they are experiencing, this makes for a pretty awkward time.

*The connection is confusing.* Due to this weird stage they are going through, connecting with them can be a challenge. That is why you cannot wear your feelings on your sleeves. Don't be easily offended. They'll say and do things that will make you wonder if they really have a heart to be won. Maybe you are working too hard at trying to be something you're not.

You can relate to every student by surrounding yourself with a team of leaders who possess a variety of personalities, but all share a love for God and a passion for students. No matter what method you use to connect, remember that a connection with a junior higher is a life-long connection.

*The pursuit must be persistent.* Make a commitment to not stop chasing the student until he or she has experienced real life in Jesus Christ.

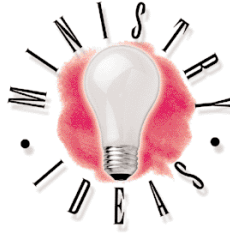
The next time you want to throw a chair at a junior higher for acting up, stop, count to 10, smile, deal with the issue, and remember the words of Paul in Galatians 6:9: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (NIV). I think the Holy Spirit had the junior-high leader in mind when He inspired Paul to write those words. Hang in there. Don't give up. Junior highers are worth it.

—Joel Wilkie is student ministries assistant director at James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

### JUST ANOTHER YOUTH SERVICE?

"What else do you do all week besides preach on Wednesdays?" This is one of the more frustrating questions students ask a youth pastor. The youth meeting is just a small part of the youth pastor's portfolio, but we need to let this question teach us about the impact a youth service has on our students. We spend time pouring our lives into students, but it is the weekly presentation of the gospel they remember more than anything else. That is why youth pastors need to make the youth service memorable. Here are some factors that can contribute to making your youth meeting unforgettable.

*Prayer must be at the center of all you do.* When God points you in a direction for your youth meeting, it is imperative



that you determine how to make the service memorable. If you can give students one principle that will help transform their lives, then you have succeeded. Remember, we minister not by our own power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Never underestimate the importance of students in front of students.* Teenagers would much rather see a peer up front than an adult. Our job is to equip and empower students to do ministry. Students read the Scripture verse for the service, lead in worship, give announcements, welcome visitors, or present special music.

*Choose a theme for your service.* Your service can revolve around a theme that will contribute to making a life-changing memory. If the theme for your service is “Significance for God,” begin by showing a music video with that particular message. Next, have a student open the night with a challenge for the group, encouraging them to make a difference on their school campuses. Then transition to a short, humorous skit that portrays a teenager making a difference in the world. Have your worship leader select songs to support your theme. After worship, incorporate a human video that will help launch your message.

*Greetings and announcements should be done with zeal.* Make even the mundane aspects of the service significant.

*Creativity will never be an adequate substitute for the meat of God’s Word.* You can share God’s Word in a way that tattoos it on the hearts of your teens. Imagine a sermon being your baby. Choose a memorable name for your baby. Title your sermon on significance, “What do you want on your tombstone?”

*Remember that students have a short attention span, and they love visuals.* Make frequent transitions; and when you can, incorporate multimedia illustrations via video clips or PowerPoint. This will help generate interest and intensity.

*Major on majors; don’t major on minors.* Capitalize on your strengths. If your drama team is strong, use them. If your band or worship team is a strength, then major on them.

Finally, build into your service a sense of tension and expectancy. And be bold in proclaiming the gospel.

—Scott Bruegman is youth pastor at  
Calvary Assembly of God, Toledo, Ohio.

## CHANGING THE WAY WE PRESENT A NEVER-CHANGING GOSPEL

To rescue a dying generation, we can’t compromise the truth, but we can present that truth in a relevant way. I take a popular idea from the secular world that teenagers are interested

in and use it to portray biblical principles and demonstrate the love of God in a practical way. More teenagers come to Christ through this than anything else. Young people bring their friends when we do these special series. It is great for reaching students in the community while stimulating growth in our church teens.

We did a series on aliens. I do not believe in extra-terrestrial life; but if you look in clothing stores, the windows of the record stores, the kind of movies teenagers are going to, aliens are popular. Here are the four main focuses of the aliens series: Aliens Feel All Alone (Genesis 23:1–4, 17 through 24:1); Aliens Become Citizens (Ephesians 2:19); Aliens Are Dreamers (Hebrews 11:13–16); Aliens’ Dreams Come True (Romans 4:16–25). At the end of this series we busted an alien piñata, gave alien pens and gumballs, and had an alien contest.

Teenagers learn more when we take the never-changing truth of God’s Word and put it in terms to which they can relate and understand.

—Heath Adamson, Norwalk, Iowa

## TOUR-OF-DUTY: MINISTRY TRAINING FOR YOUTH

Tour-of-Duty is a program that helps teens develop in different ministry areas. This program was birthed out of a passion to see young people involved in the church and to help them learn about different ministries.

One Saturday a month we focus on a ministry in the church: preaching, drama, video editing, worship leading, and sound-system training.

We bring in laypeople or other pastors on staff to help with the training sessions. Sessions focus on the basics and the mechanics, and over the next month we let students practice what they have learned.

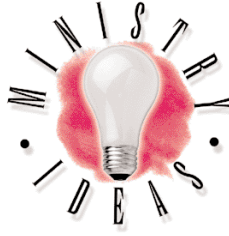
One month a Tour-of-Duty was on preaching, and our senior pastor did the training. I planned a student-preaching night in youth group 1 month later. I gave everyone in the session an opportunity to take part. Over the next 2 weeks I met with the students who wanted to preach and prayed with them. They prepared an outline and shared it with me, and I helped them develop their thoughts.

Some Tours-of-Duty we are planning include: children’s ministry (puppets, clowns, juggling), human videos, and evangelism.

It’s exciting to see teenagers interested in ministry. They just need proper training and a chance to grow.

—Josh Amiot  
St. Paul, Minnesota





### **VARSITY FOOTBALL BREAKFAST**

My goal as youth pastor has been to reach the young people in the public schools. Realizing that building relationships with the faculty and students could enable me to do this, we developed the Varsity Football Breakfast.

We invited the coach of the high school varsity football team to bring his team to our church every Friday morning during football season for breakfast. We serve the meals in our youth center to give a glimpse of our youth ministry. We provide a TV, VCR, and chalkboard for any pregame discussion.

We use adult volunteers to operate this ministry. Three to five volunteers participate each week. We set up teams, so no one has to work more than three to five breakfasts a season. The youth department provides the menu and purchases the food. The volunteers arrive at the church 15 to 30 minutes before the players to set up and prepare the food.

Our goal is to build relationships. I want the students and faculty to know we are here. This ministry has opened up numerous doors. The football team invited me to its annual

banquet to pray over the meal. The coach introduced me at the banquet and explained what we were doing. Recently, one of the coaches told me about a young man in the school who was in desperate need of help. His life was a mess because of some bad decisions. This coach felt the school had done all they could do for him, and asked if I could give him several business cards to hand out to troubled teens and their parents.

Last season we included the basketball team; and, as we gain more volunteers, we will add other school teams. We know God has made this successful, and we look forward to seeing what He has in store.

—Murlin Bettinger is youth pastor at  
First Assembly of God, Collinsville, Illinois.

### **SEND US YOUR IDEAS**

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E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to: [enrichment@ag.org](mailto:enrichment@ag.org).





### BABY'S BIRTHDAY WITHOUT BABY

Two women were enjoying an elaborate luncheon in a downtown restaurant. When asked the occasion for the luncheon, one said, "We are celebrating the baby's birthday."

"But where is the baby?" asked the inquirer, for there was no child to be seen.

"Oh," said the mother, "you didn't think I'd bring him. Did you? Why he doesn't know anything about it."

Many of us celebrate the birthday of the Savior and forget to invite Him. In our rush of observing Christmas with giving, eating, etc., do we really stop to meditate upon the Christ child who should be the center of it all?

—Pulpit Helps

*Adapted from Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations.*

*Used by permission.*

### CHRISTIAN LOVE

*Eternity* magazine records this story of Christian love and kindness. A Christian Chinese cook was put in prison. It was bitterly cold—about 26 degrees below zero. He had on his padded clothes and big fur coat. Later that night, a heathen man thrown in with him had no wraps at all. The Christian man began to pray God would get him out of prison. While he was praying, God spoke to him: "I won't hear your prayer until you take off your fur coat and give it to this man who has none."

*If I do that, the man thought, I'll freeze to death by morning.*

"If you don't," God replied, "this man will be dead before morning." So he took his fur coat and gave it to the man.

Later, at a Christian gathering in Communist China, the man who had received the coat testified, "I am here today because a man shared his coat with me in prison."

People are in need. People are suffering. Winning souls to Christ could depend on how willing we are to share our coats. That is what building bridges to reach a secular person is all about.

—Stephen R. Mills

*Springfield, Missouri*

### FAMILY OF LOVE

One day I asked the members of the church council to begin its meeting by answering the question, "What is it about this congregation that is extremely important to you, so important that you would miss it if it were gone?"

There were a number of good answers. One woman confessed a sin against another person and asked for forgiveness. The treasurer told that what matters to him is how the congregation welcomes drunks and other street people into worship

on Sunday mornings.

These were good answers, but no one topped Rhonda's. Like other council members, Rhonda had known the question beforehand. She had taken it seriously and had written down her answer.

In a voice trembling with emotion, Rhonda read, "I have a totally new perspective on what family means. Because of your love, I have begun letting down the walls in my life and started treating myself with—and demanding from others—the respect I deserve. I have found the guidance I need here. You have accepted me as I am, and that has enabled me to make progress in becoming what God wants me to be. I am not yet what I ought to be, but, thank God, neither am I what I was.

"Because of you," Rhonda continued, looking up from her paper and meeting all the other tearing eyes in the room, "my children now have the void filled that came from failures of our natural family. I measure your love with hugs, homework, discipline, and just plain baby-sitting. Love is the most important thing this congregation has given me."

—Submitted by David R. Trembley

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

### YOU'RE FIRED!

Have you heard the true story about a teen who went to work in a grocery store after his high school graduation? A couple of weeks had passed and one evening his dad said, "Son, now let's talk about college."

"Oh, Dad, I didn't tell you...I'm not going to go to college."

"You're not going to college? Why?"

"I'm not going to college because I have found my life's work. I'm happy."

"What do you mean...you found your life's work?"

"You know," he said, "I'm driving the truck there, and I love delivering groceries. The boss is happy and I just got a raise. It's really wonderful work."

"Well, Son," his dad replied. "You can do something more challenging than this."

"Wait," the son returned, "didn't you tell me life is to be happy?"

"Yes."

"Well," the son said, "I'm really happy, and that's what I'm going to do. I'm not going to college." So the dad was the victim of his own myopia. He knew he'd have to use another approach.

The father went to the store and told the manager, "John, you're going to fire my son."



"What do you mean, fire your son? I've never had a young employee like him. He's the most wonderful young man I've ever hired. I just gave him a raise. He shines the truck, even keeps people happy. He's a great employee."

"Well, he's not going on to college," said the father, "and if you don't fire him, you're going to ruin his life."

The grocer had to do something. On Friday when the teen came to get his check the grocer said, "Just a minute; you're fired."

"What'd I do?"

"You're fired."

"What's wrong?"

"You're fired."

"Wha...?"

"You're fired."

This teen got the idea...he was fired. He came home all dejected. He met his dad and said, "All right, Dad, I'll go to college this fall." Some 30 years later, after this teen had become the president of one of the leading universities, he told his aging father, "Dad, I want to thank you for the time you got me fired."

—Robert Strand, *Springfield, Missouri*.

*Reprinted from Moments for Teens. Used with permission.*

## FOLLOW THAT LIGHT

For Christmas a few years ago, Robyn Stevens bought her father a flashlight—a small, garden-variety, three-cell, waterproof flashlight. Several weeks after Christmas her father and two other men were 25 miles from shore in the Gulf of Maine, bringing the tugboat *Harkness* in from a construction job. Halfway home the *Harkness* and its crew found themselves sailing straight into a winter storm, with violent winds and temperatures of minus 60 degrees.

About 6 p.m., the captain realized that the boat was taking on water fast. Their message to the Coast Guard station was concise, "We're going down." When they realized they had to abandon ship, they made one last radio transmission. "The water is up to our chests in the wheelhouse. We're going into the water."

Three lobstermen heard their cry for help on the radio, left their families, and set out to find the sinking tugboat. As the rescue boat plowed through 8-foot waves, they had little hope of finding Robyn's father and his two friends. But after a little while, one of them saw a thin beam of light piercing the sea smoke.

Rick shouted to the captain, "Look over there. Follow that light." As they did, they found three half-dead men in the icy

water, their arms hooked together and their arms frozen to a ladder that had come loose from the *Harkness* when it went down.

The men had long since lost their ability to hold on to anything. But the freezing cold had done the men a favor. Frozen to the back of one of Robyn's father's gloves was a small, garden-variety, three-cell waterproof flashlight. And the beam of that flashlight was pointing straight up to the sky. It saved their lives!

Jesus came down at Christmas to be that thin beam of light that shines through the darkness of despair, the winds of worry, the cold of confusion, and the sea smoke of sickness and sorrow. And since we are spiritually connected to Jesus, that thin beam of light shines through us, too.

Like the flashlight Robyn gave to her father, our flashlight is empowered by three cells: faith, hope, and love. Through the fog of fear and the darkness of doubt, may our friends and family see that thin beam of light in us this holiday season.

—Adapted from *Stories To Keep You...Looking Up: Four Seasons of Wit & Wisdom* by John M. Palmer. Used by permission.

## WHO HAD TIME FOR THE BABY?

Take the year 1809. The international scene was tumultuous. Napoleon was sweeping through Austria; blood was flowing freely. Nobody cared about babies. But the world was overlooking some significant births.

William Gladstone was born that year. He became one of England's finest statesmen. That same year, Alfred Tennyson was born to an obscure minister and his wife. The child would one day greatly affect the literary world.

On the American continent, Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And not far away in Boston, Edgar Allan Poe began his eventful, albeit tragic, life.

That same year a physician named Darwin and his wife named their child Charles Robert.

And that same year produced the cries of a newborn infant in a rugged log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. The baby's name? Abraham Lincoln.

If there had been news broadcasts at that time, I'm certain these words would have been heard: "The destiny of the world is being shaped on an Austrian battlefield today." But history was actually being shaped in the cradles of England and America.

Similarly, everyone thought taxation was the big news when Jesus was born. But a young Jewish woman cradled the biggest news of all: the birth of the Savior.

—Charles Swindoll

*Adapted from Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations. Used with permission.*



### WHO IS ON YOUR WALL?

A story in *Sports Illustrated* focused on Rico Leroy Marshall, an 18-year-old senior at Forestville High School in Glenarden, Maryland. Rico was a basketball star with everything going his way...a promised athletic scholarship to the University of South Carolina, first-place winner in his school's talent contest, and one of the most popular kids in school.

Rico was driving home from a high school basketball game on a Friday night when he was stopped by a county sheriff in a patrol car. On the seat of the car beside Rico was a plastic bag with several chunks of crack, the highly concentrated and addictive form of cocaine. So he wouldn't be arrested for illegal possession, he swallowed the drugs as the sheriff made his way to the car. Later that night he went into convulsions. His parents rushed him to the hospital, but early on Saturday morning Rico Leroy Marshall died of a drug overdose.

One more element appears in this story. On the wall of Rico's bedroom was a huge poster of his hero...basketball star Len Bias. Bias was the star of the University of Maryland basketball team and for that year was the No. 1 draft pick for the National

Basketball Association. He was chosen by the Boston Celtics. But on the night he was drafted, Len Bias died of a cocaine overdose.

A sad story? Yes. Are you surprised? Maybe not. Consider...Rico's role model was Len Bias. I can only imagine that one of the first things he saw in the morning and the last thing at night before closing his eyes was Len. Len was the hero, role model, dream, goal of Rico.

Who is your role model? Choose well because heroes are important.

—Robert Strand, Springfield, Missouri.

*Adapted from Moments for Teens. Used with permission.*

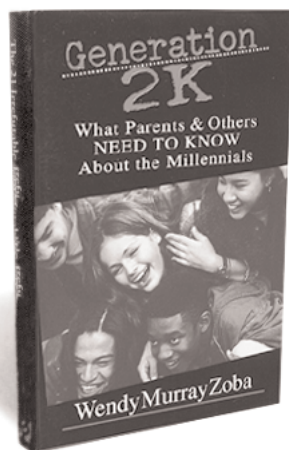
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# book reviews



## GENERATION 2K: WHAT PARENTS AND OTHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MILLENNIALS

Wendy Murray Zoba (InterVarsity Press, 111 pp., paperback, \$9.99)

*Generation 2K* is an eye-opening study on today's teenagers—the Millennials. The first of this group graduated from high school in 2000.

Zoba discusses the generations preceding the Millennials, and how they have made an impact on who the Millennials have become. Interviews with students and her experimental studies helped her learn the kind of ministry that will reach this hurting generation.

*Generation 2K* will help the reader see the Millennial's portrait—a generation devastated and torn by the media and parental neglect, and a generation some have deemed hopeless. Yet this generation is determined to make a change. Zoba writes, "Media saturation, moral ambivalence, and attendant spiritual longing have triggered societal resolve to make things better."

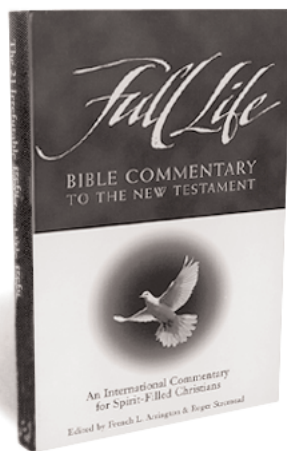
There is hope for our youth. They are ready for the change that the gospel of Christ will bring to their lives. This book has practical applications for reaching youth in today's culture.

—Reviewed by Jenna Lewis,  
Bible Quiz secretary, Springfield, Missouri.

## FULL LIFE BIBLE COMMENTARY

French L. Arrington and Roger Stronstad, ed., (Zondervan, 1648 pp., hardback, \$39.99)

Those who enjoy Donald Stamp's notes in the *Full Life Study Bible* will find the *Full Life Bible Commentary* a valuable help. It is the best one-volume commentary on the New Testament available. Its writers are outstanding Pentecostal professors and pastors. They are not only excellent scholars, but are Spirit-filled, Spirit-taught believers. They honor the Bible as God's holy, authoritative Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit.



The commentary's preface states, "The interpretation is based on the structure, language, and the background of the book. The purpose of approaching the interpretation in this manner is to preserve the power and the significance that the gospel had for the first century and that which it has for today."

French Arrington has done this well for Luke and Acts. Anthony Palma has done it well for 1 Corinthians—books of special concern for Pentecostals. Some may feel Timothy Jenney has gone a little too far in doing this for the Book of Revelation. He sees initial applications to the time of Nero, and does not connect Revelation's events with a 7-year Tribulation, but he does focus on

the triumph of Jesus.

I recommend this commentary to pastors, Sunday school teachers, and to all who love to study the Word of God.

—Reviewed by Stanley M. Horton, Th.D.,  
project coordinator for the Pentecostal  
Textbook Project and professor emeritus at  
the Assemblies of God Theological  
Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

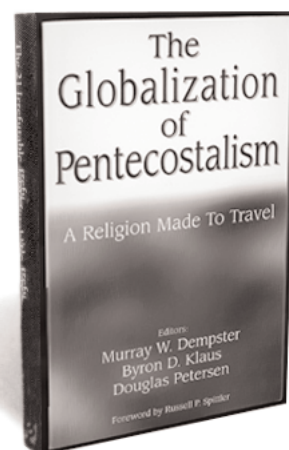
## THE GLOBALIZATION OF PENTECOSTALISM

Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, Douglas Petersen, editors (Regnum Books, 406 pp., paperback, \$24.99)

In June 1996, a conference designed to study the challenges and character of Pentecostalism in a rapidly changing world was conducted in San Jose, Costa Rica. This gathering of Pentecostal scholars was sponsored by Latin America ChildCare and three centres/institutes of Vanguard University. Regnum Books published the fruits of this endeavor.

In this book, 16 Pentecostal scholars from Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia address a broad range of issues. The 16 papers are organized into 3 sections. A response to each of the three sections is provided by scholars from outside the Pentecostal tradition.

The first section, "Changing Paradigms in Pentecostal Scholarly





Reflection,” deals with assessments of the fresh challenges Pentecostals are facing, offering ways of engaging new issues in theology, biblical studies, and practical application of the gospel.

Section Two, “Pentecostalism as a Global Culture,” reviews how Pentecostals are confronting the missionary challenge in various parts of the world. The concluding section deals with major issues facing Pentecostals in the postmodern world.

Pentecostal sociologist Margaret Poloma provides a useful commentary on modern Pentecostal-charismatic revivals in her chapter, “The ‘Toronto Blessing’ in Postmodern Society: Manifestations, Metaphor and Myth.” Poloma makes a case for taking the current wave of Holy Spirit outpourings among Pentecostals seriously.

*The Globalization of Pentecostalism* is an invaluable resource for those who wish to ponder current challenges facing this great revival movement. Thoughtful readers will be challenged by a rich diversity of perspectives.

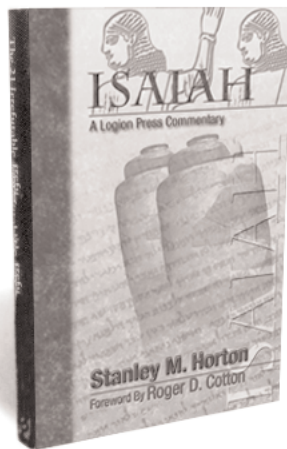
—Reviewed by William W. Menzies, a longtime educator with the Assemblies of God and chancellor of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary.

## ISAIAH

Stanley M. Horton (Gospel Publishing House /Logion Press, 512 pp., hardcover, \$32.99)

There is no heavier theological book in the Old Testament than Isaiah, and Stanley Horton has provided another good, conservative commentary on this important book. Horton is a great Pentecostal scholar who has studied Isaiah his entire ministry, beginning with his doctoral dissertation.

The author has a way of relating the truths of Scripture to the busy pastor and layperson who need the fruit of scholarship translated into everyday language. Horton provides helpful



summaries and overviews, including a preview of Isaiah, the historical background, an excellent outline, a narrative summary of Isaiah’s message, and an appendix of the major themes in Isaiah. An example of the helpful material is a list of chapters that are recommended as almost ready-made sermons.

The commentary itself is Horton’s verse by verse understanding of Isaiah. The text is not cluttered with technical references, though there is solid research behind it. Horton’s style is brief and to the point. Sometimes he lists the various options without showing his preference. He also provides the traditional understanding along with a more modern alternative translation of the Hebrew. I like to study the issues in other scholarly works and then read Horton’s conclusion on these issues.

This is a valuable tool for studying this rich and important book from one who not only knows the text, but the divine author as well.

—Reviewed by Roger Cotton, Ph.D., professor, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

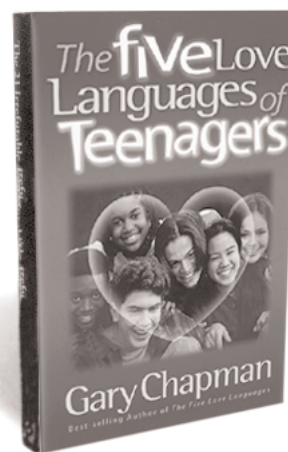
## THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES OF TEENAGERS

Gary Chapman, Ph.D. (Northfield Publishing, hardback, 259 pp., \$19.99)

Parents today are looking for answers to the perplexing problems they are experiencing raising teens in today’s society. Gary Chapman has provided this help in *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers*. He uses his own experiences and the many sessions he has conducted with teens and parents as the basis for his material.

The author first examines today’s teen culture and its characteristics to help parents understand their teen. He also emphasizes the importance of parental love in guiding a teen through this tumultuous time of life.

One of the key areas of the book concerns the love languages of teens: words of affirmation, physical touch, quality time, acts of service, and gifts.



Chapman not only examines each love language, he also explains its importance and how parents can discover their teen’s language. He contends that if parents will learn their teen’s love language(s), they will have a greater chance of influencing and guiding their teen.

Chapman provides practical advice in helping teens deal with anger. He also talks about the relationship between independence and responsibility. Today’s blended and single-parent families present challenges in raising teens. Chapman has



# book reviews

chapters that will encourage and help guide parents in these situations.

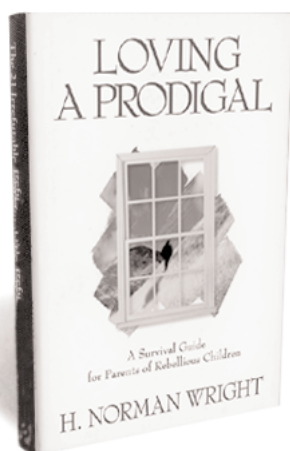
Every pastor and youth pastor needs a copy of *Five Love Languages* to help him or her counsel the parents of teens. Parents of teens and preteens need to read this book.

—Reviewed by Richard L. Schoonover,  
associate/technical editor, *Enrichment Journal*, Springfield, Missouri.

## LOVING A PRODIGAL

H. Norman Wright (Chariot Victor Publishing, 233 pp., hardback, \$18.99)

H. Norman Wright is a pastor, professor, marriage and family counselor, author of over 60 books, and a parent. He addresses the subject from his own experience as the father of a prodigal and also incorporates his professional expertise as he speaks to the hurting parents of prodigals. His method is gentle, encouraging, and nonjudgmental.



This book, divided into 15 chapters, is filled with examples of families in crisis. The prodigals range from adolescents to adult children. He addresses self-condemning questions that parents ask themselves: how to handle guilt, how to deal with the responses of others, how and when to release the child, and how to forgive and restore the family. Readers can also focus on their own

successes while learning methods others have used effectively.

Wright's chapter on "Preventing and Intervening" has valuable information on recognizing problem characteristics in a small child to help prevent potential problems before he/she becomes a prodigal. In addition to his firsthand advice, the spiritual counsel in the chapter, "Praying Parents," is crucial to practice from the time of your child's birth.

The chapter on "Bringing Your Child Back" is essential for bringing the family together in forgiveness and reconciliation. He encourages parents to keep the lines of communication open and to never give up on the child.

—Reviewed by Barbara G. Aker, *Evangel University*, Springfield, Missouri.

## FROM SURVIVAL TO SIGNIFICANCE

Troy Jones (Winepress Publishing, 188 pp., paperback, \$11.99)

Youth ministry is an ever-changing, fast-paced world. Though youth ministry is continuously evolving to stay relevant to our culture, there are certain foundations that it must maintain to accomplish God's plan for the church.

Jones tackles many of the vital and foundational issues that pertain to youth pastors: their families, personal

lives, staff relationships, local church youth ministry, programs, outreach, and discipleship. The author deals with some crucial and sensitive areas of youth ministry and the lives of its leaders. This book also provides a direct, comprehensive guide to ministry that combines timeless philosophy with current, practical ideas.

The author opens his examination of youth ministry with a direct challenge to all ministers—that they stay. The importance of longevity in youth ministry and ministry in general is understated. The theme of longevity supports and weaves throughout the book and is a major key in unlocking the other foundational ideas of youth ministry that are presented.

This book is concise, yet deep and comprehensive. It is not trend based. It is easy to read, organized, and direct. I have seldom read a book of this nature and agreed with everything presented.

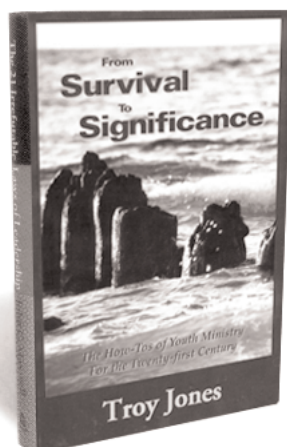
—Reviewed by Donald H. Marsh, youth pastor, *Riverside Community Church Assembly of God*, Oakmont, Pennsylvania.

## TOTAL PRAISE CD

National Youth Ministries (Gospel Publishing House, \$18)

"Fresh, exhilarating, and passionate." That's what people are saying about the *Total Praise*, a collection of songs for every age group. Churches, Bible studies, choirs, and families are discovering the *Total Praise* package, a combination of CDs that move people toward the presence of God.

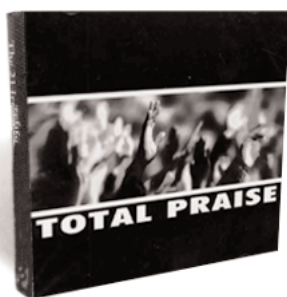
This CD was designed to create a hunger and passion for God's presence. The musical genius of arranger Bernie Hermes gives every song a sound of its own. His ability to use chord substitutions and a variety of harmonies keeps every chorus fresh and innovative.





The companion book contains easy-to-read chord charts, with the melody line. This helps piano players and worship leaders identify the melody or tune. Many of the songs are in guitar-based keys, and every song includes the Seville font that shows how each chord can be played on the guitar. Many churches are using the arrangements for their youth choirs.

The package includes two CDs, one with a stereo accompaniment track and the other with a stereo demonstration track.



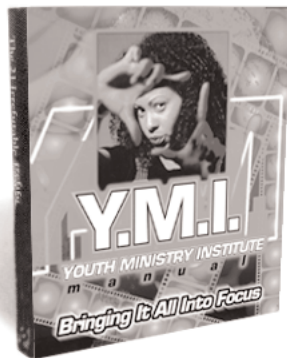
For those looking for inspiring worship songs and arrangements, for teaching new songs to your worship bands, and for youth choirs looking for song material that will engage your audience in worship, this package is for you.

—Reviewed by Kyle Rasmussen, worship minister, Cedar Park Assembly of God, Bothell, Washington.

## YOUTH MINISTRY INSTITUTE MANUAL

(National Youth Ministries, General Council of the Assemblies of God, 222 pp., notebook, \$29.95)

The *Youth Ministry Institute Manual* is a wonderful tool and a great addition to any youth pastor's or youth leader's library. Whether you have grown up in the Assemblies of God or are new to the Fellowship, you will benefit from learning the structure and philosophy of



National Youth Ministries and the basics of youth ministry.

The *Y.M.I.* begins by explaining the components of the win, build, send mission of National Youth Ministries. The book discusses the importance of what it means to be a youth pastor, including foundational ingredients such as developing a vision, being a person of integrity through accountability, and maintaining a personal devotional life.

Whether one is a veteran youth worker or an amateur, this manual is practical, covering preaching styles and elements, sermon preparation, mastering relationships, ideas for the youth service, and even discussing the pros and cons of the youth service time.

The *Y.M.I.* can be used to freshen one's ideas or as a guide to help integrate youth sponsors. Each chapter concludes with useful resource materials.

—Reviewed by Darwin Boston, Christian service director, Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.

## GETTING REAL: AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE TO RELATIONAL MINISTRY

Ken Baugh & Rich Hurst (NavPress, 240 pp., paperback, \$13)

Most churches have programs and classes for children, youth, families, and senior citizens. The authors suggest this traditional approach is not complete. "Although many churches have

several programs that meet the needs and likes of an average middle-aged person, they often have little that meets the needs of the average young adult."

Baugh and Hurst emphasize the young adult's need for a relational ministry versus another church program. The early chapters present trends, statistics, and observations on the personalities of different generations and subcultures. The authors then take their findings and use their ministry insight to present a plan to help ministers who desire to impact this often overlooked segment of the church.

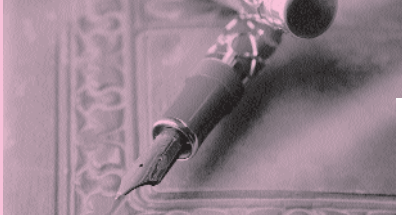


Baugh and Hurst explain how to discover the needs of the young adults in your community and become effective in meeting them. They also discuss how to build a team of leaders, how to help young adults discover their God-given purpose, and how to mobilize young adults to reach their counterparts.

—Reviewed by Scotty Gibbons, student ministries director, James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

## A S E R V I C E

*Enrichment* reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books. As a service to readers the Gospel Publishing House will supply any of these books, but books cannot be returned for credit.



# news & resources

## ROYAL RANGERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

During March 2000, nearly 400 district, regional, and national leaders gathered in Springfield, Mo., for the National Royal Rangers Council. The main focus of the event was to plan for the enhancement of Royal Rangers for the 21st century.

In addition to the traditional business meeting and the Silver Eagle Awards Banquet, hundreds of volunteers came to Springfield to serve as curriculum resource members and plan for a major revamping of the Royal Rangers programs.

Prior to and during the 2000 National Council, field-testing and study indicated the following:

### Program Names

The program will be renamed to better enhance ministry to boys in all geographic locations of the States. Each program will be redefined by grade to better fit the educational structures of the schools and the Assemblies of God. The ministry will continue with a strong emphasis on camping, while enabling boys to participate in noncamping awards and activities.

### Uniforms

The boys' uniforms will remain basically the same. Significant changes will be made to the advancements and awards to reflect the new programs.

- Boys in each outpost group will have awards vests for advancements, activities, and merit awards.
- Merit awards will be colorful patches instead of pins.
- The advancement system will be redesigned with patches, medals, and ribbon awards.
- The locations of present awards will change and be placed on the vest.
- Leaders' uniforms will remain basically the same with minor changes:
- Leadership Training Course pins

will be redesigned to correspond with new LTC Academy.

- Insignias will remain basically the same.
- Leaders will have an optional dress blue uniform, similar to present.
- Khaki color Class A and Class B uniforms will remain.
- A Class C outfit for use during activities and camps at the commander's discretion will consist of a Royal Rangers T-shirt, Royal Rangers hat, and blue jeans.
- Casual wear will consist of a knit Royal Rangers polo-type shirt, or a Royal Rangers button-down long or short sleeve shirt with Dockers-type pants.

### Advancement System

The advancement system will have significant changes to reflect the new programs and to allow for different options. The advancement systems will not require less from our boys. Conversely, they will allow additional advancements to be earned along the Advancement Trail. This can be done without making the system complex. Here's how:

- Visual material will be easy for the boys, parents, and commanders to understand.
- Advancements will have weekly planning guides, workbooks, and a Bible study.
- The advancement system will have options for both circular (work done in the weekly meeting) and linear (work done outside the weekly meeting).
- The boys' groups will require both circular and linear advancements, enabling boys to advance through the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medals of Achievement, the highest award a Royal Ranger can earn.

### Leadership Training

The Leadership Training Course will be redesigned into modular-type seminar settings. These modular-type blocks will allow different, specific modulators to be

taught for the different areas the commanders may be working. A Commanders Leadership Training Academy will be developed that will provide leaders options for continuous training.

The National Royal Rangers Council members are believing God for the greatest days ever for the Royal Rangers ministry.

## COMPASSION CLIMB 2000—MOUNT KILIMANJARO, AFRICA

Compassion Climb 2000, organized by John Bongiorno of Erie, Pa., and Greg Beggs, area director for East Africa, was completed March 1, 2000, with an exciting climb to the summit of Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro.

Of the 21 mountain trekkers, two-thirds reached the final summit, Uhuru Peak, at 19,300 feet, where they sang songs of praise and worship to the Lord.

Compassion Climb was designed to raise funds for a number of compassion ministries active in the mission field, including Convoy of Hope, Assist International, and work in the country of Tanzania. Over \$100,000 was raised for compassion ministries.

Participants in the climb included Wil Balch (Calif.), Randy Barton (Mo.), Pamela Beck (Pa.), Greg Beggs (Tanzania), John Bongiorno (Pa.), Irvin Chambers (Fla.), Joe Coffey (Pa.), David Donaldson (Mo.), Mark Henry (Pa.), Karl Heth (Iowa), Tim Jarvis (Tanzania), Jim McQuiston (Pa.), Michael Ness (Tanzania), Beverly Palmieri (Calif.), Chuck Patton (Pa.), Bob Prazer (Pa.), Richard Pyle (Mass.), Jerry Spain (Kenya), Jerry Strandquist (Minn.), Frank Villa (Va.), and Doug Villella (Pa.).

John Bongiorno, climb coordinator, noted: "For the first year of a new event like this, it was extremely successful. The camaraderie and ministry emphasis experienced by all participants not only

raised funds for ministry but also increased an awareness of opportunities to invest in Kingdom purposes. We already have a great list for next year's scheduled climb up Mount Kilimanjaro, which will be held in mid-February 2001. Brad Trask (Mich.) and Karl Heth (Iowa) will serve as the event's cochairmen."

Don Corbin, Africa region director, noted: "I was privileged to address the climbers upon their completion and share with them the significance of their effort. The moneys raised from this event will save lives and serve to advance the Kingdom."

For information on the upcoming Compassion Climb, contact John Bongiorno, c/o Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, 1661 N. Boonville Ave., Suite B, Springfield, MO 65803, phone: 417-862-1447, ext. 1646.

#### **MBA CONDUCTING NATIONAL SURVEY**

Ministers Benefit Association, in consultation with Frank Russell Investment Company, is conducting a national survey to determine attitudes and challenges that affect church contributions to retirement accounts for Assemblies of God ministers and lay employees.

The goal of the survey is to develop a communications, education, and marketing program for church leadership and church boards across the United States to encourage them to fulfill their responsibility to contribute or increase contributions to the retirement accounts of their ministers and lay employees.

George Wood, chairman of the board of Ministers Benefit Association, stated, "It is our ultimate goal that all churches contribute to the retirement account of their ministers and staff. If our Fellowship creates a clear expectation that a substantial portion of retirement planning is the responsibility of the local church, it will bless our ministers as they plan for their future."

#### **STEWARDSHIP TRAINING AVAILABLE THROUGH USP PROGRAM**

The Unified Stewardship Program (USP) was established in 1977 under the

direction of the Deferred Giving and Trusts Department. The role of USP was to train and equip stewardship directors and representatives in Assemblies of God district offices, churches, and ministries.

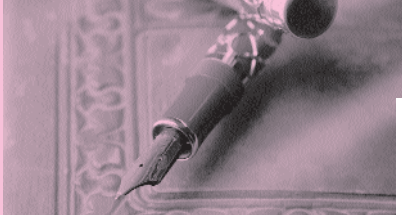
In 1992, the Assemblies of God Foundation (AGF) was formed to enhance the work of USP in providing gift planning and complex estate planning. The Foundation's professional staff offers counsel to individuals who are seeking ways to bless ministry, while using solutions and strategies that allow those individuals the opportunity to lower income taxes, avoid capital gains tax, provide safe, secure income, and eliminate estate taxes and probate. The Foundation is a service provider that assists people in giving to the ministries the Lord is placing on their hearts.

Many people, including financial professionals, are not knowledgeable in how to implement planned giving strategies into total financial and estate plans. The AGF has built a complete, 1-day USP stewardship-training program that will equip the leadership of your ministry with general information. Participants will be taught basic estate and will planning so they can give seminars, consult, and lend direction in testamentary and gift planning. The training uses planned-giving case studies

to teach planned-giving strategies, techniques, and solutions. An emphasis is placed on providing the tools to identify prospective planned-giving opportunities for your ministry. After completing the session, a home-study program is provided to reinforce the training. Upon completing the home study, participants become certified stewardship directors or certified ministry representatives. They will be supplied with seminar presentations, given direct access to the Foundation home office and field staff for assistance, and invited to the AGFSG annual Stewardship Conference for ongoing training.

At the beginning of 1999, there were 47 certified stewardship directors and ministry representatives. Ten training programs were given last year, and there are now over 110 individuals either certified or in training. Training sponsors included district offices, colleges, and affiliated AG ministries. The program is designed as a 1-day session but can be customized to meet the needs of your leaders. If scheduling an entire day is a challenge, the training can be given in multiple sessions. AGF staff will come to your location and provide all meals and training materials at no cost. All you need to do is provide a room.

Let us have the opportunity to meet



# news & resources

and train your board, your staff, and the leaders in your church, institution, or ministry. We want to serve you. Together we can show your people strategies that will allow them to direct God-given resources to God-given objectives.

For information on USP Stewardship training, please contact Scott Wynant at 1-800-253-5544, or E-mail: [agfoundation@ag.org](mailto:agfoundation@ag.org).

## **NEW HIGHLANDS-HILLCREST 2001 CALENDAR AVAILABLE**

Over the past 30 years, Highlands Child Placement Services has made its popular baby calendar available to churches and Highlands donors free of charge.

The 2001 calendar, for the first time, will also feature Hillcrest Children's Home, the other Benevolences child care ministry.

This Highlands-Hillcrest "Celebrating America's Children" calendar is full color and larger with new features. Members in your congregation will enjoy this calendar in their homes or offices.

To receive free calendars for you and your church families, fill out and mail the attached business-reply card at the back of this issue.

## **HIGHLANDS BABY BOOTIE CLUB DAY IS FEBRUARY 18**

Highlands Child Placement Services is the pro-life ministry of the Assemblies of God. Highlands Baby Bootie Club Day, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2001, is an opportunity to share this lifesaving ministry with your church.

A new Highlands Baby Bootie Club brochure is available in quantity for your church or group. You may also order plastic baby-bootie-shaped coin banks your group can use to receive an offering for Highlands on Baby Bootie Club Day and throughout the year.

To order your free Baby Bootie Club brochures or bootie coin banks, call 417-862-2781, ext. 2182.

## **BYLINE TV WITH DAN BETZER BEGINS PRODUCTION**

Media Ministries recently produced pilot episodes of *ByLine TV* with Dan Betzer at the Cardone Media Center in Springfield, Mo. This is a television version of the *ByLine* radio program that can be heard on over 240 stations nationwide. *ByLine TV* provides short, humorous, inspirational, and thought-provoking insights into everyday events.

Host Dan Betzer describes the program this way, "In today's rapid pace of living, people often don't have the time for lengthy discussions about values or faith. *ByLine* takes 2 minutes on radio, and just 60 seconds on TV, to hit home the most important facets of living.

"I receive E-mails from all over the world from listeners, viewers, and those who follow us on the World Wide Web. What a fabulous privilege to share the gospel by way of *ByLine*."

"Several networks have expressed interest in the program," states David Lee, Media Ministries director. "We expect local churches will be interested in sponsoring the program in their area. There is time on the end of the program to have a tag promoting local ministries."

## **LEDNICKY REAPPOINTED AT CBC**

H. Maurice Lednický, president of Central Bible College (Springfield, Mo.) since 1980, was unanimously reelected by the Board of Directors of the college for a sixth 4-year term.

This action, ratified by the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, validates Lednický's unprecedented tenure in the 78-year history of the college. The new term began May 1, 2000.

"Looking back over these 20 years, I cannot personally imagine any other area of ministry more fulfilling or rewarding," Lednický said. "The verification of this ministry is the alumni who are active in every aspect of ministry worldwide. My heart's cry is that God will help us become everything He wants us to be in our Lord's service."

CBC is one of 18 endorsed A/G post-secondary schools.

## **A/G POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE FIRST DAY OF SPRING 2001 CLASSES AND SPRING COMMENCEMENTS**

American Indian College, Phoenix, Ariz.—Jan. 11, May 4.

A/G Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—Jan. 5, June 8.

Bethany College, Scotts Valley, Calif.—Jan. 18, May 12.

Black Hills Indian Bible College, Rapid City, S.Dak.—Jan. 4, April 20.

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—Jan. 11, May 3.

Evangel University, Springfield, Mo.—Jan. 11, May 4.

Global University, Springfield, Mo.—rolling enrollment, varies.

Latin American Bible Institute, La Puente, Calif.—Jan. 16, April 28.

Latin American Bible Institute, San Antonio, Tex.—Jan. 9, April 27.

North Central University, Minneapolis, Minn.—Jan. 16, May 4.

Northwest College, Kirkland, Wash.—Jan. 8, May 5.

Southeastern College, Lakeland, Fla.—Jan. 10, April 27.

Southwestern A/G University, Waxahachie, Tex.—Jan. 12, May 4.

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N.Dak.—Jan. 10, May 3.

Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, Calif.—Jan. 10, May 12.

Valley Forge Christian College,



Phoenixville, Pa.—Jan. 10, May 4.

Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.—Jan. 8, April 30.

Zion Bible Institute, Barrington, R.I.—Jan. 8, May 5.

## **GLOBAL UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES E-CENTER**

With the formation of Global University, the dream of using all means possible to reach and disciple people wherever they live—no matter the language, location, or cost—is closer to reality than ever before. By building on the strong foundations of two long-standing institutions, ICI University and Berean University, Global University inaugurates a new era of distance education with the vision and experience necessary to fulfill the dream.

With the physical merger of the two schools, Global University is launching the E-vangelism and Discipleship Center (e-Center) in Springfield, Mo. The e-Center, a 98,000-square-foot facility, is the link to increasing conversions to Christ—from 1.4 million to 2.5 million people—and increasing worldwide discipleship efforts from the 400,000 currently enrolled to 600,000 people by 2005.

Global University is positioned to provide the Assemblies of God worldwide a seamless system that will enable anyone, anywhere, at anytime access to evangelism, discipleship, ministerial training, and academic programs. Global University is the largest distance-education undergraduate and graduate program in evangelical Christendom. Global University provides access to its Pentecostal-based Christian education programs through its network of national offices and cooperative institutions, utilizing print, Internet, CD ROM, videoconferencing, and audio and video delivery systems.

Berean's enrollment at the time of the merger was over 16,000 students, making Berean the largest ministerial training institution within the Assemblies of God, USA. ICI University, at the time of the merger, served students, schools, and churches outside of the USA through its network of 180 national offices in 160

countries. To Global University, ICI brings its distance-education courses and programs for evangelism, discipleship, ministerial training, and undergraduate and graduate study. Global University continues ICI's leadership in multicultural Christian education, translating and producing evangelism, discipleship, and academic programs in over 130 languages.

## **AGTS TO OPEN BRANCH CAMPUS AT NCU**

The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (Springfield, Mo.) announced the opening of a new branch campus at North Central University (Minneapolis, Minn.). Classes at the new extension will begin summer 2001.

The extension program, which will offer a master of arts in Christian ministries, is a joint venture. AGTS will direct administrative services, such as admissions, financial aid, and student advisement, while North Central will provide classrooms and faculty.

Gordon Anderson, Ph.D., president of North Central University, said, "We are joining efforts with AGTS to provide the highest quality of theologically sound and spiritually energized courses to equip ministry leaders for the new millennium."

Carolyn Tennant, Ph.D., NCU vice president of academic affairs, said the

flexibility of the AGTS master's in Christian ministries will make it possible for NCU to promote a strong Pentecostal leadership track.

North Central recently approved its own master's degree program; however, implementation is not expected for another 3 to 5 years. The AGTS program will allow NCU to provide graduate-level education earlier than anticipated.

NCU will become the fifth extension site in the AGTS branch campus program. AGTS is currently administrating programs at Southeastern College (Lakeland, Fla.), Valley Forge Christian College (Phoenixville, Pa.), Vanguard University (Costa Mesa, Calif.), and Northwest College (Kirkland, Wash.).

NCU and AGTS are two of 18 endorsed A/G postsecondary schools.

## **BRIDGING THE GAP THROUGH MENTORED MINISTRY**

One of the more difficult transitions in a minister's life is from formal education to full-time ministry, says Charles Spong, D.Min., coordinator of the Center for Mentored Ministry. To address this issue, the Commission on Christian Higher Education and the Executive Presbytery have launched "Beginning Your Ministry Mentored." The program establishes a network of A/G teaching churches, where ministry graduates from endorsed



# news & resources

A/G colleges receive a 1-year internship working with an experienced pastor /mentor. Graduates are matched with churches for the full-time staff position.

The pilot project began last summer with a selected group of ministry graduates. If the pilot program is successful, hopes are to expand it to 75 to 100 teaching churches nationwide. At the conclusion of the pilot program, there will be an evaluation seminar that will include pastor mentors, mentorees, district superintendents, and personnel from the Commission.

Candidates for the program must have completed a solid core of Bible, theology, and practical theology courses giving them basic preparation in preaching, teaching, counseling, administration, and other ministerial service. They must also have the college president's recommendation.

Pastors interested in participating must be recommended by their district superintendents, interviewed by representatives from the Center for Mentored Ministry, and agree to follow the pastor/mentor internship manual created for this program. Churches are also

responsible for the intern's salary and expenses for 1 year.

The interns' ministry experience includes regular mentoring sessions with senior pastors. Interns may earn 3 to 6 hours of graduate credit from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (Springfield, Mo.).

For more information, or to request a brochure on "Beginning Your Ministry Mentored," contact Charles W. Spong at the Center for Mentored Ministry at 863-644-5495, or Dayton Kingsriter, director, Commission on Christian Higher Education, at 417-862-2781, ext. 3315.

## **CHURCH PLANTING DAY, FEB. 11**

The Home Missions Church Planting Department is working to change how pastors and congregations view church planting. The department's goal is to make every church plant a success.

"Planting a church needs to be viewed as a natural part of being a church," says Paul Drost, director of the Church Planting Department. "Just like having a child adds to the richness in a family, there's a natural excitement that comes from planting a church."

Drost is trying to ensure that every church plant is successful through a proven four-part process. "We are working with districts to provide a complete program for church planters," says Drost. "This program assesses workers' strengths and gifts, trains workers in specialized BootCamps, coaches workers by providing planters with experienced church planting-coaches/mentors, and then assists churches in reproducing churches."

This is a vital change for the Assemblies of God. In the last decade, 50 percent of new church plants failed. "Helping leadership catch the vision, helping congregations get excited about 'birthing' a new work, and providing the training needed to succeed is what the Church Planting Department is all about," Drost says.

But excitement and training is meaningless if God isn't involved. "We need God's continued blessing," says Drost. "February 11, 2000, is Church Planting Sunday. Please remember this vital ministry in your prayers and support."

If you're interested in learning more about the Church Planting Department or about church-planting BootCamps, call 417-862-2781, ext. 3252, or E-mail: churchplanting@ag.org.

## **NATIONAL TEEN CHALLENGE DAY, DEC. 3**

Did you know there is a government program that forces drug addicts to either go to church or be sent to prison? It's true. It's called the U.S. court system. And when the court system has access and the center has room, drug addicts and alcohol abusers are given a choice: prison or a Teen Challenge center.

Imagine, the court sentencing people to meet Christ. The Teen Challenge ministry is one of the greatest success stories of the 20th century. At least 7 out of every 10 men and women who enter



**"I'd like to thank Mr. Parker for his tireless effort chairing four committees."**



Teen Challenge overcome drug and alcohol addiction through Christ.

At Teen Challenge, those with life-controlling problems are introduced to the Bible and spend hours studying God's Word, attending chapel, and going through the life-changing recovery program. Teen Challenge helps turn criminals into Christians.

But now it's your turn to help turn lives around by partnering with Teen Challenge. Sunday, December 3, 2000, is National Teen Challenge Day. The prayer and financial needs of Teen Challenge are great—and as we enter the 21st century, expansion is needed at every level. We ask that, on December 3, you pray for Teen Challenge and challenge your congregation to become regular prayer and financial supporters of this remarkable ministry.

You can learn more about Teen Challenge by calling 417-862-6969 or contacting Teen Challenge International, USA, at: [tcusa@teenchallengeusa.com](mailto:tcusa@teenchallengeusa.com).

#### RED-VESTED VOLUNTEER ARMY

The RV Volunteers Ministry has in 13 short years come a long way. From its beginning with only 18 volunteers it now has over 2,500 volunteers. This ministry is growing in such a way it now has a nationally appointed home missionary over each region of the country to help coordinate the many projects in each region. The ranks of this red-vested army are full of talents, trades, and professions that make it possible for these volunteers to accomplish almost any task.

In 1989, RV Volunteers King and Pat Bogardus suggested we have a regional convention in south Texas. The purpose of the convention was to enlist new RVers and also present projects. In the first year of this new millennium, there were over 30 regional conventions across the country.

An annual convention is held the first full week of October at Lake Williamson, Carlinville, Ill. Attendance has grown 15 to 20 percent each year. The purpose of the convention is to

bring the RV family together for fellowship and to present them with the projects in which they may become involved. At present, there are over 280 projects ranging from Teen Challenges, inner-city churches, Bible schools, and children's homes.

Growth in the ministry and in the attendance at the annual convention at Carlinville made it necessary to have a second national convention on the West Coast. There are over 500 RVers in that area, and only 50 of them attend the national convention in Carlinville. A national convention on the West Coast serves our RV family better and makes the ministry more visible to our Fellowship on that side of the Great Divide. The first West Coast convention was held October 22–26, 2000, at Palm Desert, Calif.

The RV Evangelism Tape Ministry for truckers is making a difference in the lives of many truckers. As RVers crisscross the nation, they stop at truck stops and leave free sermon tapes for truckers.

King Bogardus wrote a tract for truckers, "Are You Headed for a Dead End?" These may be obtained from the DHM MAPS Department. If there is a truck stop near your church, and you would like to be involved in this ministry, please contact DHM MAPS Department, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, M. 65802.

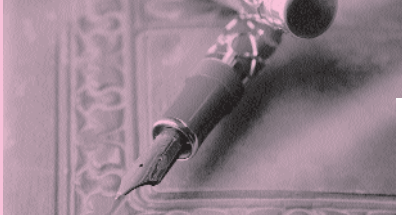
#### PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL CONTINUES GOING BEHIND BARS

Prior to the launch of its 2000 fundraising appeal last March, the Key Bearers program had raised more than \$300,000 since early 1996 to send copies of the *Pentecostal Evangel* into prisons and jails throughout the United States. Sponsored by Light for the Lost, Key Bearers provides approximately 8,000 copies of the *Evangel* for inmates every week.

The idea for the program grew out of an urgent need. Because of upgrades to the Gospel Publishing House press in 1996, the magazines usually sent to prisons free of charge were no longer available. But the magazine was ministering to so many inmates, the *Evangel* staff began searching for a way to continue—if not expand—the program.

"I told the *Evangel* that Light for the Lost would underwrite the first month's cost, about \$5,000," LFTL coordinator Benny Ferguson recalls. "I said within a matter of weeks or months, LFTL would have an answer as to what we could do long range. After consultation with my national board, LFTL entered an agreement with the *Pentecostal Evangel* to help underwrite the cost of copies going to inmates each week, throughout the year."

Every spring since, LFTL has invited individuals and churches to contribute to the Key Bearers ministry. The Division



# news & resources

of Home Missions prison ministries coordinates distribution of the Key Bearers *Evangel*.

"LFTL receives gifts from thousands of contributors every year," adds Ferguson. "But I urge pastors to present this ministry to their churches and give their congregations an opportunity to be involved with Key Bearers. With 2 million inmates incarcerated nationwide, the need for evangelism literature continues to grow. The *Pentecostal Evangel* is one of the most powerful evangelism tools available to chaplains and ministers to reach those in our country's prison system."

More information on Key Bearers can be obtained by E-mailing: [lftl@ag.org](mailto:lftl@ag.org). Donations and pledges may be made by calling 1-800-988-0292.

## **PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL TO RECEIVE 7,000TH SALVATION REPORT BY END OF YEAR**

After beginning the year with perhaps the strongest quarter for returned salvation coupons since tracking began in early 1997, the *Pentecostal Evangel* will receive its 7,000th response form before the end of 2000. During January, February, and March, 482 readers who accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior mailed salvation coupons to the *Evangel*. The number is believed to be the highest for a 3-month period since the *Evangel* began regularly publishing the ABCs of Salvation and a new convert's response form in its January 5, 1997, edition.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of respondents are forwarded to local Assemblies of God churches for follow-up. All new converts are sent a complimentary copy of the booklet, *Rock Solid—Building Your Relationship With Jesus*. During the past 3 years, hundreds of additional readers have called the Assemblies of God 1-800-4PRAYER line to report their salvation experiences.

## **PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL WEBSITE UNDERGOES EXPANSION, UPDATES**

Not only is the *Pentecostal Evangel*'s website, [pe.ag.org](http://pe.ag.org), one of the most frequently visited sites provided by the General Council of the Assemblies of God, but it has also become one of the Fellowship's most active since expanding in early 2000. Selected features, news items, and other editorial content from the upcoming edition of the *Evangel* are posted regularly along with a new personal message from a magazine staff member or contributor.

Visitors looking for recently featured articles on the site will find an archival section. Other notable additions include "From Our Files," which provides a sampling of memorable articles from the publication's 87-year past, and "Life's Q&A" that presents answers to some of life's most challenging questions. "PE Books" showcases the line of *Pentecostal Evangel* Books produced in cooperation with Gospel Publishing House.

The "News & Notes" page features recent Frontline Reports and Conversations, along with selected News Digest items. Individual and bundle subscription orders to the *Evangel* can be placed directly from the secured site with a GPH account number or major credit card. As part of the site's expansion, the number of navigation buttons was increased, making movement on the site easier and quicker.

## **STRATEGIC/FACILITIES PLANNING SERVICES AVAILABLE**

Does your church need an experienced, pastor-sensitive partner to assist with:

- a church growth study and analyses?
- a feasibility study?
- a master plan?
- a capital stewardship campaign?
- multimedia and graphic design?

- architecture?
- construction management?

Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, and Randy Barton, CEO, Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, have developed a Strategic/Facilities Planning Services department to serve Assemblies of God churches. These services are provided by the MasterPlan Stewardship Services (MPSS) division through an alliance with Aprecis, Inc. and Harvestime Ministries.

Aprecis, Inc. is based in Waterford, Mich. Mark Robinson, CEO and co-founder, states, "Our approach is simple; we do not want the church to waste one dollar on poor design or unbuildable blueprints. We don't start out assuming you need to build or that we automatically know what's best for you. Every church is unique, and it takes effort to find out the individual differences in ministry, vision, growth, and personality."

Bradley Oaster is president of the Colorado Springs, Colo., based Harvestime Ministries. Harvestime's mission is "to help as many seeker-friendly, purpose-driven churches as possible to fully realize their God-given potential."

You may receive a complimentary video, personal interview, church growth study and analyses by Aprecis, Inc. or Harvestime Ministries by calling the MPSS office at 800-962-7499 or E-mail: [masterplan@ag.org](mailto:masterplan@ag.org).

## **48TH ANNUAL LIGHT FOR THE LOST CONVENTION**

Mark your calendar to attend the 48th annual Light for the Lost convention, April 27, 28, 2001, in Portland, Oreg., at the DoubleTree Inn at Columbia River. Highlights of this exciting convention include anointed speakers, special music, and reports of how the gospel in

print is being used to reach the lost in the United States and around the world.

The Light for the Lost Golf Tournament, which immediately precedes the convention, has activities for the ladies. After-service receptions provide opportunities for fun and fellowship.

Watch for more details in the next issue of *Enrichment*.

### **LIGHT FOR THE LOST PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS**

Light for the Lost promotional brochures, councilmen brochures, recruitment posters, and videos are available in Spanish. For more information, or to order these or any other Light for the Lost products, call 1-800-988-0292.

### **2001 NATIONAL WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DAY THEME EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS**

February 25 is National Women's Ministries Day in the Assemblies of God. The theme for 2001, "Where Are You Going?" is a reflection of the poignant question the angel asked Hagar in Genesis 16:8 (NIV): "And he said, 'Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?'"

God has called women to fulfill a divine purpose in reaching their world with the love of Christ and building strong relationships within their families, churches, and communities. We are reminded of where we have come from and the great legacy of Christian faith that has been passed on to us. Now we must ask ourselves where we are going. As godly women, we must purpose to impart this faith to future generations and a world that desperately needs to know the mercy and grace of God.

The 2001 National Women's Ministries Day service provides a wonderful opportunity to focus on honoring the women of your church, encouraging them to establish godly relationships, and challenging them to minister to individuals who need to know the love of Christ. Pastors may also wish to recognize the women of the church for their varied and valuable contributions to the ministries of the entire church.

National Women's Ministries Day also allows each congregation an opportunity to give an offering to support the national Women's Ministries Department. Offerings help cover the costs of ministries provided to some 438,000 women and girls involved in Women's Ministries groups and Missionettes clubs.

Last year Women's Ministries and Missionettes gave more than \$15 million to Assemblies of God ministries around the world.

Information for planning a dynamic National Women's Ministries Day service is mailed to churches in December. If your church does not receive the packet containing a program guide, offering envelopes, a sample bulletin cover, and other theme-related items by January 15, 2001, call the national Women's Ministries Department at 800-448-2235. Please call if you would like a free National Women's Ministries Day program guide.

### **BIBLE QUIZ LUKE DEVOTIONAL**

Bible Quiz participants are studying the Gospel of Luke this season. Stacy Peters, a student at Evangel University, has written the BQ devotional for Luke. Not just for Bible quizzers, this devotional is great for personal or group use. You can order the Luke devotional by calling GPH at 800-641-4310 and requesting item

number 731-704. The cost is \$12, and is reproducible within your church.

### **FINE ARTS FESTIVAL 2001**

The 2001 National Fine Arts Festival will be held in Kansas City, Mo., August 6-10, in the Kansas City Convention Center, Bartle Hall.

### **STL PROMOTIONAL VIDEO AVAILABLE**

The *No Regrets* theme video is now available. It includes a variety of STL promotional spots, both humorous and inspirational, to promote STL in your church. To order the \$10 video, contact GPH at 800-641-4310, and ask for item 731-650.

### **NO REGRETS DEVOTIONAL**

The *No Regrets* 1-month devotional features real-life, inspirational thoughts about actual Assemblies of God teens who have no regrets about serving God and winning the world for Christ. An excellent resource to be used by students during your STL emphasis, this booklet will enable students in your group to have the same prayer focus for 31 days, encourage them to be committed givers to STL, and draw them into the Word of God. It also helps a student track his or her STL giving for one month. To order, contact GPH at 800-641-4310 and ask for item number 733-045.

All other *No Regrets* theme-related products are available by calling GPH at 800-641-4310.



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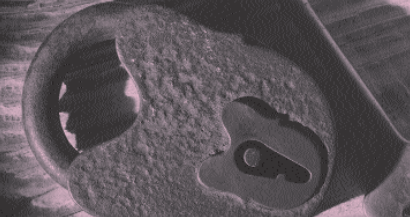
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# in closing

BY EDDIE V. RENTZ

19



## Youth Ministry is a Vital Part of the Church

Teenagers are part of an ever-changing culture. What is in today is out tomorrow. Many issues they deal with are the same, but the methods of dealing with them are different. Instead of hearing about a fight at school, teenagers now hear about a shooting. Instead of talking to their parents about a problem, some teenagers turn to alcohol or wrong relationships to bury the pain—as do their parents. The world today is full of teenagers who are searching for truth. God has called His church to reach these teens for His kingdom.

Youth ministry is a vital part of the church. Jesus said, “I am the vine; and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NIV). The role each minister has in a church is as vital as the other pastoral staff. We are all branches in the work to which God has called us. As I travel across our great Fellowship, my heart is burdened for pastors and staff who do not see the various ministries in their church as one driving force. They think their branch of ministry is “what keeps this church alive.” What a tragedy to the work of the Lord when we forget we are branches on the same tree.

God has called us to be ministers of His covenant to reach people and help them reach their potential in Christ. The church needs the hearts of its ministers pure, unified, and passionate to the people to whom God has called them. Apart from the Vine the branches

will not grow. The branch that isolates itself from the life of the church and does not help fulfill the vision of the whole church will never be used to its fullest potential.

The mission of the church is to win and disciple people for God’s kingdom. Worship ministers, CE directors, youth pastors, and children’s pastors must support each other’s ministries. When the pastoral staff is loyal to each other and

youth service and need God’s touch to soften their hardened hearts. Some teens come from blended families. Their brothers and sisters may have different fathers or mothers. Others may have parents who have troubled marriages, yet at church these parents act like they do not have any problems. There are also teenagers who have grown up in church and have become calloused to the gospel because they have never

**The world today is full of teenagers who are searching for truth. God has called His church to reach these teens for His kingdom.**

faithful to what God has bonded them together to do, they will change a church and its members. And most important, the lost will sense a unity and purpose of what God is doing.

Youth ministry is a vital part of the church, but your youth ministry is not its own entity. As youth pastor, you need to support the leadership over you. You may have great ideas, but you also need to be open to your senior pastor’s or another staff minister’s ideas that could bring a life-changing impact to your ministry. Let them sharpen you in ministry and allow yourself to be a tool that sharpens others.

You have young people who desire to know God’s will and need encouragement. There are also students who are convicted by the Holy Spirit during a

committed their hearts to the Lord. Yet, there are other teenagers who have been called into the ministry, or are excitedly talking about their first missions trip, or who passionately share a testimony about bringing a friend to church. The act of caring is so vital in the church. I challenge you to use the act of caring to touch youth with the love of God.

This issue of *Enrichment* focuses on youth ministry. Several who are involved in ministering to youth have presented ways to have an effective youth outreach. My prayer is that these articles will be a resource to help you become more efficient in your work for the Lord. **e**

*Eddie V. Rentz is director of national Youth Ministries, Springfield, Missouri.*

# Advertising Index

# ADVERTISER	PAGE #	# ADVERTISER	PAGE #	# ADVERTISER	PAGE #
* AG Financial Services Group.....	172	* E.R. Moore Choir Robes.....	180	* North Central University.....	14, 175
* AG National Prayer Center.....	180	* Global University.....	137, 175, 181	* Pastors' and Leaders' School.....	122
* AG Theological Seminary.....	126, 127, 175	* Gospel Publishing House (GPH).....	110, 111	* <i>Pentecostal Evangel</i> .....	116, 177, 178
* Ambassadors In Mission (AIM).....	cover	* GPH Radiant Life Curriculum.....	5, 180	* PULSE 2000.....	28
* Annual Church Ministries Report.....	184	* GuideOne Insurance.....	131	* Royal Rangers.....	172, 173
* Benevolences.....	146, 147, 174	* Little Giant Church Products.....	181	* Southwestern AG University.....	153
* Bible Quiz.....	133, 179	* Marriage Encounter.....	181	* Speed The Light.....	cover, 179
* Carpenter Bus Sales.....	180	* Marriage Resored.....	181	* Total Praise CDs.....	135
* Chi Alpha Campus Ministries.....	177	* MasterPlan Stewardship Services.....	55, 178	* Trinity Bible College.....	15
* Conference for Women in Ministry.....	29	* Media Ministries.....	123, 174	* Valley Forge Christian College.....	153
* CrossRoads Publications.....	181	* Miami Missionary Tents.....	180	* Woman's Touch.....	117
* Division of Home Missions (DHM).....	154, 176, 177	* Microframe Visual Pagers.....	180	* Woman's Ministries.....	179
* DFM Book of Hope.....	164	* Military & Vetereans Affairs Chaplaincy.....	155	* www.PROVERBIUM.com.....	43
* DFM Europe .....	130	* Ministerial Enrichment Office.....	115, 181	* www.SermonSearch.com.....	181
* DFM Life Publishers.....	175	* Ministers Benefit Association.....	54, 173	* www.youth.ag.org.....	4
* <i>Enrichment Journal</i> .....	105, 155	* Missionettes.....	167		